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WRITING FROM THE ANTECHAMBER:

PREFACES AND AUTHORSHIP IN THE WORKS OF LYDIA MARIA CHILD, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, AND HENRY JAMES

by

M. MOLLY VAUX

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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M. MOLLY VAUX

Adviser: Professor Neal Tolchin

This dissertation explores the work of three American writers who used the preface to speak to their audiences about writing and culture. In the prefaces to their novels and stories Lydia Maria Child, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James demonstrate both a desire to represent the experience of writing and a need to shape that representation to the exigencies defined by their audiences. Their prefaces reveal, in a more direct way than their fiction, social and cultural pressures weighing on their writing, as well as strategies for both engaging and resisting those pressures. In this study I examine how these writers mediate with their audiences through their prefaces to win authority for themselves as authorial figures, to direct the reading of the works their prefaces put forward, and to demonstrate the social and cultural uses of their texts. The moment I have chosen to examine in each writer's career corresponds with a significant point in the growth of the American literary world. In my chapter on Lydia Maria Child's first novel, *Hobomok*, I examine Child's representation of herself in the preface through the mask of an established male editor at a time when the market for American novels--and for novels written by women--was on the verge of great expansion. In my chapter on Hawthorne's works I explore a range of his writing from the middle phase of his

career, 1838 to 1851, during which the preface operates as a vehicle for Hawthorne's emergence just as publishers were strengthening their capacity to reach a national audience. In my chapter on James's prefaces to the New York Edition I study the ways in which the writing of *The Golden Bowl* and *The American Scene* were themselves essential prefatory acts to James's project of repackaging his works for an increasingly mercurial literary marketplace. From the chamber of the preface, I suggest, these writers demonstrate the ways in which the novel, together with its preface, provides models for self-constructing, for engaging with history, and for reconceiving community during a time of rapid change.

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CONTENTS

Chapter One

Writing and Prefacing

This project began with a narratological question prompted by a reading of Lydia Maria Child's novel *Hobomok*. After finishing the novel's preface, in which an established literary editor recounts his efforts to help a young friend to write a New England novel, I wondered what purpose this heavily contrived scene was intended to serve. What prompted Child to diverge from the discursive mode followed by English eighteenth-century novelists in their prefaces, for example, and by her American contemporary, James Fenimore Cooper? And having decided to make her preface a narrative about the making of the novel, what prevented her from telling the *real* story of her novel's making--the story of a young woman without publishing connections printing a first novel out of her own pocket? Why did she choose fiction over autobiography? Before taking up these questions I must make a confession, though. Recently I told this story differently. In describing my project to a class of fellow graduate students who were reading early American literature I said that the idea for the project had come to me while rereading "The Custom-House" in preparation for my comprehensive exams. I can't remember, actually, when the idea began to form itself--perhaps while reading *The Scarlet Letter*, or perhaps some months later while reading *Hobomok*. In speaking to other graduate students I decided to associate my beginning with a resonant point in our common cultural experience. I told the class that I had started with a novel always on the reading list for the comprehensives. My fictional account masked a mildly subversive and, I hoped, appealing suggestion--that one can appropriate a task often thought of as a wearisome requirement for one's own purposes.

As I sit writing an account to introduce this study, I fix on a different beginning. I prefer to think that this project began with a reading of *Hobomok.* For now I am a writer speaking to other writers. It makes sense to appeal to our common experience of writing. Referring to Child's narrative allows me to associate my endeavor with the successful attempt of an unknown female writer to put forward her first long work. In addition, recounting--or reinventing--the questions that occurred to me as I read Child's preface for the first time enables me to express obliquely the anxiety that underlies the writing of a first work. In asking why she needed to mask herself I can allude to my own desire for a cover. These two narratives have served as my "necessary fictions"[1] under differing exigencies defined by audience.

This study is an exploration of the work of three American writers who used the preface to speak to their audiences about writing and culture. These writers recognized that the preface preceding a novel or story provides an alternative zone of contact with the reader from the zones afforded by the main narrative. In their prefaces they demonstrate both a desire to represent the experience of writing and a need to shape that representation to the exigencies defined by their audiences. Their prefaces reveal, in a more direct way than their novels and stories, social and cultural pressures weighing on their writing, as well as strategies for both engaging and resisting those pressures. The three writers I have chosen to examine--Lydia Maria Child, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James--together represent the span in American literary history between the emergence of professional authorship in the Jacksonian era and the beginning of the modernist period. The prefaces explored here compose a narrative of managing authorial risk within a changing culture. From the 1820s to the early 1900s, a period when the *making* of things--the nation, manufactured products, individual identities--was of prime concern, we see in the

[1] Edward Said points out the arbitrariness of reflecting on a beginning. "Because [the beginning] cannot truly be known," he observes, "because it is what has always been left behind, . . . it is therefore something of a necessary fiction" (77).

prefaces of Child, Hawthorne, and James a growing willingness to expose the writing process and to consider writing as a form of production comparable to other American productive endeavors.

American fiction writers of the nineteenth century contended with strong resistances from their surrounding cultures. As Protestant New England novelists Child, Hawthorne, and James wrote in the shadow of Puritan orthodoxy, which held the creation of fictional worlds to be a blasphemous encroachment upon God's creative powers. Contemporary clergy saw the novel as a threat to their own "self-proclaimed role as the primary interpreters of American culture," and consequently inveighed against the novel's radical potential to create social disorder" (Davidson 42-43). Literary critics, on the other hand, warned that the novel encouraged "social passivity, withdrawal, and global discontent" (Baym *History* 17). The authors of the works explored in this study addressed these pressures and hedged against risk through their prefaces; from spaces external to their novels and stories they mediated with the forces opposing their writing endeavors. Through their mediations they strove to fulfill three purposes--to win authority for themselves as authorial figures, to direct the reading of the works their prefaces put forward, and to demonstrates the social and cultural uses of their texts.

We might expect Child, Hawthorne, and James, as white writers with deep roots in the commercially driven Protestant culture of the northeast, to have an ingrained sense of entitlement to participate in that region's growing literary market. Yet the letters, notebooks, and biographies of these writers show that each of them struggled with isolation and self-doubt. Child, for example, confided in mid-career in a letter to Rufus Wilmot Griswold that she had lived "almost entirely removed from literary influences" before the writing of *Hobomok* and that, upon presenting the first chapter of the novel to her brother, a Unitarian minister and Boston intellectual, had

been met with the question "But Maria did you *really* write this? Do you *mean* what you say, that it is entirely your own?" (Meltzer and Holland 232). If we consider this incident as a context for the writing of *Hobomok*, it is not difficult to understand why, when the time came for Child to write the preface to her novel, she chose to disguise herself as an established male editor giving encouragement and assistance to a younger male friend.

Hawthorne's letters also reveal a sense of marginality. Although he was a descendant of prominent Salemites, Hawthorne seems in his private writing more conscious of his immediate circumstances as a poor relation forced by his father's death and his mother's reclusiveness to take shelter in his uncle's home. In spite of his ample production of stories during the decade following his graduation from Bowdoin College, he was far less socially active than Child, his contemporary. In a letter to Longfellow he describes the secluded life he has been living: "I have made a captive of myself and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out--and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. . . . For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed about living" (CE XV 252). The fear of leaving the "dungeon" described in this letter helps to explain Hawthorne's dependence on the image of the house in his prefaces to both shelter and organize his efforts at self-representation.

Even James, a male child of well-to-do parents, felt a lack of identity and place resulting from his family's constant movements and his father's abstract pursuits. In his autobiography, written toward the end of his life, he recalls the difficult recognition that "the head of our little family was *not* in business. . . . Such had never been the case with the father of any boy of our acquaintance; the business in which the boy's father gloriously *was* stood forth inveterately as the very first note of our comrade's impressiveness. *We* had no note of that sort to produce" (A 278). If we

consider James's scenes of inspiration and labor in his prefaces and his constant attention to the technique of writing we see that, even at the height of his career, James struggled hard to produce a "note" that would resound impressively in a culture where he saw hard work, ingenuity, and productivity being valued at the expense of sensibility and aesthetics.

Winning authority, then, even for American writers of privileged background, was a challenge that prompted the writers studied here to invent special protective strategies when representing themselves in their prefaces. The challenge of gaining authority caused these writers to look to narratives "larger" than their own to attract the attention of their readers.[2] Child and Hawthorne place the story of the New England founding at the center of their prefaces and introduce ancestral figures and invented artifacts to ground and authenticate their historical fictions. Following the classical directive that authors present a modest demeanor in their prefaces, they also pay deference to their literary forebears. This convention serves them well, as it gives them the opportunity to associate their works with the productions of venerated Puritan clergy, historians, and public officials as well as the works of Scott and Cooper. James refers to American narratives of founding and building more obliquely, but clearly with the same agenda in mind. The prefaces of the New York Edition are an homage to the values and processes behind the building of the American nation. We see James conducting his own revolution of separation and reconstitution and subsequently dedicating himself to producing work for an ever-expanding marketplace. He also turns the convention of modesty to his advantage, although in a different way from Child and Hawthorne. Writing his prefaces at the end of a long and successful career, he can point to his own achievement in lieu of paying deference to the literary accomplishments of others.

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[2] Writers from Hesiod on, Kevin Dunn notes in his study of Renaissance prefaces, have sought to establish "the author's power . . . by finding a link to a larger narrative," by "situating [themselves] in relation to earlier representations of the 'master text'" (19).

Nineteenth-century American readers familiar with the prefaces to English eighteenth-century novels were accustomed to receiving direct guidance from the author on what use to make of the text that followed. They were urged, however ironically, to avoid letting the pleasures of the story overtake the novel's instructional effects.[3] The American writers studied here followed their predecessors' leads in using the preface to guide the reading of the work. But they sought to influence their readers indirectly. Rather than address the reader discursively they pose scenarios in their prefaces that demonstrate ways of reading to apply in the work that follows. Once prompted to look for Child beneath the covering mask of the male editor in the preface, for example, we search for her beneath the masks of the characters in the novel. Although linking author and individual characters is a risky enterprise in interpreting a novel, in *Hobomok* there are deep and significant connections between the young Mary Conant, the central character of the work, and Child herself that provide crucial information about Child's historical perspective. If we search for the same narrator's persona in *The Scarlet Letter* that we encounter in "The Custom-House," however, we falter. The engaging authorial figure in "The Custom-House" who shares with us his professional dilemmas and his views of government service gives way in *The Scarlet Letter* to a remote narrator of ambiguous sympathies. "The Custom-House" directs our reading in a different way, by bracing us for the difficult experiences of the novel. The guillotined Surveyor instructs us, through the rendering of his own perceptions and experiences, in the dynamics of freedom and community, and thus prepares us to endure and evaluate the grim proceedings of the novel that follows. James provides the most explicit model for reading in his prefaces. He asks that we watch him in the process of rereading his novels and stories

[3] Defoe and Richardson claim in their prefaces that their novels respond to the call of the age to instruct as well as to delight. They argue, no doubt ironically, that, in portraying the flaws of their characters as vividly as possible, making "the wicked part . . . as wicked as the real history will bear" (Defoe vi) and using "*instantaneous* Descriptions and Reflections" (Richardson xx), they are guiding each reader to repentance.

and that we participate in his responses as he reads. He asks, too, that we assimilate the scenes of conceiving and writing that his rereading generates, as a way of enriching our own reading once we begin each work.

In their efforts to guide the reading of their works Child, Hawthorne, and James make the narrow space of the preface into an antechamber where they can rehearse before the reader scenes that will be reenacted in the subsequent novel or story. Gerard Genette speaks of the preface in spatial terms in his study of the "paratext"--the elements of the work that stand outside the work, such as the author's name, the title, the preface, the illustrations, and so forth:

> The paratext is then for us that by which a text makes itself a book and proposes itself as such to its readers, and more generally to the public. More than a limit or an impervious frontier, it is a threshold, or--as Borges says about the preface--a vestibule that offers to all the possibility of entering, or of turning back. It is a "zone of uncertainty" between inside and outside without strict limit, neither toward the inside (the text) or the outside (the world's discourse about the text), an edge, or, as Philippe Lejeune says, "the fringe of the printed text, which, in reality, controls the whole reading."[4]

Genette defines the preface by describing it as a threshold and, borrowing from Borges, a vestibule. Genette views the preface as a passageway, a space that the reader moves through--or turns back from. The writers studied here enlarge this view of the preface. They give their prefaces settings, and in this way turn a passageway into a full-sized room, a space where writer and reader can linger long enough for events to occur that, to use Genette's terms, control "the whole reading" of the work that follows. In the preface to Child's *Hobomok*, for example, the editor's study becomes a site where an ambitious young writer enlists the aid of a literary patron in an interchange that provides a model of cooperation against which the interchanges of

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[4] The translation is my own. The original text reads as follows: "Le paratexte est donc pour nous ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs, et plus généralement au public. Plus qu d'une limite ou d'une frontière étanche, il s'agit ici d'un *seuil*, ou--mot de Borges, à propos d'une préface--d'un 'vestibule' qui offre à tout un chacun la possibilité d'entrer, ou de rebrousser chemin. 'Zone indécise' entre le dedans et le dehors, elle-même sans limite rigoureuse, ni vers l'intérieur (le texte) ni vers l'extérieur (le discours du monde sur le texte), lisière, ou, comme disait Philippe Lejeune, 'frange du texte imprimé qui, en réalité, commande toute la lecture" (Genette 7).

the novel can be considered. In "The Old Manse," through the narration of his seasonal activities Hawthorne transforms his home into a common domestic space, a place where American notions of community, and the writer-reader relationship in particular, can be reconceived before the reader enters the main text. In his prefaces to the New York Edition James recreates his moments of inspiration and labor in New York, Paris, and Florence, causing the reader to witness the work of writing in the same way that she witnesses the social action of the novels. In all of these instances, the preface is a space where social exchange is enacted dramatically. As Genette asserts, the preface is "a zone not only of transition, but of *transaction*."[5] Why are such transactions necessary? Why should an author need to create a zone outside the main text in which to engage with the reader? Writers need the preface because they do not write inside a sociocultural vacuum. They need a mediating space where they can negotiate with the pressures and resistances of the surrounding culture.

This study can also be regarded as an investigation of three phases of the writing life--initiation, public emergence, and reassessment. The moment I have chosen to examine in each writer's career corresponds with a significant point in the growth of the American literary world. In composing *Hobomok* during the early 1820s Lydia Maria Child made her initiation into novel-writing at a time when the market for American novels was on the verge of great expansion. Chapter Two is an exploration of this initiatory novel and the circumstances of its writing through the lens of the novel's preface. To make this study it was necessary to discard the notion that preface and novel are discrete entities. The preface to *Hobomok* is a template for the novel. The relationship of doubles in the preface that both expresses and contains Child's literary aspirations and anxieties is repeated in a construction of double narrators within the novel who work dynamically toward a synthesis of historical and

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[5] The translation is my own. The original text reads as follows: "une zone non seuleument de transition, mais de transaction" (Genette 7).

imaginative perspectives on New England experience. The doubling continues in the main narrative; each character has his or her opposite whose presence intensifies that figure's fictional and historical resonance. Most often foregrounded as a novel about racial tension, *Hobomok* is also rife with intergenerational conflicts that reflect the Jacksonian era's anxieties over Puritan and Revolutionary achievements. We read these conflicts against the harmonious collaborations between writer and patron in the preface and the two narrators of the main text and feel confident in the ideals underlying these figures' efforts. Yet the model of cooperation set forth in the preface breaks down in the improbably amicable negotiation between Englishman and Indian for the hand of Mary Conant at the end of the novel–a negotiation that erases the Indian hero from the landscape. While the preface to *Hobomok* is a powerful lens for understanding Child's historical perspective and her ambivalences about writing, the ideals the preface sets forth are inadequate to resolving through fiction the problems of racial and religious difference explored in the novel.

In writing *Mosses from an Old Manse* and *The Scarlet Letter* Nathaniel Hawthorne emerged as a major literary figure just as publishers were strengthening their capacity to reach a national market. Chapter Three explores a range of Hawthorne's works from the middle phase of his career, 1838 to 1851, in which the preface operates as a vehicle for this writer's emergence. Hawthorne's use of prefatory essays to introduce *Mosses from an Old Manse* and *The Scarlet Letter* developed out of a continual experimentation with frameworks to shape his collections of stories and give them unity. These framing texts and prefaces serve a parallel purpose of sheltering Hawthorne's increasingly revealing representations of creative process and constructions of an authorial persona. To ground and authenticate these representations Hawthorne locates them within actual structures of historical and social importance to New England readers. Within these textual spaces he works at devising

a viable public function for the American novelist. In "Legends of the Province-House," a collection of framed stories, through a contemporary narrator who links Boston's present with its past in the framing texts, Hawthorne asserts the power of storytelling to fortify the post-revolutionary generation by engaging it in the heroic work of founding. In the *Grandfather's Chair* series, in which Hawthorne turns from framing to prefacing, he reinforces the links between generations by insisting on a commonality of domestic experience. Hawthorne begins to address the perils of American authorship in the preface to *Rappaccini's Daughter*. His self-parody as an obscure French writer being half-heartedly reviewed by an American critic directs us to read the story itself as a rendering of the shifting realities and moral uncertainties of the contemporary literary world. The imperatives of authorship and citizenship fall into direct relation in the long prefatory essays culminating Hawthorne's search for a framework, "The Old Manse," and "The Custom House." When viewed as companion pieces, these essays comprise a two-part construction of a writer's life that reenacts the dynamic interplay going on between home and marketplace in antebellum America. Within these prefaces Hawthorne delineates a common ground where writer and reader can stand together, as his characters stand on the scaffold, and address in contemporary terms the problems that his fictional works unfold.

In assembling his collected works near the end of his career, Henry James publicly reevaluated his novels and stories in response to a publishing industry that was growing increasingly mercurial. Alarmed by declining royalties and the evaporation of serialisation opportunities, James conceived a two-part venture for regaining contact and influence with readers; he would return to America and write a book about it and he would compose a series of prefaces by which he might shape critical responses to his works. Chapter Four is an examination of James's prefaces to the New York Edition in relation to *The Golden Bowl*, which James was writing

during the time he was planning his two-part venture, and *The American Scene*, which James completed and published as he was working on the prefaces. The writing of *The Golden Bowl* and *The American Scene* comprised two complementary and prefatory acts to the writing of the prefaces to the New York Edition. A narrative about familial and marital relations, *The Golden Bowl* also treats, as subtext, a writer's contentions with a misapprehending audience. Maggie performs as a writer in the novel, mirroring James's self-representations in the prefaces. Indeed, the preface to *The Golden Bowl* is a theorizing of both Maggie's and James's devotion to action. Through Charlotte's underestimation of Maggie James vents his anger toward an audience of readers who he feels have denied his works their chance. Having shown the bitter side of his authorial experience obliquely in this novel, James could then safely proceed to compose a formal, public discussion of writing in his prefaces that addressed his readers without enmity. James makes the preface a place where creative ambition and process can be portrayed openly. In his prefaces James portrays his writing experience by means of his scenic method and thereby creates a writing consciousness that parallels the consciousnesses that operate at the center of his novels. The scenes of composition in the prefaces comprise a loosely structured narrative of inspiration, speculation, and dedicated labor that render writing a visible, and heroically productive activity. This narrative constitutes a model that James poses in answer to his unflattering critique of his homeland in *The American Scene*. America disrupts the processes of seeing and representing that are James's creative practice in the prefaces. America resists his attempts to penetrate its social world. Through its devotion to materialism America has opted for the short-cut, facilitated by money, as opposed to the long road, on which sensibility and aesthetics can be given play. In rebuking America for its arrears James poses his prefaces as an account and model of the long road completed.

Through their efforts to win authority for their works and to guide the reading of them through their prefaces, Child, Hawthorne, and James insist upon the necessity of fiction to American social and cultural life. Capitalizing on the parallel relationship drawn by domestic manuals of the early part of the century between reading and the "creation of character"[6] these writers place the chamber of the preface into correspondence with the domestic spaces of the middle class home. From this chamber they demonstrate the ways in which the novel, together with its preface, provides models for self-constructing, for engaging with history, and for reconceiving community during a time of rapid change. They give visibility and authenticity to the work of fiction writing, and transform the writer of fiction into an authoritative figure who speaks to readers in an exemplary and useful way.

[6] During the 1830s, Richard Brodhead notes, domestic manuals designated reading as one of the two principal activities of the middle class home, the other activity being "the creation of character through loving nurture" (44). See Brodhead 44-45.

Chapter Two

Reciprocating Intellects:

Double Prefacing in Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok*

> Hobomok was the first thing I ever attempted to write for print. I had for several years, until then, lived in the interior of Maine, almost entirely removed from literary influences. I [came] went to Watertown, Mass. where my brother, Dr. Francis, of Harvard University, was then settled as a Unitarian clergyman. Soon after I arrived there, one Sunday noon, I took up the N. American Review, and read Mr. Palfrey's review of Yamoyden, in which he eloquently described the adaptation of early N. England history to the purposes of fiction. I know not what impelled me; I had never dreamed of such a thing as turning author; but I siezed [sic] a pen, and before the bell rang for afternoon meeting I had written the first chapter, exactly as it now stands. When I showed it to my brother, my young ambition was flattered by the exclamation, 'But Maria did you *really* write this? Do you *mean* what you say, that it is entirely your own?' (Meltzer and Holland 232)

When Lydia Maria Child wrote this account in a letter to Rufus Wilmot Griswold she was forty-four years of age and at the height of her career as writer and reformer. Her correspondent was a well-known literary critic who was compiling an anthology, *Prose Writers of America*, which would include Child's work and would be published in the following year, 1847. In this story of the *donnée* of her first novel, Child betrays the sensitivity to the interdependencies of writers, critics, and editors that served her well throughout her writing career. Her muse, she diplomatically tells her current editor, was a literary critic, the Unitarian clergyman and historian, John Gorham Palfrey, and her first reader was her brother, Convers Francis, also a Unitarian clergyman and a Harvard graduate. That Child chose to take her brother's doubts about the chapter's authorship as fuel for her ambition rather than as condescension toward her gender demonstrates the confidence and energy with

which she approached writing, as well as other endeavors. "I know not how it is," she wrote Convers in 1838:

> but my natural temperament is such that when I wish to do anything I seem to have an instinctive faith that I can do it; whether it be cutting and making a garment, or writing a Greek novel. The sort of unconsciousness of danger arising from this is in itself a strength. Whence came it? I did not acquire it. But the "whence? how? whether?" of our inward life must always be answered, "From a mystery; in a mystery; to a mystery." (Holland and Meltzer, card 6, letter 138)

Child's account of the birth of *Hobomok* is the kind of story of creative initiative and authentication we love to hear. It serves the traditional conception of the writer as divinely inspired, as does her attribution in her letter to Convers of her will to "do" things. One might expect Child to have drawn on this experience in the preface to *Hobomok* as a way of exciting readers about her novel. But this was not the narrative that Child told in her preface in 1824. There is indeed a spirited young writer driven by the prospect of writing a new kind of work, a New England novel. But the writer is a young man. And the story runs differently. Before the man sets pen to paper he lays his idea out before a prominent editor friend. The editor instantly provides the prospective writer with the historical documents necessary to carry out his project. Upon completion the young man sets the manuscript on the desk of the editor, who reads it through once and then inscribes on it "Send it to the Printer."

It is interesting that, besides appropriating a male mask in this fiction of *Hobomok*'s beginning, Child foregrounds the routine, public aspects of writing--the project proposal, the enlistment of patronage, reviewing, and publication--when the romantic drama of the "real" story is so much more compelling. What purpose was this fiction intended to serve with the American reading public of the 1820s? And why did Child choose to withhold her own story? To seek answers to these questions we

must first look at the world from which Lydia Maria Child was emerging as well as the world to which she was seeking admittance.

The private writer in the letter to Griswold is a young single woman who has seemingly lived on the margins, first as companion to a married sister in a frontier town in Maine, then joining her brother and his family on the outskirts of Boston. Probably the copy of the *North American Review* belonged to Child's college-educated brother. The site of reading could easily have been his study, occupied at a time--Sunday midday--when a Unitarian minister would likely be absent. One begins to think of other overshadowed younger sisters--Virginia Woolf, for example, or Alice James--hungrily absorbing whatever intellectual sustenance their more advantaged brothers chose to share. Child's situation also resembles the circumstances of her male contemporaries Irving and Cooper, each of whom lived within the shadow of more established family members--Irving as "superior errand boy" to the family importing firm run by his brothers (Williams 124), and Cooper as the only surviving son of a man who was a town founder, a judge, and a U.S. congressman.

Convers Francis actively sought to bring his sister into his world. During Child's "exile" in Maine he encouraged her to read Johnson, Addison, Gibbon, Scott, Milton, and Shakespeare and carried on a lively correspondence with her, defending Milton against her accusation that he asserted too much "superiority" over women (Karcher 12-13). "To your early influence, by conversation, letters, and example," Child wrote to her brother in 1838, "I owe it that my busy energies took a literary direction at all" (Holland and Meltzer, card 6, letter 138). Other early influences enriched Child's political and cultural awareness. In her sister's home in Norridgewock, Maine, lawyers and judges met to argue the Maine statehood issue, a touchstone for contemporary debates over slavery. Child made frequent visits to

Abenaki and Penobscot Indian communities in the woods surrounding Norridgewock, where she encountered women whose physical strength and independence equaled men's and heard stories of Indian life that would feed her early fiction writing. The stimulation intensified when Child joined Convers' family in Watertown. There, she had free access to her brother's sizable library, as well as to the conversations of his eminent literary friends--among them, Emerson, Palfrey, and George Ticknor (Karcher 9-15). Thus, although Child portrays herself in her letter to Griswold as cut off from cultural influences when she began to write, biographical accounts suggest otherwise. As Karcher shows in her sensitive analysis of Child's early years, the "young ambition" that seemed to Child to spring out of nowhere had actually been germinating in rich ground.

There were other challenges to overcome besides those related to gender. Child belonged to a generation that experienced an unusual "psychic pressure" from its immediate forebears (Kammen 50). Post-revolutionary Americans felt an "imperative of filial obligation" to live up to the achievements of the nation's founders. Yet at the same time they saw themselves as "inferior in character and ability" (31). Writers in particular also struggled against a "residual Colonial mentality" among American readers (Davidson 50). In her 1846 letter to Griswold, Child describes, somewhat inaccurately, the literary scene of the early 1820s: "There were at that time scarcely any American books. Cooper's and Mrs. Sedgwick's had not appeared. I finished Hobomok in six weeks. Hasty, imperfect, and crude as it was, it excited a good deal of interest, under the then existing circumstances. Upon the strength of it, the Boston fashionables took me up, and made a 'little wee bit' of a lion of me" (Meltzer and Holland 232). Child misremembers the timing of Cooper's early successes, which she in fact refers to in the preface to *Hobomok*. *The Spy* had earned him the title of

the "American Scott" in 1821, and *The Pioneers* had sold 3,500 copies by noon on the day of its publication in 1823 (Bell 11-12) Nevertheless, Child's general picture conforms with the observations of literary historians. *Hobomok* was written on a cusp between scarcity and boom in American fiction-writing. While a scant one hundred novels had been published between 1789 and 1820 (Davidson vi), the industry would expand "tenfold" between 1820 and 1850, with Cooper starting to sell 40,000 volumes a year during the 1820s (Coultrap-McQuin 30; Davidson 17). The budding careers of Irving and Cooper "were symptomatic of emerging innovations in the financing and manufacture, and marketing of books and periodicals" (Bell 13) that would give these authors a national audience in exchange for "turning the literary work into a commodity" (17).

Child's novel was also poised on another cusp--the moment in women's writing when the sentimental novel, focused on the challenges leading up to a young woman's marriage decision, was giving way to domestic fiction focused on the experiences of older women in the home. As Cathy Davidson describes this shift, "the sentimental heroine [grew] up" (135). Complementing these subgenres was the ongoing production of women's historical writing, whose voluminousness, Nina Baym argues, "testifies powerfully to the inadequacy of current gender-based distinctions between the public and private spheres" (*History* 4). Both Baym and Mary Kelley have pointed to the circumscribed quality of these writers' ambition. Mary Kelley holds that women writers of this period were uncomfortable with exposure: "Their conflicted, often adverse reactions to their status as writers amounted to a recognition that fame, in particular fame in the literary marketplace, was not and was not supposed to be 'a woman's Paradise, yet'" (29). Judith Fetterley has taken issue with Kelley's assessment, having found in her own study of nineteenth-century

women's works "a considerable degree of comfort with the act of writing and with the presentation of themselves as writers" (5). This comfort was possible, she says, precisely because these women aimed at "less than art and lower than immortality" (6). Fetterley points to Baym's observation that writers of woman's fiction took a "practical approach" to writing: "The literary women conceptualized authorship as a profession rather than a calling, as work and not art" (*Woman's Fiction* 32). They saw themselves as "professionals making a product desired by their clients rather than artists making an object expressing their own genius and talent" (*Woman's Fiction* xvi).

Carolyn Karcher demonstrates in her biography that Child was comfortable with her writer's identity and, contrary to the writers Baym has studied, aimed high and was desirous of "immortality." Her identification with her elder brother, Karcher argues, saved her "from either the fear of unsexing herself or the paralyzing sense of inadequacy that inhibited so many other nineteenth-century writers" (16-17). She points to an 1832 essay titled "The First and Last Book," where Child asserts powerfully, in yet a third description of the writing of *Hobomok*, that her original writing impulse was felt as a calling to greatness in the romantic tradition:

> One remembers writing his first book as he recollects the first time he saw the ocean. Like the unquiet sea, all the elements of our nature are then heaving and tumultuous. Restless, insatiable ambition, is on us like a fiery charm. Every thing partakes of the brightness and boundlessness of our own hopes. . . . It then seems strange how mortals can *avoid* being intellectually great. . . .
>
> . . . We then write because we cannot help it--the mind is a full fountain that *will* overflow--and if the waters sparkle as they fall, it is from their own impetuous abundance. . . .
>
> . . . . .
>
> The last book, like the first, may indeed be written because we cannot help it: not that the full mind overflows--but the printer's boy stands at our elbow. We then look to bookseller's accounts for inspiration, hunt for pearls because we have promised to furnish them, and string glass beads because they will sell better than diamonds. (Karcher 101)

The aspiration to pursue unbounded hopes in the first book is recalled at a time when, as Karcher observes, Child was completing a "transformation" worked by the failure of her second novel, *The Rebels*, and the success of the writing with which she had created an American market for juvenile literature. By 1832, Karcher says, market responses and economic necessity had prompted Child to "redefine herself primarily as a woman writer, seeking moral influence and economic independence rather than intellectual greatness. . . . For the better part of the next fifteen years, domestic usefulness and social reform would replace literary ambition as the fulcrum of her creativity" (102). The muting of artistic ambition that Child underwent in the eight years following the publication of *Hobomok* makes this novel a compelling text to examine in reference to American women writers' self-conceptions. "Hasty, imperfect, and crude" as today's readers may find it, and as Child herself judged it, *Hobomok* calls for attention as a novel composed on the eve of the American Renaissance by an ambitious and creative woman who had not yet met with the constraining forces that would shape the writing of many contemporary women.

I do not mean to suggest that Child wrote uninhibitedly in this novel. The figures in her preface, the various narrative voices she constructs in the main text, and the pronouns in two of the three accounts of the novel's writing are male. Karcher asserts that Child "essentially thought of herself as a man" (101) and that the anxiety underlying Child's self-portrayal as male is not gender-driven but the anxiety of an American writer "seeking to demonstrate that *New* England's history offers as much scope as *Old* England's" (17). Child's choice in representing herself as a writer and later as a reformer, Karcher asserts, was "whether to consider herself a circumscribed woman or an honorary man" (215). Unlike her contemporaries, she chose the latter.[1]

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[1] This choice would arise as well in her political work during the 1830s, when Child expressed ambivalence toward sharing her considerable energy with separate women's antislavery

She dared to represent the author of her novel as one who is called to write, who dreams of an entirely original project. But mindful that few women had publicly owned aspirations toward greatness, literary or otherwise, she masked that author in a male persona. To use Child's terms, taken from her letter to Convers about her ability to "do" things, she was *both* conscious of and unconscious of danger. But the impulse to think of oneself as a man implies a deep-rooted sense of limitation in being female. And choosing to write through a male mask is not entirely liberatory, as female critics from Mrs. Gaskell onward have pointed out.[2] Child apparently felt free enough to think of herself as a man, but not free enough to write openly, that is, ambitiously, as a woman. And, although she may have thought of herself as carrying "the heart of a man imprisoned within a woman's destiny" (Karcher 82), it is important for us, as readers, to think of her as a woman, and to read her preface and her novel as multi-layered texts in which the male personae present what Susan Harris calls a "cover story," or "cultural overplot" (32), potentially disguising other stories that more closely reflect the writer's own cultural experience.

Male masking is not the only complicating feature of Child's representation of the writer in *Hobomok*. These male figures come in doubles. In the preface, as already noted, there are two literary men--one an established figure, presiding in a study, to whom a young male friend appears and confides a "new plan" of writing a New England novel. The mentor is taken aback: "'A novel!' quoth I--'when Waverly

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groups. For a discussion of Child's work with women in the antislavery movement see Karcher 214-48. Jean Fagan Yellin describes Child's conflicted state as that of "a free woman in a land of chains," a condition reflected in her polemical writing and her journalism through a tension "between the tones of the female supplicant and the tones of the woman who wills herself free" (76). See Yellin 53-76.

[2] The Brontes' "desire to appear male" caused "their writing to squint," Mrs. Gaskell observed (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 70). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar find "the metaphorical trousers" of Sand, Eliot, and the Brontes "as problematical if not as debilitating as any of the more modest and ladylike garments writers like [Anne] Finch and [Anne] Bradstreet might be said to have adopted. For a woman artist is, after all, a woman--that is her 'problem'--and if she denies her own gender she inevitably confronts an identity crisis as severe as the anxiety of authorship she is trying to surmount" (65-66).

is galloping over hill and dale, faster and more successful than Alexander's conquering sword? Even American ground is occupied. "The Spy" is lurking in every closet,--the mind is every where supplied with "Pioneers" on the land, and is soon likely to be with "Pilots" on the deep'" (3). The mentions of Scott and Cooper and the portrayal of writing as a glorious colonial enterprise only whet the young writer's enthusiasm. All the good territory may be taken, yet there remains a small corner he dreams of claiming: "I did not mean. . . that my wildest hopes, hardly my wildest wishes, had placed me even within sight of the proud summit which has been gained either by Sir Walter Scott, or Mr. Cooper. . . . Still, barren and uninteresting as New England history is, I feel there is enough connected with it, to rouse the dormant energies of my soul: and I would fain deserve some other epitaph than that 'he lived and died'" (3-4). Knowing that "under an awkward and unprepossessing appearance" the young friend conceals "more talents than the world was aware of" (4), the literary man supplies him with historical pamphlets to use in enlivening New England's history.

Had they been represented alone, neither of these men would have cut a strong figure. The young man is untried and hyperbolic. The narrator has an air of retrospectiveness of the kind that Emerson inveighs against in *Nature*. In dialogue, however, the two men complement and fortify each other. While questioning his young friend, the established literary man also authenticates the aspiring young writer by trusting in his talent and providing him with historical documentation. The young writer extends his mentor's vision by proposing to make a novel out of local history, and delivering that novel. Together the two men open up new territory for American literature. They also act out a cover story that both publicizes and legitimizes Child's

own literary anxieties and aspirations. Consider the rhetoric of the young writer when he delivers his manuscript to his mentor, six weeks after their initial consultation:

> "Seriously, Frederic, what chance is there that I, who so seldom peep out from the 'loop-holes of retreat,' upon a gay and busy world, can have written any thing which will meet their approbation? Besides, the work is full of faults, which I have talents enough to see, but not to correct. It has indeed fallen far short of the standard which I had raised in my own mind. You well know that state of feeling, when the soul fixes her keen vision on distant brightness, but in vain stretches her feeble and spell-bound wing, for a flight so lofty." (4)

"[T]hat state of feeling" that the writer describes--his vision of "distant brightness"--will be echoed in Child's account of the writing of *Hobomok* in "The First and Last Book," where she speaks of "the brightness and boundlessness of our own hopes" which spur writers on, causing them to write because they "cannot help it" (Karcher 101). The young writer also seems to speak for Child when he refers to the seclusion of his life, a possible cover for the sense of marginality that Child would later describe openly in her letter to Rufus Griswold. The mentor, too, stands in for Child. He not only voices American anxiety about the power of British writing, he also raises the fear that Cooper's achievements could crowd out the endeavors of other writers. The young author counters these warnings by claiming that he will not seek to climb as high as "Mr. Cooper," while at the same time asserting his desire for a literary epitaph. Through this fiction of a traditional writer and patron relationship Child opens a space where she can safely express her own ambitions and inhibitions. Within that space she uses the convention of deference to link her project with the work of the writers she defers to, and the convention of apology to hint at the constraints under which she works. Expressing her concerns in conventional form and in male disguise ensures that we will read her inhibitions ironically. They authenticate the project rather than undermine it. The conventions, the use of male masks, and the doubling of the

authorial voice reinforce for the reader the worthiness of the author. They also confirm the author's status and identity as described on the title page--"By an American." He is a man who is proving himself on the American literary frontier.

The identity of the author of *Hobomok* was quickly known around Boston. "Praises and invitations have poured in upon me, beyond my utmost hopes," Child wrote to her sister in Maine (Karcher 38). George Ticknor, professor of German literature at Harvard and one of the most powerful literary figures in Boston, made "flattering" remarks about the novel (Meltzer and Holland 3). Having begun *Hobomok* under circumstances far different from those presented in the novel's preface, Child approached Ticknor after the novel's publication in a letter that echoes the rhetoric and tone of the young writer in her preface. Child notes "the flattering observations" that a friend has passed on to her and says:

> no one who has been accustomed to the broad blaze of encouragement and patronage, can form the faintest idea of the impulse it gave to my mind. There is nothing in life like the beatings of pure, youthful ambition,--of a soul excited by praise and expanding over its own glorious visions. To have been praised by such a man was sufficient to urge me onto mightier efforts; and, under the influence of this inspiration. I had already commenced a new work, when a letter from my publisher informed me that the sale of Hobomok had left me considerably in debt. 1000 were printed and only half sold. (Meltzer and Holland 4)

Success had clearly emboldened Child. It had enabled her to step out from behind the male figures of her preface and present herself openly, to a member of the literary establishment, as a woman writer with "glorious visions." More concretely, it determined her to eliminate the debt she speaks of--a reference to printing costs--by engaging Ticknor's help in promoting the book. She is florid in introducing her request, but then proceeds forthrightly to the point:

> There are but few to whom we can make a frank avowal of disappointed hope, of a heart chilled and a mind prostrated by discouragement. To make such a disclosure to most men, would be like scattering the

> fragrance of the violet in the path of the hurricane. I will not use language, which, however sincere, your modesty might construe into idle flattery—suffice it to say, that all my associations with you[r] name are such as induce me to apply to you. You may ask, what do you wish, or expect me to do? I answer, your influence in the literary and fashionable world is very great, and a few words timely spoken by you would effect more than my utmost exertions. (Meltzer and Holland 4)

Instead of flattering Ticknor, Child focuses the attention on herself and asks Ticknor to take note of her condition--that of a frustrated artist, melodramatically described as "a mind prostrated by discouragement," whose dreams are like "the fragrance of the violet in the path of the hurricane." This strategy was successful. Ticknor arranged for extracts of scenes from *Hobomok* to be printed in the *North American Review* and he placed Child on the guest list for his literary soirees (Karcher 39). The gesture was "brash" for the times, as Karcher observes, and heedless of "feminine decorum" (39). At the same time it played out retroactively the fantasy of patronage Child had created in the preface to her novel. With a single letter she had commanded support, albeit after the fact, for her first project. The preface provided the script for how she wanted to be received.

Through its authentication strategies, the preface to *Hobomok* also prepared readers of the 1820s to accept the young male writer as the chief narrator of the novel. Without the mediation of the preface, readers would have had no means of identifying or locating the voice that opens the novel. This information is critical. For in the first sentence the young man, having been billed as "an American" on the title page, does no less than claim America for his own: "I never view the thriving villages of New England, which speak so forcibly to the heart, of happiness and prosperity, without feeling a glow of national pride, as I say, 'this is my own, my native land'" (5). In regarding the American landscape from a prospect the narrator follows a convention used by Timothy Dwight a generation earlier in his New England epic, *Greenfield*

Hill, and taken up by Irving at the opening of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*. The prospect generates creative energy and feeds ambition. Child's American hitches his writing endeavor to the "perfect Eden" that he sees flourishing in New England (5). This male narrator, authenticated as an American by the professional engagement dramatized in the preface, enables Child to do what, in Annette Kolodny's view, American women writers were unable to do until they reached the prairies--claim the land.[3] Here Child can also adopt the paradisal yearning that Kolodny argues was the province of male settlers in the New World (*Lay of the Land* 4-5). She finds, too, a way to adapt the pastoral fantasy of the New World to incorporate the achievements of an industrializing society. Although the narrator's emphasis is on the natural features he sees when he views the landscape, he does acknowledge urban centers as a necessary core to New England life: "A long train of associations are connected with her picturesque rivers, as they repose in their peaceful loveliness, the broad and sparkling mirror of the heavens,--and the cultivated environs of her busy cities, which seem every where blushing into a perfect Eden of fruit and flowers" (5). Within this sentence Child visualizes the development of New England as a continual, undisrupted process of growth that gives no hint of the Indian Wars and revolutionary conflict that have occurred in the intervening period. At the opening of *The Pioneers*, published a year before *Hobomok*, Cooper's narrator likewise condenses the development of a region as he regards panoramically the improvements made by the pioneers of central New York State and their yeoman children and anticipates further growth along the streams "favourable to manufacturing" (15-16). Child's and Cooper's method of

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[3] Kolodny has observed a delayed response in women settlers' interactions with the American landscape. Unable to participate in the male fantasy of the forested landscapes of the East as a "virginal paradise," she says, women applied their attention to domestic spaces and gardens. As they moved out to the "parklike prairies" of the Midwest, they found a landscape more hospitable to these concerns, and "women's public and private documents alike began to claim the new terrain as their own" (5). See Kolodny, *The Land Before Her* 3-7.

compressing the achievements of the past into a single vista is a way of tightening the links between America of the 1820s and moments of founding.

In the opening paragraphs of *Hobomok* the narrator grounds himself in New England's glorious present. Thus located, and supported by the pamphlets with which his mentor has supplied him, he is now entitled to speak about New England's past. His first task is to re-enliven that subject for his readers. He has referred to it as "barren and uninteresting" in the preface, a response that Lawrence Buell notes was a common feeling among nineteenth-century New England intellectuals (204-205). Now he must erase that observation and re-inscribe a more compelling image. In the defense of the Puritans that follows, Child's narrator seeks to mediate between centuries, acknowledging contemporary responses while striving to draw his audience closer to the ethos of the past:

> To us indeed, most of the points for which they so strenuously contended, must appear exceedingly absurd and trifling; and we cannot forbear a smile that vigorous and cultivated minds should have looked upon the signing of the cross with so much horror and detestation. But the heart pays involuntary tribute to conscientious, persevering fortitude, in what cause soever it may be displayed. (6)

The narrator's effort to engage the reader in a topic generally considered "drab" (Buell 204) culminates in his relation of the conventional "accidental" discovery of an "old, worn-out manuscript" written by an ancestor, from which he promises to draw "varying tints of domestic detail" to warm the "deep shadows" and elaborate on the "bold outlines" of the Puritan character in his narrative. Bolstered by a blood connection to an eyewitness, he will take the role not only of mediator, but also of translator of his ancestor's "antiquated and almost unintelligible style" (7). Having thus authenticated himself, the narrator now seeks to make himself essential to the reader as a guide in penetrating the obscurity of the past. These opening paragraphs of *Hobomok* comprise a second preface, one that draws upon the conventions used by

writers of epic in their invocations. The narrator's association of his project with the rise of white New England culture resembles Timothy Dwight's linkage of his poetic enterprise in his epic poem "Greenfield Hill" with the Indian wars and revolutionary struggles preceding the founding of the republic. Likewise, the narrator's mediative role between the Jacksonian and Puritan eras recalls Dwight's role as minister/writer casting back to the origin's of his congregation's village and forward into its future. Child rewrites the role of her poet predecessor, borrowing from the mission of the epic writer to authenticate the writing of fiction.

Here, the beginning of *Hobomok* begins to resemble a segmented frame. Already we have moved from the encounter between potential novelist and patron in the preface to the novelist's invocation and survey of New England history in the opening pages. At the end of this "second preface" the narrator introduces his fictitious ancestor and we move immediately into the ancestor's historical account, which comprises the main narrative and is set in quotation marks even though the narrator claims to have substituted his own "expressions" for much of the original language. At this point, then, as in the first preface, the narration is built upon the dynamic interplay of doubles, in this instance two male narrators--ancestor and descendant--apparently speaking out of two different centuries. The contrast between voices is striking. Whereas the nineteenth-century descendant, the "American," has been able in his ode to New England past and present to locate himself confidently, and precisely, in space and time, the seventeenth-century ancestor, who has just arrived off the shore of the newly settled village of Naumkeak, has no coordinates:

> I was in a new world, whose almost unlimited extent lay in the darkness of ignorance and desolation. Earth, sea, and air, seemed in a profound slumber,--and not even the dash of the oar broke in upon their silence. A confusion of thoughts came over my mind, till I was lost and bewildered in their immensity. The scene around me owed nothing of its unadorned beauty to the power of man. He had rarely

> been upon these waves, and the records of his boasted art were not found in these deserts. I viewed myself as a drop in the vast ocean of existence, and shrunk from the contemplation of human nothingness. Thoughts like these flitted through my mind, till they were lost in dreaming indistinctness. The glittering forehead of the sun was just visible above the waves when I awoke. The wind being fair, the sails were soon spread, and our vessel passed through the waters with a rapid and exhilarating motion. (7)

In the evening light the landscape of the New World is vacant and inactive. The ancestor does not seek to defend himself, and the reader, against the self-annihilating power of vacancy by enumerating what is not there, as William Bradford does in his account of the original arrival at Plymouth: "Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation . . ., they had now no freinds to wellcome them, nor inns to entertaine or refresh their weatherbeaten bodys, no houses or much less townes to repaire too, to seeke for succoure" (59-60). Nor does he seek to impose on the landscape the kind of paradisal fantasy that Annette Kolodny has found in much of American discovery writing. Rather, he allows himself to give way. With no natural features or movement to reflect upon, the ancestor begins to lose his sense of self in "the contemplation of human nothingness." Irving's narrator in *The Sketch Book*, as he sails to Europe, experiences "[t]he vast space of waters" separating the hemispheres as "a blank page in existence," but he has the comforting knowledge of "the bustle and novelties" of the old world awaiting him on the other side (11). Encountering only vacancy on the American shoreline, Child's ancestor falls into a dream state.

Instead of drawing upon recorded views of the American landscape, Child practices, through a fictitious Puritan ancestor, a way of seeing that anticipates visionary moments that occur at the end of novels by Poe and Melville. Child's "new world," as presented here, at the beginning of her novel, is shrouded in "ignorance

and desolation," and is bewildering in its immensity. It has no potential. The apparent absence of human life does not offer the compensating sense of incorporation with "the Universal Being" that Emerson celebrates in *Nature* when he describes standing on the "bare ground" and looking up into "infinite space" (10). Rather, Child's vision suggests the vacancy and vastness regarded by Ishmael at the end of *Moby Dick*: "Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago" (469). One feels that, out of the ancestor's "confusion of thoughts" and the shrinking of self to "a drop in the vast ocean of existence" that leads to a contemplation of "human nothingness," a mystical vision could arise, something like the immense white human figure that appears to A. Gordon Pym as he is borne into a chasm at the end of his voyage: "And now we rushed into the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us. But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow" (882).

What is the difference between the clearing of space and the potential erasure of the narrator at the beginning of a novel and at its end? In his characterizations of "religious man," Mircea Eliade discusses the need to return annually to the time of creation through rituals in which, first, the past year and past time are abolished and "the sins and faults of the individual and of the community as a whole are annulled," and then man is symbolically reborn into a newly created world (78). If we consider the vision of Child's ancestor as a kind of cosmogonic ritual, we see that the full cycle set forth by Eliade is enacted. The ancestor's arrival in New England implicitly dissolves the connection with Old England and releases the ancestor from its

intolerance and corruption. The ancestor falls into a liminal state, a kind of amnesia in which both the physical world and his own sense of self begin to disappear. Sleep intervenes, and when the narrator awakens at sunrise, the world has been remade with a new distinctness. Now the narrative of the ancestor's new life in Puritan New England at the time of its origin can begin. Writing in succeeding decades, Melville and Poe will use cosmogonic ritual differently. Their scenes of vacancy terminate accounts of voyages that have carried their narrators immeasurable distances from the familiar life of New England into more abstract realms with ever fewer reference points. New Bedford social structures and a New Bedford sense of time are gradually eroded. The narratives chronicle the first phase of the re-creation ritual, that is, the disconnection from and erasure of the past. But neither writer fulfills the whole cosmogonic cycle. The scene of vacancy at the end of each work suspends the cycle, leaving the work of re-creation to the reader's imagination.

Although pledged to the calling of art and to the fullest exercise of imaginative power, Child chooses to keep her narrative framed within history, rather than to discard history, as Poe and Melville will do. In essence, the visionary ancestor and the historian descendant in the opening chapter of *Hobomok* stand for two different ways of seeing practiced in the novel. Through the descendant's perspective Child views her subject historically and from an "evolutionary" standpoint, looking back, like the liberal historians of her own era, from the "enlightened present" at an "inferior" colonial past (Buell 203). Through her commitment to historical writing she ensures for herself a prominent social role: "Until the millennium released individuals from history," Nina Baym observes:

> historical memory placed [women] in the flow of world drama and gave their lives universal significance. Women yearning to be part of the pageant joyfully assumed the burden of learning to remember what was not to be forgotten until the end of time, especially joyfully

> because the story placed them--Protestant American women--at the very vanguard of historical progress. (*History* 46-47)

But even while retaining her stake in "the pageant," through the ancestor's secular and atemporal vision Child clears a space for imaginative play, and hence for the beginning of the central narrative, in which, as Carolyn Karcher points out, she manipulates historical accounts imaginatively to construct a new version of the Puritan experience.[4] As in the original preface, the two male figures of the second preface, and their two ways of seeing, reinforce each other. Alone, the voice of the descendant/historian is too oratorical for a novel. Yet the descendant's presence as editor and translator of the Puritan text makes the imaginative realm of the ancestor accessible to us. It both foregrounds and contains the imaginative voice. The doubling of narrators also enables Child, as a historical writer, to be present in two different moments--at the birth of the culture about which she is writing, and at its present flowering.

Besides reinforcing each other, the two narrators also extend the masking function performed by the male patron and writer in the first preface. They provide a structure through which Child can continue to represent dynamically both her own assertiveness and her hesitation as a writer. As we have seen, Chapter One opens with a surge of confidence expressed through the descendant's historical commentary. His authoritative tone assures us that he knows who he is, culturally speaking, and that both he and the culture are on the ascendant. This is a stance that Child, as a novice writer nurtured in the culture of liberal Unitarian Boston, should be entitled to take. But when the descendant introduces the ancestor, confidence gives way to disorientation and hesitation. We have seen how the ancestor finds no familiar

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[4] A comparison of Child's version of the early days of Salem with the accounts of her historical sources, Karcher says, shows a deliberate effort on Child's part to highlight the "underside" of the Puritan experiment and to "[shift] the focus from the saints to the sinners, from the orthodox to the heterodox, from the white settlers to the Indians, from the venerated patriarchs to their unsung wives" (23).

reference points in his first view of the new world. He looks anxiously at the landscape in the way that a writer faces a blank page. This anxiety recurs at the end of Chapter One. After supping on meager rations with the Conant family, the central characters of the novel, and sampling the doctrinal tensions between two Plymouth outcasts Roger Conant and John Oldham, the ancestor steps out-of-doors to commune again with the landscape, and embarks on the following reverie:

> As I stood gazing on the reflection of the moon, which reposed in broken radiance on the bay beyond, I tried to think soberly of the difficulties to which I and my oppressed brethren were exposed, and to decide how far I could conscientiously purchase peace and prosperity by conforming to the mummeries which my soul detested. Human weakness prompted me to return [to England], and again, when I had most decidedly concluded to stay in New England, the childish witchery of Mary Conant would pass before me, and I felt that the balance was weighed down by earthly motives. I looked out upon the surrounding scenery, and its purity and stillness were a reproach upon my inward warfare. The little cleared spot upon which I was placed, was everywhere surrounded by dark forests, through which the distant water was here and there gleaming, like the fitful flashes of reason in a disordered mind; and the trees stood forth in all the beauty of that month which the Indians call the "moon of flowers." By degrees the tranquil beauty of the scene, and the mysterious effect of the heavenly host performing their silent march in the far-off wilderness of light, called up the spirit of devotion within me;--and at that moment, forgetful of forms, I knelt to pray that my heart might be kept from the snares of the world. (12)

Just as Child will show in her novel a mixed attitude toward the Puritan way of life, the ancestor is ambivalent about the subject of his narrative, the Naumkeak community. Nature is a stronger influence on his emotions and his train of thought than is the theology that binds the world in which he has just arrived. The moon oversees his internal debate, and the flashing of the water through the trees reflects "the fitful flashes of reason in [his] disordered mind." These are the forces that call up "the spirit of devotion" and prompt a prayer, which in a passive and self-referential mode, "forgetful of forms," asks for protection from no named source. The narrator's

capacity to find divine power in nature, to experience Emersonian correspondences between nature and spirit, betrays him as a nineteenth-century man in seventeenth-century clothing In addition, this private moment stolen from communal life speaks resonantly about the turning away from social "forms," as well as the reflection, hesitation, and gathering of strength that precede a writing endeavor. In these ways the ancestor masks both Child's spiritual sensibility and her mental process as a beginning writer.

Having referred to the compelling "witchery" of the young Mary Conant, the heroine of the novel, the ancestor immediately becomes a witness to that witchery as Mary emerges from the house and goes into the woods to perform a pre-marital ritual by inscribing a circle in the ground and reciting a chant that asks to know the identity of her future husband. Before she begins the ritual she performs a melodramatic version of the act of writing: "Taking a knife from her pocket, she opened a vein in her little arm, and dipping a feather in the blood, wrote something on a piece of white cloth, which was spread before her" (13). The ceremonial conjunction of the knife, the feather, and Mary's blood prefigures the triangle that Mary will form with two young men, the Englishman Charles Brown and the Wampanoag Indian Hobomok and the mingling of cultures that Child will envision by means of that triangle. This ritual act also identifies and initiates Mary as a writer; she draws her own blood to write upon a white sheet. This scene marks the third and last in a series of commitments to writing in the opening of *Hobomok*. It reenacts privately and subversively the young writer's public commitment to his project in the preface, and the ancestor's awakening into narrative as he arrives on New England's shore. It forms a bridge between the two male narrators and the novel's female protagonist. They are all three writers, masking in different ways their creator's complex responses

to the experience of writing within New England culture. This is the last time we encounter the ancestor's voice speaking in the first person. At this point the people of Naumkeak take center stage in a third-person narration that is more fictional than historical in that it makes us privy to the thoughts of the characters as well as to their actions and gives us entry to Hobomok's wigwam as well as Naumkeak village. Only at intervals does the descendant/editor break the narration with an interjection like "the manuscript states," following it with a brief quotation to show us the quaintness of his ancestor's phrasing and spelling.

We have now seen that the preface to *Hobomok* and the novel itself are not discrete entities. The preface is a template for the text. Child continues to mask and to double in the second preface in order to devise a narrative stance that synthesizes historical and imaginative writing and thus temporarily resolves conflicts evident in the original preface. She also continues to use these techniques in the main narrative. Every major character, for example, has a double whose presence dynamically intensifies that character's fictional and historical resonance. Here again, within each relation between doubles, Child foregrounds cultural problems. These problems become complicated through the operation of the two figures within the larger narrative, that is, through their interactions with other doubled characters. Using this dynamic interplay Child works at representing cultural transition. She proves her assertions in the first and second prefaces that New England is a worthwhile subject for a novel. At the same time, through the experiences of her protagonist, Mary Conant, who serves as the authorial mask in the main narrative, she puts forth a new version of New England's past that foregrounds figures marginalized by historians--self-effacing Puritan wives, dominated daughters, and Indians (Karcher 23). In this second effort she doubles the weight of her original impulse. Not only does she claim

New England's uncharted literary territory, she also makes that territory a place where experiences of the undocumented and questions those experiences generate can be brought to light.

The novel that the editor of the preface can so quickly dispatch for publication tells the story of Mary Conant, a young woman raised in England by a cultured, artistocratic grandfather, who is sent out to Plymouth Colony to nurse her dying mother. Mary struggles to find companionship and stimulation in the bleak settlement of Naumkeak (soon to be renamed Salem), where her father has retreated in company with a small number of other colonists as the result of disagreements over governance at Plymouth. Mary finds some consolation with Sally Oldham, the witty and flirtatious daughter of Roger Oldham, another Plymouth renegade. But she forms her deepest bonds with two men—Charles Brown, who has come out to the colony to establish the Episcopalian Church in New England, and Hobomok, a Wampanoag Indian, who is serving the colony as interpreter and mediator with local Indian tribes. Conant, Oldham, and Hobomok were figures familiar to Child and her readers through common New England histories.[5] Mary's first allegiance is to Brown; they make plans to marry and return to England, but Brown is suddenly expelled from the colony for celebrating the Episcopalian communion. Mary languishes through a New England winter, taking comfort from the attentions of Hobomok, who brings her venison and talks to her about Indian life. Then crisis erupts: Mary's mother dies, and word comes that Charles has been lost at sea. Unable to cope with her grief and the harshness of her doctrinaire father, Mary escapes to Hobomok's wigwam and offers herself to him in marriage. Ostracized by family and community, Mary lives for several years with Hobomok and their small son on the outskirts of what is by now

[5] The controversies prompting Conant's and Oldham's departures from Plymouth, for example, are described in Hubbard 90-109.

Salem. After a long imprisonment on the coast of Africa, Charles returns for Mary. Encountering Hobomok in the woods, he learns of the marriage and offers to withdraw without seeing her. But Hobomok defers to Charles and himself withdraws into the wilderness, after having a divorce document drawn up. Charles and Mary marry, are reunited with the community, and live at Salem with Mary and Hobomok's son in a family configuration that illustrates Child's view of assimilation as a way of coping with racial difference. On the strength of a legacy from Mary's English grandfather, Charles Hobomok Conant proceeds to Harvard and to further education in England.

It is not surprising that critics of *Hobomok* have given extensive attention to the white-Indian marriage at the center of the novel. *Hobomok*'s status as the first antebellum novel "to give any kind of support for miscegenation" (Buell 234), along with the troubling "resolution" of the plot through Hobomok's disappearance into the western wilderness after surrendering his wife to a former white lover, have provided ample grist for analysis.[6] Critical emphasis on Child's first engagement with the problem of white-Indian relations is also warranted by the social reform work to which Child devoted most of the remainder of her life. As Carolyn Karcher has observed, Child followed "a consistent pattern of dramatizing social wrongs in her fiction before arguing against them in her reason" (213). Significantly, and appropriately, given her young age when she wrote *Hobomok*, Child chose to dramatize the problem of intolerance in New England society through the framework of intergenerational relations. As a novel about racial intermarriage *Hobomok* is also a novel about the intergenerational tensions and conflicts that inhibit choice and obstruct change. Child presents this concern in the two prefaces, where she establishes models of

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[6] See Karcher 30-33; Maddox 98-103; Person 668-85; Smith 52-53; Baym, *American Women Writers* 158-60.

intergenerational cooperation. Although the patron smiles at the young writer's naive ambition of writing a novel, he joins in the endeavor, providing the resources the young man needs to achieve his goals. And, while the young writer/descendant smiles at his ancestor's antique phrasing in his manuscript, he collaborates respectfully with the ancestor, giving him full credit for the material while altering the language to make his forebear's narrative more accessible to contemporary readers.

Juxtaposed with these models are the tense relations between the generations in the main narrative. Here, the older generation brooks no difference and no experimentation. Young women are castigated for expressing their sexuality; young men are cursed and expelled from the community for pursuing their own form of religious truth. These tensions are heightened through doubling. Roger Conant and John Oldham, two staunch renegades from Plymouth, and their eligible but rebellious daughters, Mary Conant and Sally Oldham stand on opposite sides in these conflicts. Although Conant and Oldham have been cast out of Plymouth Colony and are hence themselves marginal to the community, they strive to retain patriarchal authority at home. Conant is a classic Puritan progenitor. He is austere and judgmental, and cannot make an observation without forming a biblical typology around it.[7] When his daughter Mary eagerly questions the crew of a newly arrived ship about her beloved England, her father chides her with:

> [E]ncamped as you are in Elim, beside palm-trees and fountains, you are no doubt looking back for the flesh-pots of Egypt. You'd be willing enough to leave the little heritage which God has planted here, in order to vamp up your frail carcase in French frippery. But I would have you beware, young damsel. Wot ye not that the idle follower of Morton, who was drowned in yonder bay, was inwardly given to the vain forms of the church of England?--and know ye not, that was the reason his God left him, and Satan became his convoy? (9)

[7] For a Bakhtinian analysis of Puritan discourse in the novel see Marshall.

Conant is the first character we encounter in the novel, and this censure of his daughter's inquisitiveness is his first speech. Its heat and rancor contrast starkly with the ancestor's sympathetic description of Mary, which precedes it. Conant's allusion to his daughter's body as a "frail carcase" is chillingly ironic. In the struggle to make a life in the outcast community at Naumkeak, he has driven his wife and children hard, and Mary is the only child to survive. Although firmly established on New England soil, Conant remains obsessed with the disappointments suffered in England and takes every opportunity to oppress his listeners with diatribes against the vanities of the English church and monarch. And yet, his "inflexible self-command," we are told, has "made him 'the very soul of counsel'" in the village (127).

More than once Child describes Conant and Oldham side by side and we see in these descriptions and in their discussions of doctrine that Oldham is a parody of Conant. Whereas Conant is "sometimes passionate, and always unyielding," Oldham is "an odd mixture of devotion and drollery" (57). Oldham's obsession is with his expulsion from Plymouth. His account of the incident parodies Conant's typological mode of discourse:

> I can give you no idea of that gauntlet at Plymouth . . . when I passed through a band as long as the laws of the Levites, and every man gave me a tug with the butt of his musket. . . . [I]t was a time of great light, though it was nothing like the first dawning. I'll tell you how that was. I was sitting thus, with my mug of flip before me, and one hand upon each knee, looking straight into the fire, when suddenly I bethought that I was like that smoking brand, with none to pluck it from the burning. So I took a draught of the good stuff, and all at once a light streamed around me, ten times brighter than the earl of Warwick's big lamp. (12)

Conant quickly rebukes Oldham for his profanation of "the mysteries of godliness" by associating their powers with the offices of a mug of flip. "Flip" indeed are Oldham's uses of biblical texts: "Solomon saith, 'there is a time for all things';" he tells a gathering of elders, "and the commentary that I put upon the text is, that there is a time

to smoke a pipe and crack a joke, as well as to preach and pray" (39). Conant responds to the challenge with: "Recreation is no doubt good to oil the wheels as we travel along a rugged road; but a wise man will do as Jonathan, who only tasted a little honey on the end of his rod" (39) This duel of aphorisms articulates the chief point of tension between the Puritans and their descendants--the question of the role of pleasure. While Conant argues the traditional view, in favor of self-restraint, Oldham speaks for future generations, insisting that the Bible authorizes pleasurable pursuits. Oldham also inveighs against women in a manner that satirizes Conant's harshness toward his daughter. As the community gathers for Sally Oldham's wedding her father seeks to entertain the guests with the following discourse on women: "Their vanity is as long as the polar nights, and as broad as a Puritan's shoulders need to be. Here is Sally now, who for a wonder is as demure as you please, has thought her carcass such a valuable cargo that every body she sees must needs want the freight" (60). In mocking his daughter, Oldham also mocks himself and the community. In each of the analogies he draws he makes a cut at New England life--the poverty of New England purses, the bleakness of northern winters, the need for broad shoulders to carry the weight of the Puritan faith. Oldham's parodic critique of Conant's rigid stances and of the ethos of his own community complicate our view of Puritan life.[8] Here Child dispells the common stereotype of Puritan society as a theocratic monolith by portraying a group of Puritan outcasts that in turn has its own dissensions. This portrayal serves the descendant's purpose of bringing to light "[t]he varying tints of domestic detail" of Puritan life that, he tells us at the beginning, have been concealed

[8] In satirizing Puritan values through the dialogues of Roger Conant and John Oldham, Child engages in a mode of writing that Sandra Zagarell has observed was uncommon among white middle class women writers of the nineteenth century, who were expected to accept uncritically social norms. "When they did [satirize]," Zagarell says, "it was usually on behalf of specific, delimited social changes, notably (as in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) the abolition of slavery" (xv-xvi). See Zagarell. Child's satirizing of historical figures in *Hobomok* supports the progressive historical perspective set forth by the narrator at the beginning of the novel.

by "the ivy which clusters around the tablets of our recent history" (6). Oldham's humorous personalizing of Conant's traditional typological discourse gives Puritanism a human face. At the same time, Conant's engagement with the blasphemous Oldham softens him and lays the groundwork for his reunion with his daughter at the end of the novel. In their debates we see doctrinal rifts that will widen with future generations.

On the other side of the intergenerational conflicts in the novel are two prominent males of the younger generation--Charles Brown, an Episcopalian newcomer to the colony, and Hobomok, a Wampanoag, and a translator for the community to the Indians. Both lovers of Mary Conant, these two men are consequently in deep conflict with her father, and by association, with the other elders. Although they may move freely within the community, they are clearly not of it, and once each man's interest in Mary is discovered, he is vilified. Child's dramatization of the tensions between the two younger men and Roger Conant becomes a critique of the Puritan way of coping with difference. Her doubling of the outsider figure complicates her critique. Brown has come to New England with "the wild and romantic scheme of establishing the Episcopal mitre in the forests of America" (46). Sensing an atmosphere of intolerance at Naumkeak he has tried to keep his allegiances hidden while he establishes himself. But religious fervor overtakes him and, after holding an Episcopalian service at which communion is celebrated, he is brought before the elders and expelled from the colony. At the hearing, Conant rages against his daughter's suitor, flaunting the same sexually laden rhetoric he hurls at Mary when he accuses her of longing for "the fleshpots of Egypt": "Have you not made them drink of the wine of Babylon? Yea, have you not made them drunk with her fornication? Have you not, like the red dragon, pursued the church into the

wilderness, and poured out a flood after her, that you might cause her to be destroyed?" (70). Child has already condemned Conant's intolerance through Mary, whose "filial respect and affection" diminish, we are told, when Conant bars Brown from their house. Now, through Brown, in a conversation with Mrs. Conant after the trial, Child analyzes the elders' stance:

> Had I been treated with more moderation, perhaps I might never have been so hasty as to declare my religious opinions. Then these unhappy differences had never arisen, and with my Mary, I could happily have shared a log hut in the wilderness. But I have been spurned, goaded, trampled on, as a heretic--and worse than all, I have been doomed to hear every thing blasphemed which I held most sacred. As it is, you cannot deny us this sorrowful alleviation of our lot. (74)

Here Child suggests that the immoderate and intolerant response of the community to differing religious practices threatens the future of the colony. How, Child asks through Brown, can a settlement described as "six miserable hovels" establish itself and grow if men like Brown are forbidden to build their own "log hut in the wilderness"?

In discussing Brown's case through the narrator, Child sets forth a conception of diversity in spirituality that she will develop extensively and advocate in future works[9]:

> [U]nder no circumstances, and in no situation whatever, could Brown have been a Puritan. Perhaps he and his adversaries equally mistook the pride of human opinion, for conscientious zeal; but their contradictory sentiments owed their origin to native difference of character. Spiritual light, like that of the natural sun, shines from one source, and shines alike upon all: but it is reflected and absorbed in almost infinite variety; and in the moral, as well as the natural world, the diversity of the rays is occasioned by the nature of the recipient. (69)

Child's understanding of the influence of "native differences of character" on individual spirituality was no doubt shaped by her early religious experiences. A

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[9] See Child's *The Progress of Religious Ideas Through Successive Ages*, a monumental comparative study of the religions of the world, which Child wrote to promote religious toleration.

"gloomy" and "withdrawn" man. Child's father adhered to the strict Calvinist line preached by the Reverend David Osgood at the Congregationalist Church her family attended in her girlhood home of Medford (Karcher 7). Early on, both Child and her brother Convers turned away from their father's faith, Convers through his ordination as a Unitarian minister, and Lydia through an ongoing quest that would lead her into unsatisfactory engagements with Unitarianism and Swedenborgianism. "I wish I could find some religion in which my heart and understanding could unite," she told Convers in an 1820 letter defending her involvement with the latter (Karcher 14). Through Charles Brown, Child advocates an approach to spirituality shaded by romantic individualism. Under Puritan orthodoxy, one tailored one's spiritual nature and impulses to fit the forms of the community. "[N]ative difference of character" was not recognized. Child challenges that ethic by inverting the Puritan struggle for survival, that is, by placing in the midst of the community an Anglican who seeks the right to practice and preach a faith more suited to his character--a faith that is also, we should note, the religion of the Puritans' oppressors.

While Roger Conant and the other elders of Naumkeak are consumed with Charles Brown's qualities and views, they have no intimate knowledge of Mary's other suitor, Hobomok, and seem to want none. Mrs. Conant refers newly arrived settlers to Mary when they inquire about him, noting that Mary likes to listen to his tales of Indian life. "It's little I mind his heathenish stories," Mr. Conant adds, "but I have sat by the hour together, and gazed on his well fared face, till the tears have come into mine eyes, that the Lord should have raised us up so good a friend among the savages" (98). Consequently, although Conant speaks here of looking at Hobomok with great feeling, it is clear that he sees him only as an adjunct to the Puritan mission. As a man, Hobomok is invisible. And although Conant closely observes Brown's

courtship of Mary, he is blind to Hobomok's attentions to his daughter. When he finally learns that Mary has married Hobomok, his first desire is to make his daughter invisible as well: "[A]ssuredly I find I could more readily have covered her sweet face with the clods, than bear this; but the Lord's will be done" (133). Through Hobomok's presence among the Puritans and through his alliance with Mary, Child deepens her critique of Puritan narrowness. In the pairing of Charles Brown and Hobomok she shows how responses to difference are radically compounded when racial difference is involved. She demonstrates that, in the colonial mind, open conflict is insufficient to contain the threat of racial difference: the people who threaten must be erased. Even one's own children who transgress the boundaries between Indian and white must be eradicated, if only verbally.

Hobomok is all along aware of his invisibility to the white men of Naumkeak and shares with his arch-enemy Corbitant a fatalistic vision of Indian genocide by whites. Here, in yet another doubling, Child poses two different Indian responses to the oppression imposed by the older generation of Puritans. While Hobomok copes with the threat of extinction through accommodation, as a translator and mediator for the whites with the Indian tribes, Corbitant takes a warlike stance toward the whites. His hatred extends to Hobomok because he suspects Hobomok of having abandoned the Indian woman selected to be his wife in favor of Mary Conant. Hobomok reflects on his feelings after Corbitant accuses him of betraying his people:

> Soon after her arrival at Plymouth, Mary had administered cordials to [Hobomok's] sick mother, which restored her to life after the most skilful of their priests had pronounced her hopeless; and ever since that time, he had looked upon her with reverence, which almost amounted to adoration. If any dregs of human feeling were mingled with these sentiments, he at least was not aware of it; and now that the idea was forced upon him, he rejected it, as a kind of blasphemy. With these thoughts were mixed a melancholy presentiment of the destruction of his race, and stern, deep settled hatred of Corbitant. (33)

Hobomok's invisibility permits him to infiltrate the Puritan community and gain access to Mary without arousing the ire that Charles draws when he preaches the Episcopalian creed in the settlement. In portraying the exchange between Mary and Hobomok's mother Child is drawing upon her own experiences as a young girl in Norridgewock, where she often went to Abenaki and Penobscot Indian villages ostensibly on visits of charity but returning with a fuller knowledge of Indian culture (Karcher 11-12). Lucy M. Freibert and Barbara A. White have argued that Hobomok's worshipful attitude toward Mary is evidence of an "assumption of white superiority" on Child's part (118). Yet, if we focus on the motivation for Hobomok's love rather than on its nature, it seems possible that Child was striving to envision an equalized relationship. For Hobomok's adoration of Mary grows out of seeing her work for his people's survival, and thus out of a shared vision of the continuance of both cultures. He seeks to cultivate that common vision by visiting with Mary and sharing stories of Indian life.

At the center of the interracial and intergenerational conflicts in the novel stands Mary Conant. Raised in England by an indulgent grandfather, Earl Rivers, and schooled in painting, sculpture, poetry, and courtly life, Mary struggles to find a foothold in Puritan New England. Her one friend, Sally Oldham, though warm and loyal, does not share Mary's cultivated background nor her reflectiveness. Sally performs the same humanizing role among the young people that her father performs in the older generation, her calling being to provoke the sexual interest of the young men of the colony with as much flippancy as her father has provoked the Plymouth elders on doctrinal matters. While Mary finds much in the natural world around Naumkeak "to excite her native fervor of imagination," Sally sees "nothing in the setting sun but a hint of her outdoor work" (35). Out of homesickness for England

and exhaustion from nursing her consumptive mother, Mary turns inward, "[breathing] only in the regions of fancy" (47). There, her thoughts fix on Charles Brown. Mary's dream of forsaking her parents' Puritanism for her native Episcopalianism and returning with Charles Brown to England masks a more subversive fantasy--that of achieving her own greatness. In England, where she first met Brown:

> as she gazed on his lofty forehead, stamped with the proud, deep impress of intellect, and watched the changeful lustre of his dark, eloquent eyes, that alternately beamed with high or tender thoughts, she too became covetous of mental riches, and worshipped at the shrine of genius. . . . What was she now? A lily weighed down by the pitiless pelting of the storm; a violet shedding its soft, rich perfume on bleakness and desolation; a plant which had been fostered and cherished with mild sunshine and gentle dews, removed at once from the hothouse to the desert, and left to unfold its delicate leaves beneath the darkness of the lowering storm. (78)

Like the young writer of the preface to *Hobomok*, and like Child in her 1832 account of the writing of her first book, Mary feels "covetous" of intellectual achievement. She looks upon Charles, as Lydia may have looked upon her brother Convers, as embodiment of and access to that dream. Mary's concern with identity in this passage is significant: "What was she now?" Dreaming of Charles and England is not enough; she herself must become something, a daring aspiration for both heroine and author. Interestingly, Child describes Mary's sense of fragility in the face of Puritan patriarchal power with the same metaphor that she will later use to express her own sense of vulnerability as an author when she writes George Ticknor to ask him for his help in promoting *Hobomok*. Exposed to "a land of strangers" in New England, Mary is like a perfume-rich violet that unfolds before the lowering storm. In the same mode, exposing her authorial anxiety to "most men," Child tells Ticknor, "would be like scattering the fragrance of the violet in the path of the hurricane" (Meltzer and Holland

4). Mary's struggles to gain a foothold in New England culture are clearly an analog for Child's struggles to find a place as a New England writer.

These resonances are not the only evidence that Mary is a double for Child herself as well as for Sally Oldham. In a letter to her grandfather in England, Mary obliquely confides her dream of being a writer: "I remember you once saide that Shakespeare would have beene the same greate poet if he had been nurtured in a Puritan wildernesse. But indeed it is harde for incense to rise in a colde, heavy atmosphere, or for the buds of fancie to put forth, where the heartes of men are as harde and sterile as their unploughed soile" (79). Mary wrestles inwardly and continuously with a despair evoked by the Puritan ethos. Having enacted in her private bloodletting ritual her secret dream of writing, she struggles to protect that dream against scrutiny and condemnation. She is a silent witness to the elders' debates about the heresy of "inward outpouring" and to her father's dictums against writing "without an especial reference to the declarations of Scripture" (39). And she is pained by the Puritan blindness to the natural world, which so strongly stimulates her own imagination:

> Even in this [winter] dress, [nature] displayed much to excite a poetic imagination and a devotional heart; but the souls of men were not open to the influence of nature. Little thought they, amid the fierce contests of opinion, of the latent treasures of mind or the rich sympathies of taste. . . . A sound, doctrinal exposition of Romans brought more religious warmth into their hearts, than the nightly exhibition of the numerous hosts shining in the broad belt of the heavens, those mighty apostles, which God has sent forth to proclaim thoughout creation, his majesty and power. Mary grew more and more weary of the loneliness of unreciprocated intellect. (91)

Although two hundred years divide Child from her heroine, the Calvinism practiced by Convers Francis, Senior, could have had an equally chilling effect on his daughter's early creative impulses. Under Mary's disguise, Child can stand apart from these constraining influences and critique the narrowness in her heritage. In this passage,

and in the excerpt from Mary's letter to her grandfather, we see not only a daughter's anxiety in standing up to patriarchal power but also a young woman's fear that such self-assertion condemns her to eternal isolation. The parallel experience for Child is that of a young woman writer seeking authority within a culture both overshadowed by and proud of its patriarchal, theocratic origins. Is there an audience for such a writer, or will she fall subject to "the loneliness of unreciprocated intellect"? The preface to *Hobomok* poses Child's fantasy of proposal, fulfillment, and reception and therefore a means of finding or creating reciprocity. The young writer of the preface, who becomes the descendant/editor of the first chapter and thence serves as the narrator of the novel, functions as Child's mask and generates in Mary's history a cover story for Child's conflicted experience as an aspiring American author.

Mary is protecting more than a dream of her own greatness when she resists her Puritan father and the other elders. At the root of Mary's isolation and anxiety--and the thing that she most needs to guard--is an unshared vision, the unorthodox practice of viewing God's creation and man's creation with the naked eye rather than through the lens of bibilical text. Emerson will shortly assert at the beginning of *Nature* that "[t]he foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face: we, through their eyes" (7). Contrary to Emerson, Child argues that the way of seeing of foregoing generations was actually a defense against sight. Their hearts were more warmed by a passage from Romans, she says, than by the stars in the evening sky. At the same time, through Mary's responsiveness to her natural surroundings, Child demonstrates an alternative way of seeing that Emerson likewise will articulate in *Nature* when he asks, "Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?" (7). The reciprocating intellect that Mary yearns for is a transcendental sensibility. We

witness this way of seeing in isolated moments in which Mary regards the natural setting "face to face" and receives direct insight, a "revelation to us." Key among these moments is a scene in which she awaits a secret visit from Charles Brown. She is standing by the door, looking out on "the still brightness around":

> The evening star was sailing along its peaceful course, and seemed, amid the stainless sanctity of the heavens, like a bright diadem on the brow of some celestial spirit. "Fair planet," thought Mary, "how various are the scenes thou passest over in thy shining course. The solitary nun, in the recesses of her cloister, looks on thee as I do now; mayhap too, the courtly circle of king Charles are watching the motion of thy silver chariot. The standard of war is fluttering in thy beams, and the busy merchantman breaks thy radiance on the ocean. Thou hast kissed the cross-crowned turrets of the Catholic, and the proud spires of the Episcopalian. Thou hast smiled on distant mosques and temples, and now thou art shedding the same light on the sacrifice heap of the Indian, and the rude dwelling of the Calvinist. And can it be, as my father says, that of all the multitude of people who view thy cheering rays, so small a remnant only are pleasing in the sight of God? Oh, no. It cannot be thus. Would that my vision, like thine, could extend through the universe, that I might look down unmoved on the birth and decay of human passions, hopes, and prejudices." (48)

The mind mirrors nature here as Mary prays for release from the bonds of "passions, hopes, and prejudices." Inspired by gazing at the evening star, she embarks on a poetic meditation that ranges imaginatively through the world and, like a star, sheds an equalizing light on Christian and pagan. The evening star, in a "revelation" to her, gives her a vision of unity and harmony that consoles her. It is interesting to compare this moment of insight to the vision experienced by the ancestor/narrator at the beginning of the novel, a vision that brings on spiritual desolation. In this moment the vacancy of the shoreline in twilight reduces the ancestor to "a drop in the vast ocean of existence" and causes him to shrink "from the contemplations of human nothingness" (7). Mary's revelation is a compensating vision that answers the bleakness of the seventeenth-century Puritan landscape with transcendental expansiveness. In a sense, Mary Conant is a woman misplaced in time whose longing for imaginative power and

for the freedom to use such power is a longing for the nineteenth century to begin. As Nina Baym has observed in comparing the heroines of *Hobomok* and Catherine Maria Sedgwick's novel *Hope Leslie*,:

> Mary Conant and Hope Leslie are more theologically latitudinarian, esthetically sensitive, socially polished, and politically republican than the Calvinist hierarchs they live among in America, and as these values increasingly improve the quality of everyday life, the budding nation is pushed toward its nineteenth-century flowering. . . . The long road traveled from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century is exactly what the novels are about insofar as they are historical. (*History* 156-57)

Through her resistant thought and actions Mary functions as the catalyst for the social and cultural transformations that Child enacts in the novel.

Mary Conant is not entirely alone in her transcendental way of seeing. Both Charles Brown and Hobomok have helped her to realize and assert her own spiritual and aesthetic identity. Each man represents a different facet of that identity. In her love for Charles, Mary holds close to her "the latent treasures of the mind" and the "rich sympathies of taste" (91) to which her exposure to English art and culture have awakened her. In her encounters with Hobomok, "whose language was brief, figurative, and poetic, and whose nature was unwarped by the artifices of civilized life" (121), Mary practices unfamiliar uses of imaginative power. Critics commonly associate Hobomok with nature, seeing Child and her contemporary Catherine Maria Sedgwick as finding "their own place in nature" by marrying nature "in the form of an Indian male" (Person, "Eve" 684) and viewing natural imagery as the primary identifying feature of Hobomok's dialect. Karcher complicates this association by showing that both Charles and Hobomok ultimately represent a "fusion of nature and culture"—Hobomok through his sharing of Indian oral culture with Mary (27-30). I associate Hobomok with imaginative power because he, not Charles, makes possible Mary's escape from the narrow confines of Naumkeak. During the winter following

Charles's expulsion from the colony Mary lives off the promise of a future life with Charles in England and the regular visits of Hobomok, who brings her furs and venison along with his stories. Her spirit survives in a delicate balance. When the news of Charles's shipwreck reaches Naumkeak that balance is destroyed. A romance by Poe or Melville might move deeper into the visionary realm at this point. Mary might depart from the settlement on a solitary, one-way journey into the wilderness in which the landscape around her comes to resemble more and more the "chaos" raging within her own mind. But Child holds her heroine inside the framework of history. She allows the disruptions caused by sudden imbalance to work their effects within the community. Only in this way can a new and more stable equilibrium be achieved.

Equilibrium is critical to Child's social vision. While her spiritual vision may anticipate the individualistic expansiveness of nineteenth-century transcendentalism, her social and aesthetic views seem more in keeping with eighteenth-century ideals of moderation, proportion, and balance.[10] These standards emerge immediately in the first preface, where we see the seasoned editor modulate and channel the young writer's enthusiasm. They are present as well in the second preface, where the descendant shapes a historical mould to contain the ancestor's limitless vision of the New World. The ideals of harmony and proportion are set forth in these prefaces as standards for judging the actions and relations among characters in the main narrative. Mindful of these standards as we read, we see that Mary's dual allegiances to Charles Brown and to Hobomok keep her in a tense equilibrium that enables her to live

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[10] This point is rooted in the observation made by Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland that, in her political writing and activism, "Child was one of the most eighteenth-century of the nineteenth-century women reformers" in that "[s]he confronted a rapidly industrializing society with the values of the earlier Republican age believing in the natural rights of all people and the wisdom of the 'common man.'" Child showed little interest, they note, in such nineteenth-century "concerns" as industrial development, finance, capitalism, and westward expansion. See Meltzer and Holland xi.

alongside her wrathful father as she nurses her self-effacing mother, and yet to conduct an ongoing critique of the older generation's views and ways.

The loss of Charles upsets this equilibrium and prompts a spate of immoderate actions. When the grieving Mary sees her father attempt to throw her treasured Book of Common Prayer into the fire, she responds to his wrath with an excess of her own: she escapes immediately to Hobomok's wigwam, where the same evening she marries him in an Indian ceremony. She embraces the man who has helped her to develop the power of her own imagination and thereby transgresses the community's boundaries of gender, race, and religion. From this evening on, everyone but Sally Oldham shuns Mary. Her father asserts that he would rather see her dead. John Oldham articulates commonly held anxiety about miscegenation as he comments mockingly on Indian culture, "A pretty piece of business it would be of a truth, to have a parcel of tawny grandchildren at your heels, squeaking *powaw* and *sheshikwee*, and the devil knoweth what all" (127). Even the ancestor/narrator, who from the start has been captivated by Mary, frowns upon her marriage to Hobomok. Observing that she has acted out of temporary irrationality, "the unreasonableness of mingled grief and anger" (122), he says, "It was strange that trouble had power to excite her quiet spirit to so much irascibility; and powerful indeed must have been the superstition, which could induce so much beauty and refinement, even in a moment of desperation, to exchange the social band, stern and dark as it was, for the company of savages" (122). The "superstition" the narrator refers to here is a fatalism, "an ill directed belief in the decrees of heaven" (122), which Lucy Maddox sees as a regression on Mary's part into her Calvinist heritage (100). Through Mary's offer of herself to Hobomok Child challenged not only her characters' but also her readers' social codes. One reviewer called the marriage "not only unnatural, but revolting. . . to every feeling of delicacy in

man or woman" (*North American Review* 263). Most troubling to critics of our time is the fact that the community's censure of Mary echoes in her own heart[11]: "Kind as Hobomok was," the narrator tells us, "and rich as she found his uncultivated mind in native imagination, still the contrast between him and her departed lover, would often be remembered with sufficient bitterness. Beside this, she knew that her own nation looked upon her as lost and degraded; and, what was far worse, her own heart echoed back the charge" (135). As long as Hobomok is fixed within a complementing relation with Charles, Mary can hold him in high regard. Alone, he is insufficient because he is "uncultivated." His goodness and his high standing in his own tribe and in the colony--from which Charles has been expelled--have no bearing against his race and his non-Anglo ways. In this inability to let go of her bias toward Charles and English culture after her voluntary marriage to Hobomok, Mary degrades herself. Child likewise undercuts her bold gesture of representing positively an Indian-white marriage by insisting on Indian assimilation as the answer to cultural and racial difference.

Nowhere does Child assert this imperative more strongly than in the confrontation between Charles Brown and Hobomok in the woods upon Charles's miraculous reappearance after a three-year imprisonment in Africa. Hobomok can see only two options during this tense encounter--to kill Charles or to relinquish Mary. His fatalism--and Child's fatalism--about the continuance of Indian culture in America bars any hope of retaining his position as husband of a white woman and father of a small mixed-race son. When Charles offers to disappear quietly without seeing Mary, Hobomok replies:

> The purpose of an Indian is seldom changed. . . . My tracks will soon be seen far beyond the back-bone of the great Spirit. For Mary's sake I

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[11] See Maddox 100-101; Smith 53.

> have borne the hatred of the Yengees, the scorn of my tribe, and the insults of my enemy. And now, I will be buried among strangers, and none shall black their faces for the unknown chief. . . . You have seen the first and last tears that Hobomok will ever shed. Ask Mary to pray for me--that when I die, I may go to the Englishman's God, where I may hunt beaver with little Hobomok, and county my beavers for Mary. (140)

This absurd negotiation between Mary's two lovers is a travesty of the models of cooperation set forth in the prefaces to the novel. It is hardly a negotiation, given that one of the parties agrees not only to withdraw his claim but also to withdraw himself into oblivion, "beyond the back-bone of the great Spirit" (140). Its inequity betrays the social conditions that Lucy Maddox says constrained both Child and Sedgwick in their representations of Indians:

> The virtual absence of Indians from the New England of the 1820s, and the widespread public conviction that their presence anywhere in the eastern United States was an obstacle to the natural progress of American civilization, meant that although Child and Sedgwick might attempt to revise the Puritan characterizations of Indians, they could not reinstate the Indians in the trajectory of American history as easily as they could reinstate women; all they could do was try to account for the Indians' decline. (97)

In erasing Hobomok from the landscape and accounting for that erasure, the arrangement between Charles and Hobomok conveniently clears the ground for new, white-initiated endeavors. But through its elimination of a man who has played a critical role in the community's survival, the arrangement also taints any future cooperative arrangements made on that ground. It also taints the new literary territory claimed by the young writer who announces in the preface his ambition to write the first New England novel.

Hobomok's Christ-like sacrifice does not go unmourned. Charles remains seated on a rock, hoping that Hobomok will pass him again as he makes his departure. He gazes at the forest with a sense of desolation that echoes the ancestor's view of the New England shoreline at the opening of the narrative:

> No sound was heard in those lone forests, save the rustling of the leaves as they bowed to the autumnal wind, or the shriek of some solitary bird as he flapped his wings above the head of the traveller. To these was now and then added the monotonous sound of the whippowill, answered by a strain of wild and varied melody from some far-off songster of the woods. The foliage of the trees was everywhere so thickly interlaced, excepting the narrow footpath which opened before him, that scarcely a single ray of light could be discerned among the branches. The brightness of the sun had already gone beyond the view, and a long train of sable clouds were gathering in the west, as if mourning his departure. The conflicting feelings of the young man were settled in deep melancholy; and the aspect of nature "suited the gloomy habit of his soul." (142)

The thought of Mary does not salve Charles's melancholy. "Existence must now be as sad as those dull clouds which are so fast gathering," the narrator tells us (143). There is a sense here, as in the ancestor's vision at the beginning of the novel, of inadequacy in New England dreams and endeavors. On arriving in the New World the ancestor feels bewilderment, not exhilaration. After finally winning Mary, Charles can only sit quietly, staring into the dark, thicketed forest. Structurally, these two moments frame the body of the novel, separating the optimistic tones of the nineteenth-century descendants in the two prefaces from the bleaker tones of their seventeenth-century ancestors in the main narrative. They are moments out of time. And once we know the outcome of the story that they frame they are visions not of vacancy, but of absence. They provide the "invisible mediating force. . . the shadow [hovering] in implication, in sign, in line of demarcation" (46-47) that signifies, in Toni Morrison's view, the unseen "Africanist presence" in American literature and, by implication, the unseen Indian presence.

The presumed loss of Charles at sea prompts the crisis of the novel; Mary transgresses social boundaries and is temporarily ostracized by her father and the community. The disappearance of Hobomok into the wilderness "resolves" the crisis; Mary acquires a more respectable and more desired husband and returns to the fold.

Hobomok must be sacrificed, Lucy Maddox argues, because as an Indian he is a "blocked child," incapable of joining in the advancement of white American culture. "For the white heroine," she asserts, "the separation from her Indian companion is a necessary part of the painful process of maturing; she begins to come of age only when she frees herself from both the tyrannical white father and her own regressive wish to live in the Indian's perpetual childhood" (102). Child's sacrifice of Hobomok might also be interpreted in religious terms. In her discussion of *The First Settlers*, a book Child wrote to assist mothers in teaching their children New England history, Nina Baym observes that "Child's admiration of Native Americans rests on the fantasy that they are really uncorrupted (that is, Unitarian) Christians" (*History* 40). If we follow Baym's view, we might say that Child fantasizes that Indian renunciation of land and culture is made with self-effacing Christian love rather than pagan wrath. Hence, Hobomok dreams of going "to the Englishman's God" when he dies, and strives to make himself worthy of that end by giving up his wife and son to his white rival.

Hobomok is not the only figure to disappear from the novel. The historian/editor in the preface evaporates after dispatching the novel to the printer. The ancestor/narrator recedes before the editing pen of his descendant. The warrior Corbitant never reappears after his unsuccessful attempt on Hobomok's life. Mary's recalcitrant and punitive father dissolves into an improbably indulgent grandfather. Most poignant among the losses, next to that of Hobomok, are the deaths of Mary's mother and of Lady Arabella Johnson. Just as Hobomok is a mediator between the colony and the Indian tribes, these two women are mediational figures within colony and family and between England and the New World. Mrs. Conant gently restrains her husband when he becomes too harsh with Mary. She allows Mary to meet secretly

with Charles. Lady Arabella is likewise a go-between, bringing letters of forgiveness and gifts from Mrs. Conant's estranged father in England. As daughters of an aristocracy that has patronized the arts, these women see no incompatibility between art and religion. Mrs. Conant tells Charles, "[T]he Bible is an inspired book; but I sometimes think the Almighty suffers it to be a flaming cherubim, turning every way, and guarding the tree of life from the touch of man. But in creation, one may read to their fill. It is God's library--the first Bible he ever wrote" (76). Clearly, Mary's transcendental experience of the natural world is founded in her mother's quiet renunciation of scriptural hegemony. Exhausted by their struggles and their sacrifices, Mrs. Conant and Lady Arabella subside simultaneously in a melodramatic death scene where Child enhances the loss through doubling: "[M]edicine, anxiety, and kindness, were alike unavailing; and soon they both retired to the same apartment, and laid themselves down on the beds from which they were never more to rise. . . . There, in that miserable room lay the descendants of two noble houses. Both alike, victims to what has always been the source of woman's greatest misery--love--deep and unwearied love." With the death of these two women of noble birth, Child breaks the community's tie with English culture and the hierarchy of class. Mrs. Conant and Lady Arabella Johnson have borne their cultural heritage to the New World, but the new culture, which they have helped to implant with self-effacing love, must now survive and grow on its own without aristocratic patronage. In the literary world of the new republic young writers will have to take support from their own kind, as does the eager young writer of the preface to *Hobomok* and as Child would do in her post-publication letter to George Ticknor. Child will continue developing this conception of a republican culture distinct from that of England in her next novel, *The Rebels*, published in 1825, in which a young American heiress, her heart "weary of

splendour," rejects London society and high culture in favor of the American revolutionary cause and its commitment to "usefulness" over "lustre" (278, 300).

All of the characters who disappear from *Hobomok* before its closure are transitional figures sacrificed to the cause of cultural change. Hobomok, Corbitant, Roger Conant, Mrs. Conant, and Lady Arabella, as well as the historian/editor and the ancestor/narrator, are the New World's old world. They must give way to the new generations. They have each devoted themselves to a single ideal--Corbitant to Indian resistance, Hobomok to the good of Mary, Roger Conant to the power of scripture, Mrs. Conant to her love for her husband, the historian and the ancestor to the advancement of the novel. With the passing of these figures, the nation moves into the nineteenth century and the novel accomplishes its task of reconciling its readers with the imbalances and injustices of the past, while posing an ideal community and a new equilibrium for the future. That community and its equilibrium are embodied in Charles Hobomok Conant, Mary and Hobomok's son. This small child bears the influences of all the community's contending factions--Puritan, Episcopalian, Indian, English, female, male, pilgrim, native-born--and as a paradigm of assimilation signifies Child's social ideal for the century. Doted on by Roger Conant and educated at Harvard and in England through the legacy of Earl Rivers, young Hobomok will doubtless take a prominent place in nineteenth-century New England's "perfect Eden." But he will no longer be known as Hobomok, and his father will be remembered only as a facilitator of white settlement. In the final sentences of the novel, Hobomok, a nurturer of the "tender slip" of Plymouth Colony, is forced to withdraw before the "mighty tree" he has cultivated and be forever absent to both his son and the community he has served.

> His father was seldom spoken of; and by degrees his Indian appellation was silently omitted. But the devoted, romantic love of Hobomok was

> never forgotten by its object; and his faithful services to the "Yengees" are still remembered with gratitude; though the tender slip which he protected, has since become a mighty tree, and the nations of the earth seek refuge beneath its branches. (150)

Dreams of greatness are exclusive. The young writer of the preface, who dreams of writing the prototypical New England novel and of thereby achieving an enduring epitaph, comfortably commits Hobomok to the realm of memory as he brings the narrative down to the present day and once again hitches his project to the endeavor of making a great nation. The final sentence of the novel loops back to the claim made in the opening sentence: "I never view the thriving villages of New England, which speak so forcibly to the heart, of happiness and prosperity, without feeling a glow of national pride, as I say, 'this is my own, my native land'" (5). In both instances white New England stands for the whole or, as Lawrence Buell has noted, it is "the key source of what [is] distinctively American" (146). As Carolyn Karcher has observed, the absence of Hobomok at the end of the narrative, which symbolizes the absence of the Indian from nineteenth-century New England, "amounts to cultural genocide" (32). Excluded also from the dream of greatness are Child's two hesitant writer doubles--the ancestor/writer, who at the beginning of the novel looks at the New England shoreline and humbly prays to "be kept from the snares of the world" (12), and Mary Conant, who later prays for release from "passions, hopes, and prejudices" (48). Child gives not only the first but also the last word in the novel to the confident young writer in the preface. His role mirrors that of young Charles [Hobomok] Conant and, wearing his mask, Child joins the nineteenth-century "pageant" of "historical progress."

Child continued to write fiction throughout her life, to a mixed critical reception. Her novel of the American Revolution, *The Rebels*, published in 1825 and

dedicated to George Ticknor, enacts through an intricate marriage plot the breaking of faith between England and America. Critics found this novel disappointing. The *North American Review* argued that the narrative was "too loosely tied together" (402) and the *Literary World* complained that "[t]he historical personages . . . are painted on the canvas of the back scene, instead of being the living and moving characters on the stage itself" (72). From now on literary success was to come from other arenas--the realm of children's literature, for example, in which Child launched the highly regarded magazine *Juvenile Miscellany* in 1826, and the field of domestic advice, in which she published *The Frugal Housewife* in 1829, one of the first books to address the workings of poor households (Karcher 127-28). For much of the 1830s, in fact, Child channeled her literary energies toward "domestic usefulness" and social reform (Karcher 102). In 1833, her careful analysis of slavery and racial prejudice, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, won her a place in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement even while it lost her the support of the Boston literary coterie, including George Ticknor, who were offended by her criticisms of northern racial prejudice. In 1835, her two-volume comparative study, *History of the Condition of Women, in Various Ages and Nations*, lent support to the growing group of antislavery women who were seeking to add expansion of women's rights to the abolitionist agenda (Karcher 192, 220).[12]

Yet, even while writing books on social reform and domestic matters almost yearly, Child kept her novelist's vocation alive, publishing a third novel, *Philothea*, in 1836. Set in Periclean Athens, *Philothea* tracks the moral and political debates of a circle of brilliant women and men, many of them famous figures from two centuries of Greek history (Baym, *History* 180). In the most compelling of these discussions, the

[12] For analysis of Child's prefaces to these nonfictional works, see Yellin 55-56.

noble and retiring Philothea strives to turn the courtesan Aspasia away from worldliness and vanity with a sermon that resounds with the nineteenth-century conservative women's doctrine of doing good through influence rather than direct action. For the first time Child openly claimed authorship with the phrase "By Mrs. Child, Author of The Mother's Book, &c." on the title page. She also sought reconciliation with Convers, whom she had alienated through her staunch abolitionist stand, by dedicating the novel to him. The blend of classicism and realism that Child contrived in *Philothea* appealed to her readers. Reviewers who had condemned her stand on slavery in *An Appeal* sought to separate *Philothea* off from Child's more recent polemical writing and applauded the novel as reflective of her early work (Karcher 236). Child turned to the subject of slavery in her final novel, *A Romance of the Republic*, published in 1867. This novel follows the fortunes of two orphaned mulatto sisters from New Orleans who are taken under the "protection" of a Georgia planter only to be sequestered and threatened with being sold off as slaves. *A Romance* picks up where *Hobomok* leaves off in the narrative of American race relations by incorporating an interracial marriage plot with the theme of the tragic mulatto. Thomas Wentworth Higginson found *A Romance* Child's "best fictitious work," and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* called it "the second *great* novel based upon slavery" after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Karcher 531).

In the prefaces to the novels that followed *Hobomok* Child steps out from behind the mask of the male writer. The preface to *The Rebels* has no fictional constructions of writer and patron and no indications of the speaker's gender. Its oratorical mode and confident tone demonstrate that "The Author of Hobomok," as Child identified herself on the title page, is now an established literary figure qualified to speak about the young nation--to analyze its past and to shape its future. Child's

preface to *The Rebels* likewise constitutes a declaration of her independence as a writer. Speaking in an oratorical mode, without a fictional mask, "The Author of Hobomok" proclaims:

> America is now vigorous and majestic. . . . We now hear her youthful shout of freedom loudly echoed by the far-off nations;--but while we exultingly exclaim, "To-day our country may stand against the world!" we forget that but yesterday, none were so poor to do her reverence. Hercules decked with a lion's spoil is before us; but the infant, struggling with serpents, is indistinctly seen in the distance. (v)

As in the two prefaces to *Hobomok*, Child finds a means in the preface to *The Rebels* to forward her literary endeavors by associating them with the building of a nation that now "may stand against the world!" The image of Hercules swathed in a lion's skin not only speaks of the strength of post-Revolutionary America but also calls to mind Child's image of herself as a "'little wee bit' of a lion" admired by Boston literary circles after the publication of *Hobomok*. Without fictional constructions in the preface or a shadow preface at the opening of the narrative, *The Rebels* does not contain the ambivalence and the hesitancies at its opening that we find at the beginning of *Hobomok*. The success of *Hobomok*, combined with Ticknor's support, made it possible for Child to present her second novel in a more straightforward and assured manner.

Despite the ideal of retiring womanhood promulgated in *Philothea*, in the preface to this novel Child discards the masking and oratorical devices she has protected herself with previously and speaks freely as Lydia Maria Child, describing the conflicts she feels as an American writer, recounting a recent dream, and repeating a domestic conversation with her husband. In a comparison of her return to fiction writing with Pegasus' flight from the earth we see the same creative energy and ambition that drove the writing of *Hobomok*:

> The work has been four or five years in its progress; for the practical tendencies of the age, and particularly of the country in which I lived, have so continually forced me into the actual, that my mind has seldom obtained freedom to rise into the ideal
>
> The hope of extended usefulness has hitherto induced a strong effort to throw myself into the spirit of the times; which is prone to neglect the beautiful and fragrant flowers, unless their roots answer for vegetables, and their leaves for herbs. But there have been seasons when my soul felt restless in this bondage,--like Pegasus of German fable, chained to a plodding ox, and offered in the market; and as that rash steed, when he caught a glimpse of the far blue sky, snapped the chain that bound him, spread his wings, and left the earth beneath him --so I, for awhile, bid adieu to the substantial field of utility, to float on the clouds of romance. (iii)

Having weathered both success and failure as a fiction writer and both adulation and ostracism as a political writer, Child shows in this preface to her third novel that she has developed the assurance to pursue without apology her literary impulses. Like Pegasus, she has released herself from the bondage of utility, taken flight, and won an ever-broadening view of the earth beneath her. She has accomplished what Mary Conant dreams of doing in her prayer to the evening star when she says, "Would that my vision, like thine, could extend through the universe" (48). Only, in the preface to *Philothea*, there is more joy in the notion of flight. As Carolyn Karcher points out, joy was at a premium for Child during the 1830s because of the intense financial pressures she and her husband lived under (233). An abolitionist lawyer and polemicist, David Child, had incurred enormous debts through libel suits and poor management of his affairs.

At this stage the preface no longer functions for Child as a template for the novel it introduces. It no longer provides models against which to measure the figures and events in the main narrative. In *Philothea*, models are presented in the narrative, principally through Philothea's speeches on ethics, while the preface offers a self-portrait by the writer that emphasizes the pleasure she has derived from writing the novel: "To minds. . . who may think an apology necessary for what they will deem so

utterly useless. I have nothing better to offer than the simple fact that I found delight in doing it" (iii). Child even seeks to illustrate this creative pleasure by recounting a dream she had shortly after beginning the novel in which she and her husband progress through a landscape that is both domestic and visionary. Their garden is "filled with flowers of every form and hue." On the sea are "a multitude of boats, with sails like the wings of butterflies," and among the boats are statues of beautifully proportioned women and "lovely little cherubs" diving, floating, and undulating in the water. Child concludes:

> We could find no words to express our rapture, while gazing on a scene thus clothed with the beauty of other worlds. As we stood absorbed in the intensity of delight, I heard a noise behind me, and turning round saw an old woman with a checked apron, who made an awkward courtesy and said, "Ma'am, I can't afford to let you have that brisket for eight pence a pound."
>
> When I related this dream to my husband, he smiled and said, "The first part of it was dreamed by Philothea; the last, by the Frugal Housewife" (iv).

After her liberating flight Child is called back to the earth by the woman with the overpriced brisket, just as domestic necessity and economic and social injustice would continually call her back from fiction writing throughout her life. The psychological particularity that Child gives herself in this preface--revealed through her conflicts, her dreams, her domestic affairs--humanizes the cool idealism of the narrative, making her ancient Grecian models more accessible. This particularity, along with her use of the mode of dreams, anticipates Hawthorne's self-portraiture and discussion of dream states and their relation to creativity in "The Custom House," his preface to *The Scarlet Letter*.

The gradual process of unmasking that unfolds in Child's prefaces from *Hobomok* through *Philothea* culminates in *A Romance of the Republic*, where Child dispenses with prefacing altogether. In her preface to *Philothea* she revealed herself

as a woman eager for both pleasure and professional success, and her readers had responded well. There was no further need for masking or any other kind of mediation. Or so it must have seemed. Yet many of Child's friends avoided responding to this novel, apparently finding interracial marriage more acceptable in a novel set in Puritan times than in one set so close to home and touching on the recent past (Karcher 531). Emancipation having just been accomplished, and Reconstruction still in its infancy, readers no doubt resisted looking back on the troubling problems of antebellum life. One wonders what role a preface might have played in the reading and reception of this novel. Would an accounting of her literary career that acknowledged the rifts with her readers have warmed the more conservative ones to her cause of working social problems through in fiction? Child's omission of a preface shows a confidence that increases through the progression of her novels--a belief that art had a critical, and recognized, function in the collective political and social life of the new republic and in the individual lives of its female citizens.

Chapter Three

Writer and Reader on the Scaffold: Hawthorne's Early Prefaces

Like his contemporary, Lydia Maria Child, Nathaniel Hawthorne dreamed from an early age of becoming a successful writer. In 1821 he wrote to his mother:

> Oh that I was rich enough to live without a profession. What do you think of my becoming an Author, and relying for support upon my pen. Indeed I think the illegibility of my handwriting is very authorlike. How proud you would feel to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull. But Authors are always poor Devils, and therefore Satan may take them. (CE XV 139)

Hawthorne chooses writing in this letter after discarding the church for its dullness, the law for being overcrowded, and medicine for its morbidity. He wishes for wealth, not coincidentally, just before he presents his mother with his ambition to write. For even as he boasts that his own literary productions will rival the works of English writers he clearly understands the difficulties confronting ambitious American authors of the 1820s. Although only seventeen, he is already aware that American writers must pay their own way if they wish to publish and must struggle to claim and hold a place in the shadow of England's literary might.

While Hawthorne dreamed of achieving fame through writing, he wrote--and lived--in margins. After his father's death in Surinam during a trading voyage, Hawthorne and his mother and sisters moved to the house of his mother's family in Salem, where for the rest of his childhood he shared the Mannings' living quarters, even doubling up in a bed with one of his uncles. In this house, as T. Walter Herbert notes, the young Nathaniel spent many hours inscribing the logbooks from his deceased father's trading voyages with "profuse marginalia, often his father's

words copied in elaborate script like his father's" (68) and writing and rewriting his own signature on the logbooks' flyleaves. "On the front fly of the *America* logbook," Herbert reports, "his father had written in graceful cursive 'Nathaniel Hathorne's Book . . . 1795, Calcutta'; on the facing title page the son's heavy block capitals echo: 'Nathaniel Hathorne's Book, 1820 Salem'" (68). Hence, the youthful bravado of Hawthorne's letter to his mother shelters a private activity, ongoing from childhood, through which Hawthorne expressed his yearning to be known through writing. His "effort to ground his own identity" (Herbert 68) in the margins and blank pages of the trading narratives written by his father established a practice he would take up later in life as a writer of his own stories--that of filling the blank pages preceding his own narratives with words that construct the picture of a writer.

Hawthorne continued to live in the margins well into adulthood. Between 1821, when he graduated from Bowdoin College, and 1836, when he moved to Boston to become editor of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, he resided in the Manning house in Salem with his reclusive mother and sisters. This "long seclusion" (Mellow 36) was productive. In 1828 Hawthorne published his first novel, *Fanshawe*.[1] In 1830 his stories began to appear in *The Token*, *New England Magazine*, and the *American Monthly Magazine*. In 1837 eighteen of these stories were collected in *Twice-Told Tales*, a volume that he would continue to enlarge and republish through the ensuing decade. Like Child, Hawthorne published his first novel anonymously. But Hawthorne was even more reticent than Child about putting his authorial ambitions and anxieties before the public in these early works. There was no author's preface to *Fanshawe* nor to

[1] Apparently, during his twenties, Hawthorne saw intellectual pursuits and ordinary life as incompatible. In *Fanshawe*, published in 1828, Hawthorne casts his reclusive hero's dilemma as a conflict between the desire for greatness achieved through intellect and "solitary study" and the desire for human attachment and commerce with "the living world" (18). After a brief, melodramatic romance Fanshawe relinquishes his beloved in favor of scholarship and works himself into the grave by the age of twenty. Hawthorne later refused to let *Fanshawe* be republished (Mellow 43-44).

Twice-told Tales. Further, as James R. Mellow has pointed out, in compiling *Twice-told Tales* Hawthorne omitted even "relatively innocent sketches that hinted at the personal experiences of the author," such as "The Devil in Manuscript" and "Monsieur du Miroir" (77). "*Twice-told Tales* was clearly a guarded performance," Mellow notes, "intended to put its author before the public in the most acceptable light" (78). To explore the complex experience of authorship--even as Child had done, through the mask of fiction, in her preface to *Hobomok*--was apparently to expose too much.

The first edition of *Twice-told Tales* nonetheless brought Nathaniel Hawthorne exposure. Longfellow, a former college classmate to whom Hawthorne had sent the book, praised the stories in the *North American Review* for being "national in their character," and referred to Hawthorne as a "new star" rising (Crowley 57, 55). In spite of Hawthorne's aversion to self-portrayal, Longfellow noted that the volume was the kind that "excite[s] in you a feeling of personal interest for the author" (58). The two men had not been close in college (CE XV 249), and hence, before reviewing the volume, Longfellow had written to his friend inquiring about his "environments." Hawthorne had responded with a Gothic description of his decade-long seclusion and apprenticeship:

> By some witchcraft or other--for I really cannot assign any reasonable why and wherefore--I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. . . . I have made a captive of myself and put me into a dungeon: and now I cannot find the key to let myself out--and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. . . . For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed about living. It may be true that there have been some unsubstantial pleasure here in the shade, which I should have missed in the sunshine; but you cannot conceive how utterly devoid of satisfaction all my retrospects are. I have laid up no treasure of pleasant remembrances, against old age. (CE XV 252)

The fear of emerging from seclusion that Hawthorne describes in this letter grows out of a view of mainstream life as a "current" that has passed him by. He has been living in a "dungeon," a realm cut off from the two centers of antebellum American

life--the domestic circle and the marketplace. In his alienation he resembles the classic nineteenth-century agoraphobic, who responds to the "motions of commerce" by keeping to the shade, to "the protection of interiors or companions or shielding edifices" when outside the "private sphere" (Brown 174). This response, Gillian Brown asserts, is a way of sustaining "selfhood" against the pressures of a rapidly commercializing society. As a child, Hawthorne must have felt the pressures of advancing commerce in at least two painful ways--through the loss of his family's house after his father's death and through the decline of his native Salem as a commercial seaport.

But clearly, the ability to describe this period so articulately to a writer who had already achieved renown was a first step toward finding a way out of his captivity. *Twice-told Tales* provided a vehicle of escape. It helped Hawthorne to forge his first literary friendship. It also drew him into public life and family life. A copy of the book he sent to a Salem writer, Elizabeth Peabody, prompted a friendship with the Peabody family. Through Peabody Hawthorne would find, in the following year, his first government appointment and would meet the woman who would become his staunchest literary supporter and his wife. In his preface to the 1851 edition of *Twice-told Tales*, Hawthorne himself acknowledged the role that the various editions of this collection of stories had played in the making of his life: "These volumes have opened the way to most agreeable associations, and to the formation of imperishable friendships; and there are many golden threads, interwoven with his present happiness, which he can follow up more or less directly, until he finds their commencement here" (TS 1153).

As Hawthorne stepped out of his private sphere in the late 1830s to join the streams of commerce and culture he also began to find ways to allay the anxieties his reclusiveness posed for him as a writer. He began to build structures for himself in his fiction that would shelter his creative process and his emerging authorial persona.

Perhaps as a result of childhood losses, Hawthorne was obsessed with houses. His notebooks of the 1830s and 1840s are full of descriptions of houses both inhabited and abandoned that he encountered on his wanderings through New England. Not only did he construct his third novel around the history of a house, he also often referred to his works generically as edifices. As early as 1838, while emerging from the "dungeon" of his ten-year apprenticeship, he concludes a letter to Longfellow about plans for collaborating on a book of fairy tales with this imperative, "Think about it, and write to me; and let us get our baby-house ready by October" (CE XV 266-67). Twelve years later, when finalizing plans for publication of *The Scarlet Letter* he refers to "The Custom-House" in a letter to James T. Fields as "an entrance-hall to the magnificent edifice" of the novel (CE XVI 308). Again, in his preface to *The Snow-Image*, published in 1851, he describes his prefaces and introductions as entryways that "pave the reader's way into the interior edifice of a book" (TS 1154). It is remarkable, too, how many of Hawthorne's most admired works begin at the threshold of a house--the doorway where Young Goodman Brown takes leave of his beloved Faith, for example, or the prison door where Hester Prynne stands proudly before the people, or the "rusty wooden" facade of the old Pyncheon house that masks the brutal history of the Pyncheon family.

During his shadowy, ten-year apprenticeship in Salem Hawthorne had lived at the top of the Manning house in a room that in later years became a focal point for reflecting on the growth of his character and creative power. Writing to Sophia Peabody from that room in 1840, Hawthorne said:

> Here I have written many tales--many that have been burned to ashes --many that doubtless deserved the same fate. This deserves to be called a haunted chamber; for thousands upon thousands of visions have appeared to me in it; and some few of them have become visible to the world. If ever I should have a biographer, he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here; and here my mind and character were formed; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent; and here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently

> for the world to know me, and sometimes wondering why it did not know me sooner, or whether it would ever know me at all--at least till I were in my grave. And sometimes (for I had no wife then to keep my heart warm) it seemed as if I were already in the grave, with only life enough to be chilled and benumbed. But oftener I was happy--at least, as happy as I then knew how to be, or was aware of the possibility of being. (CE XV 494)

Although it was perched on the margins of life, the chamber that had fostered the growth of "mind and character" and the writing of numerous tales was also a center of creative power, a site of transformation more powerful for Hawthorne than any site in nature that his future neighbor Emerson might select. The protectiveness the chamber provided was crucial. For Hawthorne did not see the individual as an Emersonian "encloser," capable of standing tall amidst the grandeur of the universe because he incorporates the universe within. Between the "I" and the "not I" there had to be a zone separating the one from the other, a realm of "inhabited space," as Gaston Bachelard might characterize it, "of the non-I that protects the I" (5).

During the late 1830s Hawthorne began building structures to attach to his works in which he could represent himself as an authorial I and yet remain separate from the universe of his readers. From these places he could speak about his life and writing. As he became more confident of his authorial "I," he began inviting the reader into these structures. Among other writers associated with the "American Renaissance," Stephen Railton argues, Hawthorne is unique in this socializing impulse. "According to 'Self-Reliance,'" Railton says,

> the path to the highest truth leads 'from man, not to man.' In their own way, Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman each literalize this notion, carrying their readers into the middle of the ocean, the depth of the woods, away from all houses and rooms. Hawthorne too is alone when he discovers the A, but he is alone in 'the deserted chamber of the Custom-House.' He even finds it wrapped in 'faded red tape.' The custom-house is an ambiguous setting, but an unequivocally social one. By identifying his symbol with it, Hawthorne implicitly insists that his path as a seeker of truth leads to the idea of society that the other writers want to transcend. (109)

To offset the risk of speaking in an ever more personal voice in these prefatory spaces, Hawthorne associates each space with an actual structure that is not only personally significant to him, but also historically and culturally important to his New England readers.[2] To win authority for the idle wandering narrator of "Tales of the Province-House," for example, he describes in the prefaces to these tales the structure and atmosphere of the august, if forgotten, residence of the old Massachusetts colonial governors. In the prefaces to the *Grandfather's Chair* series, to justify his embroidery of historic evidence in his children's histories of New England, he poses in the preface the authoritative image of the patriarchal fireside chair. In his prefatory essay to *Mosses from an Old Manse* he consecrates the Edenic pleasures of his early married life in Concord by emphasizing the Old Manse's hallowed function as a factory of theological writing. And in the prefatory essay to *The Scarlet Letter* he excuses his preference for novel writing over government service through comically critiquing the inefficiencies sanctioned under the roof of the Salem Custom House. While representing important locations in the social and cultural heritage of New England, the enclosing spaces of the Province House, Grandfather's Chair, the Old Manse, and the Custom House also resemble, through their function, Hawthorne's room in the Manning House. They provide sites for reflecting on the process by which imagination transforms historical artifact. Yet they are also social spaces where writer and readers meet. Here Hawthorne poses models of self-invention and relation to community that speak to his middle-class readers' concerns. As sites of shelter, emergence, and connection linked to his own and his readers' cultural heritage, these enclosures were essential to Hawthorne's progress and growing reputation as an American writer. They were the means by

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[2] Michael Davitt Bell connects Hawthorne's use of houses with his addiction to "developing the associations of historically significant objects," and making legends out of them. "He often works up real history," Bell says, "by 'associating' it with an object he himself has made up." The Pyncheon house, he notes, is itself "an object of historical meditation," and the Custom-House a means of making a romance out of the invented scarlet letter. See Bell 197-98.

which he migrated from the realm of the short story to that of the novel, and from the status of reclusive magazine contributor to that of national literary figure.

From the late 1820s onward, Hawthorne had tried, with each collection of stories to develop a "framework" that would make the volume "something more than a collection" (Mellow 44). With his four-tale series, "Legends of the Province-House," which appeared in magazines in 1838-39 and opened Volume II of the 1842 edition of *Twice-told Tales*, he succeeded on a small scale. This series works on two levels. Set in revolutionary Boston, each of the four stories depicts a small but resonant moment in America's transformation from British colonial outpost to independent nation. In restaging these moments each tale invites the reader to engage in revolutionary consciousness, to experience through fictional means incidents that advanced the cause of independence and shaped the identity of the founding generation as well as that of the nation. Yet each tale is framed by a text rooted in the present. As a guide into and out of each tale, these frames draw attention to the mysteries of time and change and the power of art to represent and comment upon change. In the texts framing the legends, Hawthorne poses as a casual, Irvingesque figure who happens upon the mansion of the royal governors of Massachusetts Colony, now a shabby lodging house and tavern. He becomes enthralled with two tavern fixtures, elderly gentlemen who revive the spirit of the province-house with tales of colonial days which the casual wanderer retells in the province-house series "[w]ith some suitable adornments from my own fancy" (TS 653). At the opening of each tale, we see the narrator turn his back on the hubbub of 1830s Boston and go down a passage beneath an "upstart modern building" to a secluded courtyard where the province-house "hides its time-worn visage" (628). At the finish of each tale we witness and share the narrator's transformed consciousness as he leaves the province-house, observing the "ghostly sounds" he hears as he descends the staircase and his "thrill of awe" as he retraces his steps through the archway.

If the frames to these legends demonstrate the capacity of art to represent change, the tales themselves demonstrate the power of art to enact it. In each of the four stories an artistic production contributes to social and political transformation. In "Howe's Masquerade," for example, a procession of spectral figures magically appears at an ostentatious ball held by Governor Howe to distract loyalists from the artillery roar of Washington's siege of Boston. To the strains of a funeral march the procession flows down the grand staircase of the Province-House and out the front door. Hawthorne leaves little to the reader's imagination in this scene. "Now, were I a rebel," announces one of the guests, "I might fancy that the ghosts of these ancient governors had been summoned to form the funeral procession of royal authority in New England" (TS 634). Indeed, this theatrical event, presumably staged by Boston patriots, destroys Howe's authority in front of his own supporters. When Howe draws his sword upon the final figure in the procession, the man unswathes his cloak just enough for Howe to see his own face beneath. Before the eyes of Boston's most prestigious loyalists Howe rages at the prospect of his own defeat.

Through the rebels' "anti-masque" (Colacurcio 402), which overpowers Howe's masque, art becomes a form of political power. Hawthorne continues to explore this kind of power in the next two province-house tales, which also turn on artistic gestures staged to highlight and resist the oppressiveness of British colonial rule. In "Edward Randolph's Portrait" the image of the governor who robbed Puritan New England of its "democratic privileges" by obtaining the repeal of the first provincial charter presides darkly over Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson as he considers whether or not to sign an order allowing British regiments to occupy Boston. Randolph's face in the portrait is barely visible. Hutchinson's niece, Alice Vane, a rebel sympathizer who has been schooled in European painting, seeks to persuade her uncle to keep the troops out by working a temporary restoration on the

painting that reveals the "terrors of hell" haunting the cursed Randolph's face for betraying the people of New England. At that moment Vane's artistry only infuriates Hutchinson and drives him to sign the order. But her restoration of the portrait also has the more enduring effect of haunting the people who saw it in its transformed state. Witnesses to the signing "ever afterward trembled at the recollection of the scene, as if an evil spirit had appeared visibly among them" (TS 650) and Hutchinson many years later cried out on his deathbed that he was "choking with the blood of the Boston Massacre" and took on the "frenzied" look of the hated Edward Randolph (TS 650-51).

There is a mutual relation here between the political events of the American revolution, which are the context for these tales, and the artistic acts the tales depict. The legendary power of the portrait to haunt its viewers sanctions the revolutionary effort, while the success of that effort, known to every reader of the tales, justifies the artistic acts the stories depict. Yet, as Evan Carton points out, when art becomes more influential it loses its "security." "When art takes an active hand in the shaping of events," he asks, "does it not merely exchange acceptance of history's explicit direction for a much more insidious entanglement in a web of historical implication which it can neither circumscribe nor escape?" (176). Alice Vane's power, Carton observes, "is inextricably entangled with the power of Edward Randolph" (180). The question Carton articulates is posed in a more threatening way in the next story, "Lady Eleanore's Mantle." Here, English and American artistry are directly pitted against each other when the maddened, lovesick Jervase Helwyse begs the arrogant Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe to cast off her smallpox-infected mantle along with her cruel English pride. In this dramatic moment, staged before the British occupiers of Boston, Helwyse pleads the colonists' cause when he pleads his own. His forthright, impassioned speech, signifying rebel values, does not persuade Lady Eleanore to drop her richly embroidered defenses and join "the chain of human

sympathies." But Helwyse's prophecy of Lady Eleanore's death comes true. The intransigent aristocrat is destroyed by smallpox carried in her luxurious cloak. Confirming the power of American democratic artistry, a theatrical procession bears an effigy of Lady Eleanore wrapped in the infected mantle through the streets of Boston and commits it to a bonfire that purges New England of old England's contagious influences. This triumph is a hollow one. The leader of the procession is a man of "crazed intellect," and in the course of the action a magnificent work of art, the last creation of a dying woman, has been destroyed. As Larry Reynolds notes in his study of American writers' responses to events in Europe during 1848, Hawthorne was "disturbed" by violent revolutionary activity (81). This discomfort is implicit in the final scene of the legend and raises the question of the future: to what authority does Helwyse's mob commit a purified Boston? In this instance, art, in the hands of a madman, produces chaos.

If "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" represents the hazards involved when art leads the procession of change, "Old Esther Dudley," the final legend in the series, alters--yet reaffirms--the role of art in social process. Esther Dudley, the artist in this story, is the daughter of a once prominent family who has lived so many years on sufferance in the province-house in return for food and shelter that "her presence seem[s] as inseparable from it as the recollections of its history" (TS 668). Even after the last of the provincial governors has departed from Boston, Esther Dudley carries on in the vacant mansion as the last "one true subject" of the King in New England. One can't help thinking here of Hawthorne's childhood displacements resulting from the loss of his father and his compensating fascination with embellishing the records of his father's life. Esther Dudley becomes a symbol of resistance to such changes and a means of talking about such compensations. A "fable" springs up depicting Esther Dudley as capable of conjuring the world of the past out of a clouded antique mirror hanging in the province-house:

> [I]t was the general belief that Esther could cause the Governors of the overthrown dynasty, with the beautiful ladies who had once adorned their festivals, the Indian chiefs who had come up to the Province-House to hold council or swear allegiance, the grim Provincial warriors, the severe clergymen--in short, all the pageantry of gone days--all the figures that ever swept across the broad plate of glass in former times--she could cause the whole to reappear, and people the inner world of the mirror with shadows of old life. (TS 671)

The community who observe and know Esther invest her with fantastic powers. The myth of her powers grows out of the experiences of their children who, lured by gingerbread stamped with the royal crown, spend whole days listening to Esther's "stories of a dead world." The children come home as groggy as Rip van Winkle, more awake to events and persons of the past than to those of the present:

> At home, when their parents asked where they had loitered such a weary while, and with whom they had been at play, the children would talk of all the departed worthies of the Province, as far back as Governor Belcher, and the haughty dame of Sir William Phips. . . . "But Governor Belcher has been dead this many a year," would the mother say to her little boy. "And did you really see him at the Province-House?" "Oh yes, dear mother! yes!" the half dreaming child would answer. "But when old Esther had done speaking about him he faded away out of his chair." Thus, without affrighting her little guests, she led them by the hand into the chambers of her own desolate heart, and made childhood's fancy discern the ghosts that haunted there. (TS 673)

While the children of the community may regard Esther Dudley as invested with magical powers, the officials of the new republic view her as an artifact, a haunted and eccentric old woman with nothing to offer the present or the future. "You have treasured up all that time has rendered worthless," John Hancock, the arriving republican governor--whom she has mistaken for a representative of King George--tells her, "[a]nd I, and these around me--we represent a new race of men, living no longer in the past, scarcely in the present--but projecting our lives forward into the future. Ceasing to model ourselves on ancestral superstitions, it is our faith and principle to press onward, onward!" (TS 676). As Esther Dudley falls dead to the ground, he proclaims smugly, "She hath done her office!" (TS 677).

Critics tend to dismiss Esther Dudley the way John Hancock dismisses her. Evan Carton introduces her as "a deluded reactionary" (105) and Nina Baym describes her as "obviously crazy" (76). And yet, among the artists in these stories she stands the closest to Hawthorne. The two views Hawthorne poses of Esther Dudley--the private one shared by the community and the public one constructed by an official of the new republic--show two sides to a conflict that threads through Hawthorne's creative work and repeatedly arises in his prefaces. Esther Dudley embodies and unleashes one of Hawthorne's strongest drives as a writer--the impulse to reach back and revitalize the past, an impulse that might originate in Hawthorne's desire to bring to life with his child's pen the world his father recorded in his logbooks, and the writer himself. Yet what meaning does such work have within the context of republican America? Too much attention to history can inhibit the life of the present and the future, the new governor warns Esther as he seeks to effect a rupture with the past. Michael Colacurcio argues that to Hawthorne Esther Dudley represents continuity, rather than an old way of life that must be discarded. "What she stands for, finally," he says, "is the continuity which endures even the most radical of revolutions, a trust which at its deepest levels is not political but is the equivalent of historical process itself" (467). Like Esther Dudley, Hawthorne insists on continuity with the past as his subject, and consequently settles for a very small circle of listeners. More than once in his prefaces he disclaims all expectation of winning a wide audience with his writing. At the opening of "The Custom-House," for example, he announces, "The truth seems to be, however, that, when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and lifemates" (SL 121). Again, in his preface to *The Snow-Image*, he observes, "[E]ver since my youth I have been addressing a very limited circle of friendly readers, without much danger of being overheard by the

public at large" (TS 1154). Making this accommodation with obscurity gives Hawthorne the appearance of a writer sidestepping the question of the relevance of his work and pursuing undisturbed his passion for the past.

While Hawthorne appears to be following that passion he is also devising a viable role for himself as a writer in post-revolutionary America. We see this first in the framework to the "Legends of the Province-House" and in the links that join this framework to the tales. Through these devices Hawthorne finds a way to connect his antiquarian tales to the present and the future, and thereby make the series of stories "something more than a collection." Within each tale, near the end, the aged tale-teller notes that the incident at the center of the story has been turned into legend by those who have heard it; it has been changed from a single historical event into an ongoing supernatural occurrence. At the end of "Howe's Masquerade," for example, Mr. Tiffany reports that "superstition . . . repeats the wondrous tale that, on the anniversary night of Britain's discomfiture, the ghosts of the ancient governors of Massachusetts still glide through the portal of the Province-House" (TS 638-39). Likewise, at the end of "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" the aged loyalist notes that "[t]here is a belief. . . that, in a certain chamber of this mansion, a female form may sometimes be duskily discerned, shrinking into the darkest corner, and muffling her face within an embroidered mantle" (TS 666). As supernatural phenomena, these incidents will keep recurring. They become texts that reflect the past but also will live into the future. When commuted into legend by the community, the historical incidents at the root of each story become something to be told and re-told, read and re-read, texts that in fact *must* be re-read--as the Latin origin of *legend*, a future verb form expressing duty or necessity, connotes.

A parallel linkage between past, present, and future occurs in the texts framing each tale. In the concluding section of the frame to "Howe's Masquerade" the narrator--that is, the casual visitor to the province-house--struggles to sense the

supernatural qualities attributed to the mansion in the story he has heard: "When the truth-telling accents of the elderly gentleman were hushed, I drew a long breath and looked round the room, striving, with the best energy of my imagination, to throw a tinge of romance and historic grandeur over the realities of the scene" (TS 639). But all that reaches his senses are signs of the present--the smell of cigar-smoke and the sound of a spoon stirring a glass of whiskey-punch. The narrator's inability to recover the past, Colacurcio says, shows "a weakness of imagination." "He does not . . . know enough," Colacurcio argues. "He reacts chiefly to the aura and the tonalities of the story rather than to the substance or moral" (395-96). While the narrator's responses do seem self-conscious and overly anxious, they also seem designed to meet the reader half-way--in the present moment--and to draw the reader gradually out of the frame and into the legend, as the narrator himself is drawn in. When the narrator leaves the province-house and looks back at the illustrious staircase before passing through the archway, he feels the "thrill of awe" he has been waiting for. And by the time "Old Esther Dudley" is concluded he, like the children who visit the province-house, is immersed in the revolutionary world: "[w]e had babbled about dreams of the past, until we almost fancied that the clock was still striking in a by-gone century" (TS 677). The narrator senses that Esther Dudley might even appear, and the legend that she still walks the rooms of the province-house reconvert itself into reality. Denied that vision, the narrator leaves abruptly, "being resolved not to show my face in the Province-House for a good while hence--if ever" (TS 677). Nina Baym interprets this unceremonious departure as a renunciation of "the quest for historical legends" (75). Likewise, Evan Carton sees the narrator's flight as a repudiation of "his imaginative enterprise" (190). But these views neglect the narrator's role as the source of the stories. He will not show his face again because he must take up the office of Esther Dudley. He is driven now to

write down the stories, to preserve them within a literary framework--an impulse that mimics the supernatural forces at work within the walls of the province-house.

When Hawthorne wrote to Longfellow describing his life in 1837, he said that he feared his ten-year seclusion had deprived him of experiences he could write about: "I have another great difficulty, in the lack of materials; for I have seen so little of the world, that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stories of, and it is not easy to give a lifelike semblance to such shadowy stuff" (CE XV 252). Clearly his guise of the unknowing wanderer who happens upon the mysteries of the province-house--a pose that anticipates his accidental discovery of the scarlet letter in the second story of the Custom-House--masks an anxiety about finding compelling subject matter, an anxiety that he was able to discuss openly with Longfellow. In the framing text to "Howe's Masquerade" Hawthorne expresses another kind of anxiety more overtly. He is concerned about his capacity to enliven historical material, once he has settled upon it for his subject matter. "In truth," he confesses, "it is desperately hard work, when we attempt to throw the spell of hoar antiquity over localities with which the living world, and the day that is passing over us, have aught to do" (TS 639). Through these devices of masking and confession in the framing texts to "Legends of the Province-House," Hawthorne allows the reader a limited view of his creative process and dilemmas.

Despite his claim to Longfellow that he had been "carried apart from the main current of life," Hawthorne betrays anxieties in these texts that troubled a generation of writers and the nation at large. Writers of the early decades of the nineteenth century not only had to assert the viability of a new American literature in the face of England's literary power but, like all other Americans, also had to come to terms with the ideals and accomplishments of the American founders who had immediately preceded them. Prosperity separated the later generation from the earlier one. Nevertheless the later generation felt insecure. "A cultural situation had arisen,"

Michael Kammen observes, "in which their perception of tradition provided many Americans with aching pangs of self-reproach. Why? Because they felt themselves to be inferior in character and ability to their Revolutionary forebears" (31). And, as George Forgie notes, "Although the post-heroic [post-revolutionary] generation had a role to play in history, that role was not historic and therefore would not be memorable" (69) The new role, says Forgie, involved the work of "democratization, economic transformation, and expansion--that is, carrying out the implications of the father's work" (66), all tasks that require "busy-ness" rather than heroic action. The implications were as grave for writers as for others. "The meaning of the success of the fathers," Forgie says, "was that when their heroic tasks were completed, so was the story" (70).

For Hawthorne, writing historical fiction, especially fiction about American settlement and independence, offered a way around this dilemma. Through reimagining a historic event from Puritan or Revolutionary times, and applying to it "adornments" of his own "fancy," he could reengage in the heroic endeavor of founding. He could invent a "historic" role for himself. And he could extend the "story" by attaching to historical fictions a framework that linked the heroic past to the less substantial present. Fiction writing as Hawthorne pursued it during the 1830s could fortify the post-revolutionary generation by re-engaging it with the past. In addition, framing historical fiction within a present context, as Hawthorne did in "Legends of the Province House" and in subsequent works written in the 1840s, gave the present time--the "localities" of the "living world"--an authority of their own. To gain access to the legends of the past the reader had to linger in the shabby rooms of the present province-house. The reader also had to attend to an ordinary authorial figure--a source originating in the present day, a man off the modern street--as the medium for the legends. This necessity raised the status of the present-day author, placing him closer to the founding generation.

In the *Grandfather's Chair* series, three volumes of biographical stories for children published in 1840 and 1841, Hawthorne continued to experiment with framing. Here in place of a house that remains static while historical personages and events unfold around and within it, an august chair serves as a framing device that itself moves down through history. Ornately carved with flowers and foliage and topped with a grinning lion's head, the chair has passed in an improbable provenance from the hands of one renowned American personage to another from Puritan times down through the Revolution. In place of the whiskey-tippling regulars of the province-house who tell the tales associated with the mansion, Grandfather, who has sat in the chair "ever since [the children] could remember anything" (CE VI 10), parcels out stories of each of the chair's occupants that instruct his small listeners in New England values and culture. Puritan ministers exhorted the immigrant passengers of the *Arbella* from grandfather's chair. Roger Williams sat in it to pen his sermons. Anne Hutchinson presided from the chair at her Boston lectures. The British provincial governors gilded, varnished, and cushioned the chair to reassert royal authority. And Washington settled into it to plot the British expulsion from Boston.

Here, for the first time, Hawthorne also appends to each volume a discrete preface, a text standing outside the framing texts, where he presents and justifies his use of the device of the chair. Clearly these prefaces were addressed to parents of small readers and were intended to promote Hawthorne's treatment of New England history as suitable and engaging reading for children. But this practical purpose should not obscure a critical fact about these texts: for the first time Hawthorne stands outside the confines of his story, speaking as the author, and acknowledging the artifice with which he has constructed his work. Acknowledgment calls for justification. And in the rationale he offers we gain a fuller view of his concerns and strategies as an author. Clearly there was a strong commercial motivation behind

Hawthorne's desire to write for children, as his letters to Longfellow from this period attest.[3] Contrary to future statements denying any concern with attracting a large audience for his works, he shows here a strong desire to appeal to his young readers and their parents. He voices the same concern about the somberness of New England subject matter, for example, that is expressed by Child's eager young writer in the preface to *Hobomok*:

> The author's great doubt is, whether he has succeeded in writing a book which will be readable by the class for whom he intends it. To make a lively and entertaining narrative for children, with such unmalleable material as is presented by the sombre stern, and rigid characteristics of the Puritans, is quite as difficult an attempt as to manufacture delicate playthings out of the granite rocks on which New England is founded. (CE VI 6)

But while Child's writer proposes a New England novel of romantic heroism in the tradition of Scott, the speaker in Hawthorne's preface offers a domesticated history, one that permits a window onto its heroes' and heroines' private lives:

> There is certainly no method, by which the shadowy outlines of departed men and women can be made to assume the hues of life more effectually than by connecting their images with the substantial and homely reality of a fireside chair. It causes us to feel at once, that these characters of history had a private and familiar existence, and were not wholly contained within that cold array of outward action, which we are compelled to receive as the adequate representation of their lives. If this impression can be given, much is accomplished. (CE VI 5-6)

Hawthorne justifies his privatization of history in these volumes as a means of making New England's history engaging to a juvenile audience--a readership that Child had done much to develop during the 1830s through publication of the *Juvenile*

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[3] On March 21, 1838, Hawthorne wrote to Longfellow to follow up on a discussion about collaborating on a collection of fairy tales and argued that the project would not only expand their reputation but would reward them monetarily. "Seriously," he said, "I think that a very pleasant and peculiar kind of reputation may be acquired in this way--we will twine for ourselves a wreath of tender shoots and dewy buds, instead of such withered and dusty leaves as other people crown themselves with; and what is of more importance to me, though of none to a Cambridge Professor, we may perchance put money in our purses" (CE XV 266-67). After Longfellow decided to proceed with the project alone, Hawthorne wrote to him on January 12, 1839, teasingly threatening him with a plan for a competing book. "Really," he went on, "I do mean to turn my attention to writing for children, either on my own hook, or for the series of works projected by the Board of Education--to which I have been requested to contribute. It appears to me that there is a very fair chance of profit" (CE XV 288.

Miscellany. Through his use of the fireside chair Hawthorne seeks to win that audience by appealing to the complex domestic concerns of the middle-class antebellum family. The ideal antebellum home was a private place distinct from public life, a shelter from the vicissitudes of political life and the marketplace (Brown 3). But it was a public sphere as well, in the sense that "from the earliest years of the republic men and women progressives defined it as the place where citizens and citizenship were produced" (Baym *History* 6). By the 1830s, conduct books were advising parents to instill character and citizenship within the home through "loving nurture" (Brodhead 44). Grandfather's chair abets this defining function of the middle class home and family. The chair that heroically served major historical figures in action now provides the seat from which stories of model citizens can be lovingly told. This combined service comfortably fuses the public and the private realms in a way that supports the complex interdependencies of the two spheres of antebellum life. It also provided Hawthorne with a way of gaining entry for his writing into the middle-class domestic setting. Critical here is Hawthorne's use of the preface to gain acceptance of his privatization of the historical. Readers who nodded approvingly at the notion of exposing and fictionalizing the "private and familiar existence" of historical personages saw a decade later, in Hawthorne's exploration of secret sin among the Puritans in *The Scarlet Letter*, how far a writer committed to such an approach might take it.

Hawthorne began to step forward as an authorial figure and comment upon his work through the preface at a time when he was also beginning to forge closer relations with people outside his family and to become more active in public life. In 1838 he felt close enough to Longfellow to discuss collaborating on a collection of fairy tales to be called "The Boys' Wonder-Horn." In 1839 the friendship he had formed with Elizabeth Peabody brought him the job of weigher and gauger at the Boston Custom House. "They tell me that a considerable portion of my time will be

unoccupied," he wrote to Longfellow, "the which I mean to employ in sketches of my new experience" (CE XV 287). Instead, he wrote the *Grandfather's Chair* series. The idea for this series came out of a visit in 1840 with Susan Ingersoll of Salem, owner of the house of the seven gables. When Hawthorne complained of a lack of subject matter, Ingersoll pointed to an antique chair and suggested that he "make a biographical sketch of each old Puritan who became in succession the owner of the chair" (CE XV 456). Experiences of this kind in which he could have fruitful exchanges about his writing and professional situation with established and influential people must surely have helped to make life seem more actual and less dream-like. Hawthorne, however, would probably have attributed his new willingness to step forth as an author to his growing relationship with his future wife, Sophia Peabody. In an 1840 letter to Sophia he told her that his contact with her had "endowed" him with "real life":

> Thou only has revealed me to myself; for without thy aid, my best knowledge of myself would have been merely to know my own shadow--to watch it flickering on the wall, and mistake its fantasies for my own real actions. Indeed, we are but shadows--we are not endowed with real life, and all that seems most real about us is but the thinnest substance of a dream--till the heart is touched. That touch creates us--then we begin to be--thereby we are beings of reality, and inheritors of eternity. Now, dearest, dost thou comprehend what thou has done for me? (CE XV 495)

Establishing an independent household with Sophia after their marriage in the summer of 1842 gave Hawthorne an unaccustomed sense of substance and location in the world. In a notebook entry describing the arrival of visitors at the Old Manse he observes the feeling of authentication that being a householder has given him: "It was a pleasant sensation when the coach rumbled up our avenue, and wheeled round at the door; for then I felt that I was regarded as a man with a wife and a household--a man having a tangible existence and locality in the world--when friends came to avail themselves of our hospitality" (AN 334). Several other entries from this period express a new and welcome sense of rootedness. After a walking tour with Emerson

Hawthorne reports, "[W]e arrived safe home in the afternoon of the second day--the first time that I ever came home in my life; for I never had a home before" (AN 362).

In the study of the Concord house where Hawthorne began his married life with Sophia he wrote many of the stories that would be published in the 1846 collection *Mosses from an Old Manse*. One of these tales, "Rappaccini's Daughter," is introduced with a preface. While in the *Grandfather's Chair* prefaces Hawthorne speaks directly, as the author, promoting his approach to history in a straightforward manner, here he places himself at two removes from the story. Like Child, who stands apart from the text of *Hobomok* by posing in the preface as an established editor seeking to encourage a young, unknown writer, Hawthorne presents himself in the preface to "Rappaccini's Daughter" as a reviewer seeking to place an obscure French writer, M. de l'Aubépine (hawthorn in French), before American readers. The reviewer is deprecatory toward Aubépine's work and recommends it guardedly. Readers must count on these stories only to "amuse a leisure hour." If one seeks more, the tales "can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense" (TS 975). After citing the titles of various Aubépine works--*Contes deux fois racontées*, *Le Voyage Céleste à Chemin de Fer*, and so forth--the reviewer confesses to "a certain personal affection and sympathy" for the author, "though by no means admiration" (TS 976). This coy self-parody frames a serious self-assessment. The reason why Aubépine has no audience, the reviewer says, is that "he seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists. . . and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude." His fancy and originality might have drawn readers to him, "but for an inveterate love of allegory." "[H]e generally contents himself with a very slight embroidery of outward manners," observes the reviewer, ". . . and endeavors to create an interest by some less obvious peculiarity of the subject" (TS 975).

Like Lydia Maria Child in her preface to *Hobomok*, Hawthorne sought to empower himself with the literary establishment by fictionalizing himself in this preface. Both writers use a successful literary figure as a medium who lends authority to an unknown writer's work, in Child's case, a seasoned editor and in Hawthorne's a well-regarded reviewer. But while Child's fictions seem intended to compensate for her gender and inexperience, Hawthorne's seem designed to offset his reserve and his Americanness. In 1844 Hawthorne was accomplished and yet feeling misunderstood and underappreciated by American readers (Gilmore 53). In disguising himself as a French writer being introduced by an American reviewer, Hawthorne draws on the cachet attached to the discovery of an obscure European author. Obscurity and neglect, even if the works are insubstantial, then become novel. There is an excitement to gaining access to an as-yet-untranslated French work. Thus, while seeming to parody himself, Hawthorne is in effect parodying the strategies of American literary tastemaking. And the parody distracts the reader from the fact that the author is putting forward a list of his own titles and a self-appraisal that might be appropriated into the critical literature surrounding his work.

Besides seeking to promote his story by playing on his authorial image, Hawthorne is also using the preface to guide the reading of the story. Nina Baym points out that, while "Rappaccini's Daughter" is "one of the richest stories in the canon . . . . [t]he story may even be too rich, in the sense that it is susceptible to a number of partial explanations but seems to evade any single wholly satisfactory reading" (107). One issue here is that interpretations that focus, for example, on repressed sexuality in Beatrice's and Giovanni's relationship (Steele), or on Giovanni's failure of faith (Martin), or on the contest among the male characters for dominance (Leverenz) do not account for the preface. This is the first discrete preface Hawthorne wrote for an adult audience. The text's concern with authorial identity and self-representation suggests that the story it introduces is also caught up

with matters of authorship. Michael Gilmore argues for "a close connection" between the preface and the narrative that follows. He regards the story as an allegorical answer to the preface's implicit question of why Aubépine's work is unknown. Gilmore sees Giovanni as Hawthorne's reader, Beatrice as his art, and Baglioni and Rappaccini as his rivals--the two types described in the preface as "monopolizing current taste," Baglioni being a common "pen-and-ink man" and Rappaccini a Transcendentalist (64). Like the American public, which misunderstands Hawthorne's allegories, Giovanni misreads Beatrice. In effect, Gilmore says, "[t]he competing factions which dominate the American literary scene conspire with the reader to destroy [Hawthorne's] work (66).

There may be another way to link preface and story, one that shows the newly married Hawthorne reflecting back on his early solitary writing life in the garret in Salem. Indeed, in the same way that the theme of the novice writer introduced in the preface to *Hobomok* guides us to an understanding of Mary Conant as a writer/double for Child in the novel itself, the problems of achieving recognition raised by Hawthorne in the preface to "Rappaccini's Daughter" point toward linking Hawthorne, the little-known New England story writer, with Giovanni Guasconti, the untried medical student freshly arrived in Padua from the south. This line of interpretation, like Gilmore's, causes the weight of the story to shift from the frustrations of the young lovers in the garden to the deadly rivalry of the older men who observe them--Beatrice's father, Rappaccini, and Giovanni's mentor, Baglioni. The fatal competition of these two scientists mirrors and exaggerates the adversarial relation between critic and writer in the preface. As in the preface, the theme of writing is explored through displacement. Authorship is represented as scientific experimentation. Everyone in the story but Beatrice is a scientist/writer. If we read science as a metaphor for art, Beatrice is the unfortunate work of art with whom the naive Giovanni longs to merge himself and thereby

increase his creative power. As Leland Person notes, Hawthorne's language in describing the encounters between Giovanni and Beatrice "clearly links eroticism and . . . artistically creative surrender" (118). But is the power that created Beatrice--the power of art--angelic or demonic? This question tortures Giovanni as it preoccupied Hawthorne from his inquiry in "Fancy's Show Box" into the possible criminality of the writer's imagination, to his exploration in *The Scarlet Letter* of Chillingworth's predatory engagement with the soul of Dimmesdale. "Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes," Beatrice urges Giovanni, a statement that, however wise as a directive for approaching art, offers few clues to someone who longs to understand its powers. Meanwhile, Rappaccini gazes on Giovanni and Beatrice "as might an artist." His creative plan is fulfilled: he has ensnared an adoring suitor for his daughter, a devoted reader of his work. Yet this achievement cannot protect Rappaccini from the malicious maneuvers of his rivals. Insanely jealous of Rappaccini's creative success, the seemingly benevolent Baglioni, Rappaccini's arch-rival, devises a way to destroy his enemy's creation. He looks down from the garret window as Giovanni presses on Beatrice the evil "antidote" supposed to deliver her from the power of her father. Like venomous criticism, Baglioni's remedy kills Rappaccini's creation. Innocent of the fatal battle being waged between the two older men, Beatrice, as she dies, accuses Giovanni, her reader: "Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?"

In imagining the entry of Giovanni, a naive medical student, into the secluded garden of the renowned scientist Rappaccini, Hawthorne engages in his own experiment--one that seeks to dissolve the boundary between a work of art and the one who appreciates it. The story, like the preface, is a displaced autobiography. Giovanni, the appreciator, is not unlike Hawthorne himself, reading and writing on the margins of life in his Salem garret. Giovanni looks down into Rappaccini's garden from a "high and gloomy chamber" in the palace of a family, which, like the

Salem Hathornes, is renowned for a single infamous ancestor and is now in decline. In the way that Hawthorne's displacement of his persona onto an obscure French writer lends novelty to the preface, the projection of his early career onto a northern Italian city of "very long ago" enhances the romantic atmosphere of the story. We are intrigued by the strange relationships between man and nature and the transformations that occur. When Giovanni descends into the garden, the breath that the lovers exchange is the catalyst for dissolution of the boundary between them; the strange perfume exuded by Beatrice and her sister shrub gradually works its poison on Giovanni, slowly dissociating him from life, while the air of the world breathed by Giovanni makes Beatrice more human. "For the first time in my life I had forgotten thee," Beatrice exclaims to the poisonous shrub that sustains her (TS 993). When Baglioni seeks to warn Giovanni against Beatrice's destructive powers, Giovanni responds in disbelief, "so thoroughly had she made herself felt by him as a simple, natural, most affectionate and guileless creature" (TS 999). Yet total dissolution of the boundary between the lovers is impossible. They stand together in a liminal, and impossible space. Though Beatrice "craves love" and Giovanni longs to lead her back into "the limits of ordinary nature." Beatrice--a production of art--bears the burden of art; she "must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of time--she must bathe her hurts in some fount of Paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality--and *there* be well" (TS 1004).

Beatrice's parting words to Giovanni--asserting that his nature has more poison in it than hers--constitute a warning to the artist. Giovanni, like his mentor Baglioni, has permitted the wondrous achievements of others to distract and divert him from pursuit of his own course. He is appalled when he discovers that he has become like Beatrice, and like Hawthorne in his Salem "dungeon," "estranged from all society" and incapable of surviving outside the garden of artificial plants. "Accursed one!" he cries. "[F]inding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me,

likewise, from all the warmth of life, and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror!" (TS 1002). A once-captivating world is now horrific. What seemed like a wondrous fusion of the human and the natural now seems grotesque in its hybridity, created out of "perverted wisdom" (TS 1005). In this light Baglioni's moral stance becomes ambiguous. Is he maliciously destroying Rappaccini's work, or is he benevolently rescuing Giovanni from the power that has drained him of his humanity and his ambition? Baglioni functions indeterminately, as do the guides and elders in "My Kinsman Major Molineux" and "Young Goodman Brown." This ambiguity mirrors the uncertain motivations of the reviewer who speaks in the preface. Is he seeking to promote the works of M. de l'Aubépine or to demean them? The shifting realities and moral uncertainties of the world of the Paduan scientists ensnares Giovanni, just as the same qualities in the industry of modern authorship might fatally enmesh a young American writer.

In "Rappaccini's Daughter" Hawthorne reflects on the perils of isolation and obscurity he experienced during his long seclusion in Salem. Giovanni's longing to linger in the garden of experimentation and to embrace Rappaccini's renowned and wonderful creation suggests Hawthorne's longing during the Salem years to gain full access to his own creative power. The review of M. de l'Aubépine's work represents--and shelters--an equally strong desire in Hawthorne to win an audience for his writing. The preface's parodic mode, on the other hand, betrays a cynicism toward contemporary American audiences; they are impressionable and easily manipulated. In the space between story and preface reverberates a tension between Hawthorne's desire to appeal to a middle-class readership and his need to dismiss that audience for its failure to live up to his conception of the ideal reader. Michael Gilmore has observed that "formal dissonance" is a common means of expressing "divided feelings" in American romantic writing. "[T]he formal dissonances of *Moby-Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter*," he says, "grew out of their authors' indecision

about their identity as producers of literary commodities and about their relation to the mass reading public which they wished to cultivate quite as much as they resented" (11). If the dissonance between story and preface in "Rappaccini's Daughter" reveals contradictions in Hawthorne's attitude and approach toward his readers, the dissonance between this story and "The Old Manse," the preface to the *Mosses* collection, only further complicates Hawthorne's stance. In a sense, "The Old Manse" is a second reply to Longfellow's 1837 letter in which he confesses to Hawthorne "a lively curiosity to know something of your *environments* " (CE XV 253). Subtitled "The Author Makes the Reader Acquainted with His Abode," "The Old Manse" is an homage to the domestic. It conforms remarkably in tone and subject, with Longfellow's speculation in his 1837 letter about what Hawthorne's life must be like:

> I have always thought of you, as of one who had realized Jean Paul's idea of happiness.--"to nestle yourself so snugly, so homewise in some furrow, that in looking out from your warm lark-nest you likewise can discover no wolf-dens, charnel-houses or thunder-rods, but only blades and ears, every one of which for the nest-bird is a tree, and a parasol and an umbrella." (CE XV 253)

As if in response to suggestion from Longfellow, Hawthorne devised in his 1846 essay a picture of his life in which his friend's themes, in his 1837 letter, of shelter and "looking out," of nesting and nurturing, prevail. The kitchen-garden of ordinary vegetables and the old but generous orchard of the Old Manse contrast sharply with Rappaccini's laboratory of "malignant" exotics. Through the kitchen-garden, and other images of domestic productivity and providing, such as the fishing excursions with Ellery Channing on the Assabeth River, Hawthorne poses a cloistered setting in "The Old Manse" where creative energy is contained rather than unleashed. Here Hawthorne merely husbands the natural amenities he finds; he does not, like Rappaccini, experiment with creating new kinds. And rather than distance himself from the text by parodying a foreign literary persona in this preface, Hawthorne

proudly poses himself as host of the Old Manse welcoming the reader as a guest "entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing" (TS 1125). As with the *Grandfather's Chair* series, Hawthorne clearly wants to appeal to the domestically minded reader through this text. There is none of the ambivalence toward readership that arises in "Rappaccini's Daughter."

At the same time, Hawthorne seeks to give this essay about his domestic setting weight by associating it with national historical narrative. From the windows of the Old Manse, Hawthorne tells us early in the essay, a householder watched the revolutionary battle at North Bridge. But the battle itself is of no more interest to Hawthorne than the sermons the previous clerical inhabitants have written at the Manse. As in "Legends of the Province-House," Hawthorne gives us the American Revolution through a small, oblique incident that has been cast, through retelling, into legend. Appropriately, the story has been delivered to him orally by "Lowell, the poet." It concerns a boy chopping wood at the Old Manse, who hears the sounds of battle and, grabbing his axe, runs to the battlefield "to see what might be going forward." The British have retreated, but two soldiers lie dying on the ground. When one soldier raises himself and gives the boy "a ghastly stare into his face" the boy in "a nervous impulse" deals the soldier a fatal blow on the head with his axe (TS 1128).

Were this story a province-house tale, we might now find Hawthorne walking the field where the soldier died of his axe-wound "striving, with the best energy of [his] imagination, to throw a tinge of romance and historic grandeur over the realities of the scene" (TS 639). Hawthorne is indeed in the field with the soldier, but he is striving by far more intrusive and experimental means to reach back to the incident that has inspired this legend:

> I could wish that the grave might be opened; for I would fain know whether either of the skeleton soldiers have the mark of an axe in his skull. The story comes home to me like truth. Oftentimes, as an

> intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the bloodstain, contracted, as it had been, before the long custom of war had robbed human life of its sanctity, and while it still seemed murderous to slay a brother man. This one circumstance has borne more fruit for me, than all that history tells us of the fight. (TS 1128-1129)

Here the impulse to privatize history returns. "[R]omance and historic grandeur" are not what Hawthorne is after. Rather, he wishes to follow the internal consequences of an action on the margin of history. One could say that there is a cold objectivity to the desire "to observe how [the youth's] soul was tortured by the bloodstain," and that Hawthorne's impulse anticipates Chillingworth's ruthless probing of Dimmesdale's heart in *The Scarlet Letter*. Yet we also sense a feeling that he could be that boy dashing to the battlefield, eager to make his mark. The intensity of Hawthorne's identification with the youth, and the youth's marginality, make this psychological inquiry a form of courageous action. Here is another way of participating in American founding and extending its story--while also authenticating fiction-writing as a heroic enterprise. The blow that the American boy delivers to the British soldier's head opens a way for the writer into the past, and a way of establishing a continuum with that past through studying its private after-effects. Only the fictive process can offer access to this psychological realm. And "[t]his one circumstance," Hawthorne confides, with its tremendous psychological resonance, bears more fruit than "all that history tells us of the fight." Only fiction can get at the "truth" of history.

Allusion to the American Revolution is just one way in which Hawthorne authenticates his writing endeavors in the early pages of "The Old Manse." Association with clerical figures is another. The Old Manse has housed "a succession of holy occupants," authors of thousands of sermons--and Emerson as well. In the "Saints' Chamber," a garret room in the house, these "holy men, in their youth," like Hawthorne during his writer's apprenticeship in Salem, "slept, and

studied, and prayed" (TS 1134). With comic self-deprecation Hawthorne seeks to ally himself with this priestly class:

> Nor, in truth, had the old Manse ever been prophaned by a lay occupant, until that memorable summer-afternoon when I entered it as my home. A priest had built it; a priest had succeeded to it; other priestly men, from time to time, had dwelt in it; and children, born in its chambers, had grown up to assume the priestly character. It was awful to reflect how many sermons must have been written there. . . . I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue; and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the old Manse, well worth those hoards of long-hidden gold, which people seek for in moss-grown houses. Profound treatises of morality;--a layman's unprofessional, and therefore unprejudiced views of religion; --histories, (such as Bancroft might have written, had he taken up his abode here, as he once purposed,) bright with picture, gleaming over a depth of philosophic thought;--these were the works that might fitly have flowed from such a retirement. In the humblest event, I resolved at least to achieve a novel, that should evolve some deep lesson, and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone. (TS 1124)

A "writer of idle stories," a profaner of sacred space, Hawthorne nonetheless seeks to equal his august foregoers. He will in fact draw upon them for inspiration, for "intellectual treasure" that will advance him toward a great project and sanctify it. He will, "[i]n the humblest event. . . achieve a novel." But Hawthorne presumes here. In the Puritan tradition from which these clerics descend, novel-writing touches on God's creative prerogative. As if in deference to the Puritan--and Transcendentalist--distrust of fiction,[4] Hawthorne humorously presents the novel-writing endeavor as an afterthought, something to be tried if the attempt to write a "[p]rofound treatise on morality" should fail. Yet at the heart of the humor and self-deprecation there is an implicit hope that some hint of authority achieved by the dutiful sermon writers will rub off onto Hawthorne's "idle" endeavors.

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[4] "The strong New England prejudice against fiction," Barbara Packer notes, "made writing novels or short stories out of the question for most of the Transcendentalists." See Packer 424. The Transcendentalists inherited the Puritan view of invention which, as Ursula Brumm describes it, "regarded an allegorical world, or any fictional world not concerned with biblical themes as blasphemous, because men's inventive powers are thereby pitted against God's power of creation." See Brumm 126-27.

Having sought authority with his readers in the early pages of "The Old Manse" by associating his writing activity with the work of founding and spiritual guiding, Hawthorne then appears to set himself and the reader free to enjoy the idle pastimes of the present moment--to roam the house, contemplate the river, and putter in the garden. Yet threaded through these simple, pleasurable meanderings are metaphors that keep the subject of writing near the surface of the text and work to justify the writing life. The Concord River, for example, is also an idler. And like the mid-nineteenth-century man who chooses to write rather than engage in industry, the river is unproductive in contemporary terms:

> From the incurable indolence of its nature, the stream is happily incapable of becoming the slave of human ingenuity, as is the fate of so many a wild, free mountain-torrent. While all things else are compelled to subserve some useful purpose, it idles its sluggish life away, in lazy liberty, without turning a solitary spindle, or affording even water-power enough to grind the corn that grows upon its banks. (TS 1126)

But the reader must not "contract a dislike" towards "our slumberous stream," and implicitly toward the seemingly lazy, disengaged author, Hawthorne advises. The stream's reflective surface, like the imaginative mind, merges "a picture of the heaven that broods above it" with glimpses of "the black mud over which the river sleeps." reminding us that "the earthliest human soul. . . may contain the better world within its depths" (TS 1127). The river's apparent indolence--and the writer's--masks a unique capacity to absorb and reflect the multiple layers and complexities of experience. Further, the river's motions, like the motions of narrative, are a form of progress in understanding: "The winding course of the stream continually shut out the scene behind us, and revealed as calm and lovely a one before. We glided from depth to depth, and breathed a new seclusion at every turn" (TS 1140). Through his lyrical descriptions of their motions and surface reflections Hawthorne makes the Concord and Assabeth Rivers justify "the lazy liberty" of the writing life for its spiritual benefits.

It is difficult to accept the fact that Hawthorne did not write "The Old Manse" in Concord. We want to believe that this preface, Hawthorne's most sensuous work, was quietly spinning itself out in the study where Emerson wrote "Nature" while the summer-squashes were fattening themselves in the kitchen-garden and the apples were ripening in the patriarchal orchard. But Hawthorne came full circle in writing "The Old Manse." The Concord house having been reappropriated by its owners, and the family being short of cash, Nathaniel, Sophia, and their young daughter had been forced to retreat to the Manning house in Salem, where they lived temporarily until Hawthorne was appointed Surveyor in the Salem Custom House. Hence, "The Old Manse" was written in the garret room where Hawthorne began his writing life. Hawthorne had struggled to fulfill his commitment to write a preface for *Mosses* during the months preceding the move to Salem. While still in Concord, in July 1845, he had written to E. A. Duyckinck, his editor, about his plans for the preface and lack of progress:

> It was my purpose to construct a sort of frame-work, in this new story, for the series of stories already published, and to make the scene an idealization of our old parsonage, and of the river close at hand, with glimmerings of my actual life--yet so transmogrified that the reader should not know what was reality and what fancy. Perhaps such sketches would be more easily written after I have pitched my tent elsewhere. (CE XVI 105)

Hawthorne's instinctive feeling that the "sketch" might come more easily once he was living elsewhere was correct. The return to the garret of his youth prompted him to resume writing, although he did not produce the preface until April of 1846.[5]

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[5] Hawthorne's letters to Duyckinck during this phase chart a frustrated effort at composition. In October 1845 he wrote: "Here I am, accordingly, in the old dingy and dusky chamber, where I wasted many god years of my youth, shaping day-dreams and night-dreams into idle stories. . . . [M]y youth comes back to me here; and I find myself, sad to say, pretty much the same sort of fellow as of old--and already, though not a week established here, I take out my quire of paper and prepare to cover it with the accustomed nonsense. Doubtless there will be a result of some kind or other, in the course of two or three weeks, so soon as my mind has deposited the sediment of recent anxieties and disturbances" (CE XVI 126). In December there had been no progress and Hawthorne was very glum. "Peradventure," he said to Duyckinck, "I have reached that point in an author's life, when he ceases to effervesce; and whatever I do hereafter must be done with leaden reluctance, and therefore had better be left undone. Do not think me wilfully idle; for it is not so" (CE XVI 136). By January 1846, the preface still unwritten, he vowed to abandon story-

In his July 1845 letter to Duyckinck setting forth his "purpose" with "The Old Manse," Hawthorne says that he still hopes to develop a framework capable of unifying a story collection and compensating for its fragmentariness. He will again make the setting of his framing text cohere with its formal purpose; the setting will be a house of historic importance. But this time the incidents occurring in the house will be personal and domestic. As already noted, Hawthorne in his role as host clearly wants to appeal to the domestic interests of American readers in "The Old Manse." In addition, the essay's hospitable tone and open treatment of the writer's everyday concerns give the appearance of a desire for intimacy with his audience. Emerson may have been addressing this stance when he wrote about his Concord neighbor in his journal in 1845, "Hawthorn [sic] invites his readers too much into his study, opens the process before them. As if the confectioner should say to his customers Now let us make the cake" (405). Possibly to argue with Emerson's view, and certainly to clarify to his audience the kind of relation he wishes to establish, Hawthorne takes up the question of self-revelation in a direct address to his reader in the final pages of "The Old Manse":

> Mine honored reader, it may be, will vilify the poor author as an egotist, for babbling through so many pages about a moss-grown country parsonage, and his life within its walls, and wrought upon him, from all these sources. My conscience, however, does not reproach me with betraying anything too sacredly individual to be revealed by a human spirit, to its brother or sister spirit. How narrow--how shallow and scanty too--is the stream of thought that has been flowing from my pen, compared with the broad tide of dim emotions, ideas, and associations, which swell around me from that portion of my existence! How little have I told!--and, of that little, how almost nothing is even tinctured with any quality that makes it exclusively my own! Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being, and have we

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writing altogether: "[A]s I never mean to write any more stories (the one now in embryo excepted) we will offer this collection to the public as the last that they shall ever be troubled with, at my hands" (CE XVI 139-40). In submitting the preface to Duyckinck in April Hawthorne wrote, "The delay has really not been my fault--only my misfortune" (CE XVI 152). Mellow points out that Hawthorne had many other preoccupations during this period, chief among them being his mother's death in July 1845 and financial worry, which were tied to the suspense over his possible political appointment (267).

> groped together into all its chambers, and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so. We have been standing on the green sward, but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come. I have appealed to no sentiments or sensibilities, save such as are diffused among us all. So far as I am a man of really individual attributes, I veil my face; nor am I, nor have ever been, one of those supremely hospitable people, who serve up their own hearts delicately fried, with brain-sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public. (TS 1147)

The uncharacteristically grotesque image of a fried heart served up with brain-sauce expresses succinctly and vividly Hawthorne's scorn for confessional writing. Although he may reveal much about the process of his life--too much, Emerson says --the self that he puts forward, or, as we might say, invents, is only partial. We have been exposed to only a "narrow stream" of the author's experience, he insists, the portion that coincides with what is common to author and reader alike, the "green sward. . . where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come."

This strategy of showing only a narrow glimpse of his domestic life eases what Michael Gilmore has seen as Hawthorne's deepest division as a writer--the conflict "between his longing for popularity and his dread of having his inner being violated" (12). Limited self-representation protects the privacy of Hawthorne's "inner being"--what he will call "the inmost Me" in "The Custom House"--while also serving the social needs of his audience.[6] Through his circumscribed view of his private life in the Old Manse Hawthorne offers his readers not only an exemplary domestic space upon which they can model their own homes and lives, but also a common domestic space for the nation, a house that has been inhabited since the nation's beginning and continues intact and productive. This domestic space, Sandra Tomc notes, does not resemble "the midcentury notion of that inner, private sanctum

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[6] J. Hillis Miller argues in his analysis of "The Minister's Black Veil" that the "inner being" as Hawthorne circumscribes it is in fact incommunicable. "Even if he could succeed in embodying his secret selfhood in words," Miller says, "they would not be legible to others." Hawthorne's appeal to "the common" becomes all that is possible. See Miller 55-59.

called 'Home'" (164). Indeed, as a hive of productivity it seems more to hearken back to the materially self-sufficient eighteenth-century household. This larger meaning of the house that links the present moment with the period of the nation's founding could allay anxieties about fragmentation of the Union, communities, and families prevalent in America in the 1840s. Post-revolutionary malaise, already discussed here, translated into a fear of political disintegration to some Americans, including Lincoln, who in his 1838 Lyceum speech warned that ambitious men, finding little challenge in the work of maintaining the "edifice" of the Union, might "set boldly to the task of pulling [it] down" (114). In addition, as material production shifted out of the home and into manufacturing centers and transportation systems were developed to support those centers, the domestic setting and function had to be redefined and communities were forced to look outward and re-envision themselves as part of a growing nation (Zboray 71). Hawthorne addresses these experiences through his appeal to "the common" at the end of "The Old Manse": "I have appealed to no sentiment or sensibilities, save such as are diffused among us all," he says. What is important here is the assertion that there *is* a ground common to all readers and writers. Following upon this assertion, the preface to *Mosses*--and the preface as a generic form--become a site where community and national identity can be reconceived. In "assuming a personal relation with the public" and in seeking "to stand in some true relation with his audience," as he describes his efforts in "The Custom House," Hawthorne insists upon the importance of fiction-writing in American cultural and social life. Publishers were alert to the potential in literature to offer readers a powerful, if illusory sense of community during the antebellum period, Ronald Zboray observes. "In a time of economic chaos," he says:

> the wide-open literary market-place was an unlikely arena in which to transact cultural unification or rediscover community wholeness. Yet faith can transcend reality; publishers pushed the cant of nationality alongside the elegies to villages, and readers felt they needed a sense of belonging in whatever form. . . . [E]conomic development

> provoked the problem and proferred the solution, in the form of illusory, print-oriented connectedness that could pose as community. (77-79)

Interestingly, Hawthorne's assertion of the "connectedness" among readers, and between readers and writer, coincides with more than one reviewer calling him a writer of national importance. Writing in the *American Whig Review* after the publication of *Mosses*, Charles Wilkins Webber was "very happy to perceive in [Hawthorne] something of that breadth, depth, repose, and dignified reliance, which we have, perhaps unreasonably, asked as worthy characteristics of a truly National Literature." Likewise, Samuel W. S. Dutton wrote in the *New Englander* that "[t]he works of Nathaniel Hawthorne place him, in our judgement, in the first rank of American authors, in the department of imaginative literature" (Crowley 128, 135).

This recognition came at a time when Hawthorne was enjoying as well some prominence in "official life" as Surveyor of the Salem Custom-House. Ten years after reporting to Longfellow that he lived "apart from the main current of life," Hawthorne seemed to have arrived at a center. He had been given a presidential appointment in the town of his birth with a salary adequate to support his young family. But during this three-year period, as with the stint at the Boston Custom House five years earlier, official life almost completely supplanted writing. "I had ceased to be a writer of tolerably poor tales and essays," Hawthorne reports in "The Custom House," "and [became] a tolerably good Surveyor of the Customs" (SL 151). "Whenever I sit alone, or walk alone," he wrote to Longfellow after taking the job, "I find myself dreaming about stories, as of old; but these forenoons in the Custom House undo all that the afternoons and evenings have done" (CE XVI 215). The forenoons were not lost, however, as every reader of *The Scarlet Letter* knows. His observations of official life as it was conducted in Salem and his subsequent ejection from the surveyorship paved the way toward the work he most wished to accomplish--the writing of a novel.

With the writing of "The Old Manse" Hawthorne had come upon a form that satisfied his need for a framework for his stories. Indeed, he seemed to discard the notion of a framework altogether in favor of another architectural conception--the "entrance-hall." Yet the long personal essays that open *Mosses from an Old Manse* and *The Scarlet Letter* do more than introduce the reader to the author and his "edifice." Taken together, they also constitute a frame for Hawthorne's Custom-House experience, and thereby function as a two-part autobiography offering the reader views, respectively, of Hawthorne's domestic life and public life. While seemingly opposed in their settings, the two essays also demonstrate the dynamic interplay between home and marketplace in antebellum America. "The Old Manse," an ostensible sketch of domestic life, teems with concern about productivity and exchange, while "The Custom-House," announced as a sketch of commercial life, reaches its fullest power in a scene of a moonlit parlor strewn with sewing and toys. To authenticate the second project, Hawthorne strives to give the appearance of picking up in "The Custom-House" where he has left off at the end of "The Old Manse." Having found "a listener or two on the former occasion," when he introduced his audience to his "abode," he feels prompted now, he says, to "again seize the public by the button" and speak of the three years subsequent to his departure from Concord. His justification for introducing the reader to the place where he has been employed is the need to explain how the historic records upon which *The Scarlet Letter* is allegedly based came into his possession and to offer "proofs of the authenticity" of the narrative contained in those records (SL 122). That Hawthorne uses his own previous writing to gain authority for a current project shows increased confidence in his standing with his audience. In "The Old Manse" he had sought authority by reference to clerical writers and to Emerson.

"The Old Manse" and "The Custom House" are also linked by a common theme of questing. On rainy days in the Old Manse Hawthorne burrows in the garret "in search of any living thought, which should burn like a coal of fire, or glow like

an inextinguishable gem, beneath the dead trumpery that had long hidden it" (TS 1136). This ongoing search for "treasure of intellectual gold," alluded to several times in the essay, yields no reward. "All that I had to show, as a man of letters," Hawthorne reports at the end, "were these few tales and essays, which had blossomed out like flowers in the calm summer of my heart and mind" (TS 1148). This statement is double-edged. He himself has produced "[n]o profound treatise of ethics--no philosophic history--no novel, even, that could stand, unsupported, on its edges" (TS 1148). But at the same time there has been no inspiration to build upon; among the "venerable" clerical books in the garret "all was dead alike," both old and new "were alike frigid," "retained no sap" (TS 1136-38). This search for "any living thought," for intellectual gold, continues at the Custom-House, where Hawthorne as Surveyor assesses not only the commodities that pass through the port of Salem but also each member of the Custom-House corps, the "patriarchal body of veterans" who sit in tipped-back chairs reviving "the frozen witticisms of past generations" (SL 132).

Ultimately Hawthorne discards the hope of finding an external source of inspiration. Using his own past work, "The Old Manse," as a platform for his new essay and novel, he draws upon his own inventive powers to provide the historical impetus for the work. The tale of the discovery of the manuscript that forms the basis of *The Scarlet Letter* borrows the historical figure of Salem Surveyor Jonathan Pue, whom Hawthorne adopts in "The Custom House" as his "official ancestor." Here, instead of displacing authorship geographically, as he does in the preface to "Rappaccini's Daughter" by attributing the story to M. de l'Aubépine, Hawthorne displaces authorship historically, giving credit to--and gaining authority from--a custom-house surveyor and antiquarian of earlier and more distinguished times in Salem. Through the fiction he embroiders around the figure of Pue--in which he ascends to the "second story" of the Custom-House and discovers Hester's history

and the scarlet letter--Hawthorne can fulfill his ongoing quest for intellectual treasure in exactly the terms he has set forth in "The Old Manse." Not only does he find among Surveyor Pue's private papers material to activate "a mind that would otherwise have eaten up with rust," he also finds gold, and an object that burns--the tattered scarlet letter worn by the subject of Surveyor Pue's narrative. Here Hawthorne commutes incident into legend, not through the use of supernatural occurrences as in "Legends of the Province-House," but through the invention of physical artifacts. The sensation of "red-hot iron" that draws a shudder when Hawthorne applies the scarlet letter to his breast is a culmination of physical engagements with the past throughout his work that begins with the thrill of awe the narrator feels on descending the Province-House steps and continues with the imagined exhumation of the British revolutionary soldier buried near the Old Manse.

In his discussion of Jonathan Pue's "papers" Hawthorne stresses the "private nature" of the documents and their inconsequentiality to "the business of revenue." Extending the fiction of discovery, he speculates that "[o]n the transfer of the archives to Halifax, this package, proving to be of no public concern, was left behind, and had remained ever since unopened" amidst "the heap of Custom-House lumber" (SL 144-45). As in "Legends of the Province-House" Hawthorne chooses to work here with an incident on the margins of history. But he finds a more personal and compelling way to engage with this incident and to extend the story into the present. The link between Hawthorne and his own early Salem ancestors is broken; they would find him, as a writer of "story-books," a "degenerate fellow," he says (SL 127). Yet there is an alternative way to reach two hundred years back and connect Hester Prynne's Boston with the present-day Custom-House. The linkage is forged by the decaying but nonetheless vibrant Collector of the Custom-House, the most colorful and appealing of the men whom Hawthorne sketches. The "soul and spirit of New England hardihood," the Collector is Hawthorne's model of heroism.

On the Niagara frontier "[he has] slain men with his own hand. . . but, be that as it might, there was never in his heart so much cruelty as would have brushed the down off a butterfly's wing. I have not known the man, to whose innate kindliness I would more confidently make an appeal" (SL 137). "[A]s much out of place as an old sword" at the Custom-House (SL 138), the Collector is nonetheless of service to Hawthorne. The slayer of men who would not harm a butterfly incorporates the gentle pastoral of the writer in retreat at the Old Manse with the militant fervor of the guillotined civil servant of the Custom-House. His vow on the eve of a desperate foray, "I'll try, Sir!", becomes Hawthorne's vow to the ghost of Surveyor Pue "to bring his mouldy and moth-eaten lucubrations before the public" (SL 147). Through this motto, Hawthorne avails himself of the Collector's stirring heroism to legitimize the imperative that drives him, after the political debacle of the Custom-House, to write a novel. On submitting the manuscript of "The Custom House" to J. T. Fields, Hawthorne declared, "In the process of writing ['The Custom House'], all political and official turmoil has subsided within me, so that I have not felt inclined to execute justice on any of my enemies" (CE XVI 305). Direct vengeance was unnecessary. As a writer of sketches and stories, Hawthorne could wreak political vengeance through displacement. The Collector did battle for him, albeit retroactively at Niagara.

But among the community of ancestors that Hawthorne devises in his two major prefaces the Collector is an anomaly. Assuming the judicial function of his forebear John Hathorne, Hawthorne the descendant weighs the ultimate accomplishments of these men and finds every one of them wanting. Their fault lies in their refusal to engage. The Concord clerics "in the very act" of writing "set themselves apart from their age," Hawthorne complains in "The Old Manse." The books they have left behind in the library are no help to future readers; they lack a sense of contact with "the Age itself" and hence with any period (TS 1137).

Hawthorne treats this act of setting oneself apart with reverent humor in "The Old Manse." The clerics wrote diligently and earnestly, even if their productions now seem mouldy. But Hawthorne's brush with the corruption of his own "Age" in a patronage job makes his critique of the Custom-House officials, who hang on beyond their time, more urgent and more judgmental. "[A] Custom-House officer, of long continuance, can hardly be a very praiseworthy or respectable personage," he asserts. "[T]he very nature of his business . . . is of such a sort that he does not share in the united effort of mankind" (SL 151). He is not required to struggle as others do. "[W]hile he leans on the mighty arm of the Republic," Hawthorne says, "his own proper strength departs from him," leaving him without the initiative to join in any other endeavor when, inevitably through the vicissitudes of public life, he is thrown out of office (SL 152). If in appearing to serve the spiritual life of the community the Concord clerics were overly separate and individualistic, they nonetheless sustained themselves and were productive. The Salem customs officers, on the other hand, in their masquerade of public service are lessons in individual and collective failure.

In the body of *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne goes so far as to give the failure to engage a criminal cast by juxtaposing it with Hester's and Arthur's ostensible crime of adultery. Through what David Leverenz terms his "evasive mixture of sympathy and judgment" (270), the narrator becomes Hawthorne's mechanism for setting one "crime" against the other as he persistently draws our attention to the self-isolating tendencies of all the major characters. Of Chillingworth, he asks for example, why he did not come forward to claim Hester when he saw her exposed on the scaffold in the marketplace. His first speculation seems sympathetic to Chillingworth's position as betrayed husband: "He resolved not to be pilloried beside her on her pedestal of shame." But the narrator then describes Chillingworth's alteration of his identity and disowning of his wife in sweepingly

critical terms: "Unknown to all but Hester Prynne, and possessing the lock and key of her silence, he chose to withdraw his name from the roll of mankind, and, as regarded his former ties and interests to vanish out of life as completely as if he indeed lay at the bottom of the ocean, whither rumor had long ago consigned him" (NC 219). Implicit in the narrator's choice of metaphors is the sense that, in dissociating himself from Roger Prynne and his attachments, Chillingworth has spurned the rest of humanity and has thus sinned against the community.

Dimmesdale's disengagement is more complex. He can "only be at ease in some seclusion of his own," we are told (SL 174). Yet, as the most inspired preacher, he stands at the center of the Boston community. The narrator makes little comment on Dimmesdale's refusal of Pearl's request, when Hester and Pearl join him on the scaffold at midnight, to repeat the scene there at noontide and publicly affirm his connection with his family. But when Dimmesdale confides to Hester his wish to confirm the congregation's faith in his purity by preaching the Election Sermon before their flight to Europe, the narrator points to his flawed nature:

> We have had, and may still have, worse things to tell of him; but none, we apprehend, so pitiably weak; no evidence, at once so slight and irrefragable, of a subtle disease, that had long since begun to eat into the real substance of his character. No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true (SL 304)

As he proceeds to the meeting-house on the appointed day, he is so disengaged from his audience, says the narrator, "so unattainable in his worldly position, and still more so in that far vista of his unsympathizing thoughts" (SL 324-25), that he is oblivious to his surroundings and cruelly refuses Hester any glance of recognition. This refusal is an example of what Sacvan Bercovitch calls the sin of "concealment" at the heart of *The Scarlet Letter* -"the deliberate masking of who one is in order to deny one's actual state of connectedness" (8).

Hester, also, too insistently refuses connection, the narrator says, even though, through "the office of the scarlet letter" she is privy to a unique, "sympathetic knowledge" of "the hidden sin in other hearts" (SL 192). Her punishment, he says, has turned her "from passion and feeling, to thought" (SL 259), and she exercises a "latitude of speculation" that is freeing, but in separating her from society, erroneous:

> For years past she had looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established; criticizing all with hardly more reverence than the Indian would feel for the clerical band, the judicial robe, the pillory, the gallows, the fireside, or the church. The tendency of her fate and fortunes had been to set her free. The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers,--stern and wild ones,--and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss. (SL 290)

As the narrative of *The Scarlet Letter* progresses, the narrator's commentary makes Hester's and Arthur's self-isolating actions seem more transgressive than their violation of the community's sexual code. As the narrator often presents them in his commentaries, Hester and Arthur are frozen into prisons of self that prohibit transformation. One can't help thinking here of the immutable condition of Hawthorne's own parents--his father's early death and his mother's subsequent and permanent retirement from society. Only Pearl, whose involuntary isolation is perhaps the most painful feature of the novel, has the potential to reconnect. The narrator projects for her a future far different from the lives of her parents. After her persistent attentions to Dimmesdale have finally won her his public acknowledgment of her as his daughter, the narrator reports, "The great scene of grief, in which the wild infant bore a part, had developed all her sympathies; and as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it" (SL 339). There is a sense of tragic parental sacrifice at this moment that, if it doesn't exonerate

Hester and Arthur from their refusal to connect with their community, gives at once purpose and closure to their suffering.

We want to resist this narratorial voice, particularly when it takes issue with Hester's and Arthur's stances. It is difficult to join in the narrator's criticism of Hester's intellectual rebelliousness after the cruel opening scenes at the prison-door and in the marketplace. And it is hard to dismiss Arthur for his weakness, as the narrator does, when Chillingworth's incursions on Dimmesdale's nature are so insidious. To speak of engagement in these contexts is to ask for a conformity requiring a total denial of self. Finally, in light of all this individual suffering, one resists joining the narrator in his faith in the "great heart" of the people. The narrator asserts that the people would not have treated Dimmesdale as Chillingworth does in his "intimate revenge." The people's great heart, he says, "would have pitied and forgiven" (SL 238). The taunting and ostracism of Hester would seem to belie this. Yet the people do offer forgiveness in the end, at the scaffold. At the sight of Arthur joined with Hester and Pearl, the narrator tells us, the people's "great heart was thoroughly appalled, yet overflowing with tearful sympathy, as knowing that some deep life-matter--which, if full of sin, was full of anguish and repentance likewise" (SL 337). The cost of the people's forgiveness, of course, is self-exposure and submission of one's own will to the collective will of the law.

Hawthorne himself had recently been exposed as a public official and punished by the political system. In his exploration of the psychological aftermath of exposure and punishment in *The Scarlet Letter* he wrestles with his own ambivalence toward this process. Through his characters he plays out an individualistic resistance to social controls, while through his narrator he asserts the necessity of individual adherence to community and law. Hence, although *The Scarlet Letter* is a romance, its narrator takes an anti-romantic view. The narrator wins the day. Hester's and Arthur's reward is forgiveness by their peers, rather than

a better life in a better place. The questions this outcome addresses reverberate through "The Old Manse" and "The Custom-House" as well as through the novel. When the domestic harmony and continuity of the Old Manse are disrupted and Nathaniel and Sophia are turned out of the house, where should they go? When the truculent federal eagle hovering over the Custom-House door throws its young out of the nest, where should they seek shelter? What should a Democratic civil servant do once he has been guillotined by the Whigs?

Certainly, cycles of change were inscribed on Hawthorne's life from an early age by the premature death of his father, and were impressed on his imagination by the shadow of the American Revolution. Part of the pain of his ejection from public service must have been its apparent repetition of early displacements. "Begin all anew!" Hester urges Arthur. Go deeper into the forest, she says. "There thou art free!" (SL 287-88). Certainly Hawthorne appears to be fleeing his birthplace of Salem at the end of "The Custom-House." Soon Salem will be a memory, he announces. But when he imagines his prospective place and identity, the greater freedom implied is a contained one. There is an insistence on a communal framework. He will be a "citizen" of "somewhere else" crowded with "other faces" (SL 157). And in departing he declares, "My blessing on my friends! My forgiveness to my enemies!" (SL 156). Even if we take this statement ironically, his terms make it clear that, rather than sever all connections, he wishes to replace them. He has demonstrated in his novel that the refusal to own connection deadens the self. This principle is the driving force behind his two major prefaces. Writer and reader must stand together on the scaffold.[7] "[T]houghts are frozen and utterance

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[7] In his study of the influences of European revolutions on writers of the American Renaissance, Larry Reynolds notes the reverberations that Hawthorne's image of the scaffold sets into motion. "The association of a scaffold with revolution and beheading," Reynolds says, "particularly the beheading of Charles I and Louis XVI, explains, I think, why Hawthorne uses it as his central and dominant setting. It links the narrator of 'The Custom-House' sketch with the two main characters in the romance proper, and it raises their common predicaments above the plane of the personal into the helix of history." See Reynolds 84-85.

benumbed," he says on the opening page of "The Custom-House," "unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience" (SL 121). In opening his experience to his readers in his prefaces Hawthorne adheres to what he sees as an imperative of authorship that stems from the imperatives of citizenship. As Stephen Railton observes, "Protagonists can flee society, but authors cannot. . . . Perhaps literary creation should mean finding and freely enjoying a territory of one's own imagination, but in fact it means moving in just the opposite direction: toward others" (21-22).

Hawthorne's problematization of freedom in "The Custom-House" and *The Scarlet Letter* originates in "The Old Manse" with the fishing excursions he takes with Ellery Channing up the Assabeth River. On these trips the two men "cast aside all irksome forms and straight-laced habitudes" to "live like the Indians or any less conventional race" (TS 1138). They glide deeper and deeper into a transcendental realm where the boundaries between nature and its reflection on the river's surface and on the mind fall away. "I could have fancied that this river had strayed forth out of the rich scenery of my companion's inner world," Hawthorne says (TS 1139). Temporal and social boundaries dissolve also: "The painted Indian, who paddled his canoe along the Assabeth, three hundred years ago, could hardly have seen a wilder gentleness, displayed upon its banks and reflected in its bosom, than we did" (TS 1140). The Assabeth's urgings to "[b]e free! Be free!" remain with the men in Wordsworthian echoes that will follow them in later days as they cross the threshold of a house or tread "the thronged pavements of a city" (TS 1141). A romantic text might close at this point. But for Hawthorne there must always be a return to the community. Young Goodman Brown must face the townspeople; Arthur Dimmesdale must face his congregation. And unlike the returns of Dimmesdale and Brown, who have strayed too far into the wilderness of their own psyches, the return to the Old Manse and its restraints offers rewards:

> And yet how sweet--as we floated homeward adown the golden river, at sunset--how sweet was it to return within the system of human society, not as to a dungeon and a chain, but as to a stately edifice, whence we could go forth at will into statelier simplicity! How gently, too, did the sight of the old Manse--best seen from the river, overshadowed with its willow, and all environed about with the foliage of its orchard and avenue--how gently did its gray, homely aspect rebuke the speculative extravagances of the day! It had grown sacred, in connection with the artificial life against which we inveighed; it had been a home, for many years, in spite of all; it was my home, too;--and, with these thoughts, it seemed to me that all the artifice and conventionalism of life was but an impalpable thinness upon its surface, and that the depth below was none the worse for it. Once, as we turned our boat to the bank, there was a cloud in the shape of an immensely gigantic figure of a hound, couched above the house, as if keeping guard over it. Gazing at this symbol, I prayed that the upper influences might long protect the institutions that had grown out of the heart of mankind. (TS 1142)

The act of returning reaffirms Hawthorne's long-felt need for a home, for a starting and finishing place that frames and contains "speculative" experiments with freedom. In the golden afternoon light the Old Manse comes to stand for all social institutions. Having strayed from them like a prodigal son and then returned with an altered vision, Hawthorne prays for their protection. He turns away from them again in "The Custom-House," angry at the dehumanization and creative enervation that engagement with institutional processes inflicts. In that turning away he does not seek to escape into an illusionistic world as he does in "The Old Manse." Instead, informed and demoralized by an engagement with social processes, he stands his ground, like Hester, and engages in critique.

The constraints that Hawthorne places on freedom are of course much easier for the reader to accept in his commentary on the return to the Old Manse than they are in the narrator's commentary on Hester's radical speculations. Here we might ask what it would be like to read *The Scarlet Letter* without "The Custom-House." Without the welcoming passage through the "entrance-hall" the reader might turn back from "the magnificent edifice." Hawthorne's demonstration of his own understanding of the dynamics of freedom and community in "The Custom-House"

make the reading of *The Scarlet Letter* more tolerable. Here is a case where the preface braces the reader for the difficulties the novel puts forth.

The questions Hawthorne poses about authorship in "The Custom-House" are essentially the same question posed in "Legends of the Province-House" with the expulsion of Old Esther Dudley from the governors' mansion. What significance and what influence can a writer of fiction have in postrevolutionary America? Hawthorne's early career seemed to carry him from the sidelines of American social and commercial life into the heart of it. Between the 1820s and the 1850s he won a national reputation as a fiction writer and rose to a respected post in government service. If we follow Hawthorne's "autobiographical impulse[s]" through his early prefaces we see a continuing effort to make the American writer a focus of public attention. As Lauren Berlant notes, Hawthorne "speaks in an exemplary way" in "The Custom-House" (3). He also disposes of traditional notions of margin and center that are played out by his central characters in his novel. Hester's and Arthur's tragic error is their continual definition of self in relation to a fictitious center. They fail to fully recognize that in fact there is no center, that they live among a plurality of sinners. Like the many figures in *Hobomok* whose ideas and identities are too fixed to permit them to participate in change, Hester and Arthur are the New World's old world. They too must disappear, as the detailed description of their tombstone at the end of the novel demonstrates. In the end the novel turns its readers back to its prefaces. Hester and Arthur cannot serve as models for antebellum Americans. Hawthorne's self-representations in his prefaces as a citizen/writer seeking a true relation with his citizen/readers argue that the writer can.

Chapter Four

The Return of the Novelist: Henry James's Prefaces and the Works of 1902-1908

Twice in his career Henry James wrote extensive appraisals of his literary life and accomplishments. The first was a blend of memoir and self-critique inscribed partly in pencil in a notebook James carried with him on a return visit to America in 1881-82. The second was a formal and public discussion James addressed to his readership in the eighteen prefaces he wrote between 1906 and 1908 for the deluxe collection of his novels and stories, *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, called by James the New York Edition. This self-examination followed a trip to America, the first return after 1882. Each text is a stock-taking in which, among other things, James analyzes his writing methods and assesses his productivity. As might be expected of a man of forty, James is anticipatory in the 1881-82 American Notebook: he finds fault with the way he works and exhorts himself to do better. At sixty, on the other hand, he is retrospective and proud of his accomplishments: in the prefaces he analyzes that success. Clearly, coming home evoked in James a sense of accountability and a desire to prove himself a vital participant in the culture and economy of his native land. The accountability worked in two directions. For while he was taking stock of his own literary life and achievements in his notebooks and prefaces, James was also appraising America and the accomplishments of other Americans in biographical and travel writing. The results were mixed. Although in the end James could take pride in his own career, he was continually critical toward America. By 1905, when he wrote *The American Scene* , he had evolved an ironic conclusion: one must separate from America if one wanted to succeed as an

American artist. This view pervades James's writing of this period. His last major fictional works--*The Golden Bowl* and "The Jolly Corner"--demonstrate the necessity of establishing distance from one's origins. At the same time, the prefaces to the New York Edition pose alternative social standards and models that dispense with national and cultural boundaries altogether and celebrate identity as the product of personal history.

In his 1881-82 notebook, James looks back in order ultimately to look forward. He recalls his decision during the summer of 1875 to expatriate, his subsequent wanderings in Europe, and his settlement in London. His references to friends and places outnumber allusions to the novels and sketches he was writing at the time. This string of "impressions" fulfills the directive he gives himself on the opening page of the notebook:

> I have lost too much by losing, or rather by not having acquired, the note-taking habit. It might be of great profit to me; and now that I am older, that I have more time, that the labour of writing is less onerous to me, and I can work more at my leisure, I ought to endeavour to keep, to a certain extent, a record of passing impressions, of all that comes, that goes, that I see, and feel, and observe. To catch and keep something of life--that's what I mean. (N 213-14)

Contrasting with the loosely connected notes on travel and new acquaintances are a tender eulogy for his mother, who died during his American visit, and intermittent confessions about his writing life, including a discussion of his longing to write for the theatre. The notebook for 1881-82 finishes with an ardent exhortation that is both grandiose and painfully self-deprecating, given that James had just published *Portrait of a Lady*:

> If I can only *concentrate* myself: this is the great lesson of my life. I have hours of unspeakable reaction against my smallness of production; my wretched habits of work--or of un-work; my levity, my vagueness of mind, my perpetual failure to focus my attention, to absorb myself, to look things in the face, to invent, to produce, in a word. I shall be 40 years old in April next: it's a horrible fact! I believe however that I have learned how to work and that it is in moments of forced idleness, almost alone, that

> these melancholy reflections seize me. When I am really at work. I'm happy, I feel strong, I see many opportunities ahead. It is the only thing that makes life endurable. I must make some great efforts during the next few years, however, if I wish not to have been on the whole a failure. I shall have been a failure unless I do something *great* . (N 232-33)

At issue in these remarks framing James's 1881-82 notebook is the question of how to work--how to convert experience into writing and how to discipline one's mind to produce a great written work. Embedded in this question is another question--the issue of where to locate oneself. This matter has been firmly decided, James asserts. He retraces in his notebook the stages by which he has come to choose England for his home--his dutiful attempt first to satisfy himself in New York, his experimental months in Paris, and his final embrace of London, "the most possible form of life" (N 218). "My choice is the old world," he insists. "There is no need for me today to argue about this: . . . the problem was settled long ago . . . My work lies there--and with this vast new world, *je n'ai que faire* . . . . I feel as if my time were terribly wasted here!" (N 214). James does not explain in this private memorandum *how* the problem was settled long ago. He speaks only of the "terrible burden" on American writers to come to terms with Europe and ultimately to "choose." No European writer "is obliged to deal in the least with America," he complains (N 214). The firmness of James's stance in these statements bespeaks the difficulty of making such choices and keeping to them. It also bespeaks the particular quandary imposed on James and his siblings by the family's incessant trans-Atlantic movement, a quandary that William saw as affecting Henry the most. "[H]e is . . . a native of the James family," William observed to Alice, "and has no other country" (Menand 30).

These passages were not James's first dismissal of his homeland as a place to write and live. Two years earlier, in 1879, he had published a critical essay on Hawthorne where he had listed--in what has become James's most frequently

repeated comment on America--a lengthy inventory of the country's deficiencies.[1] In this essay he had also dismissed Hawthorne as a model for the present-day American expatriate. In Hawthorne's Italian notebooks James saw a rigid and parochial sensibility that he associated with the past generation:

> Hawthorne presents himself to the reader of these pages as the last of the old-fashioned Americans. . . . What I mean is that an American of equal value to Hawthorne, an American of equal genius, imagination, and, as our forefathers said, sensibility, would at present inevitably accommodate himself more easily to the idiosyncracies of foreign lands. An American as cultivated as Hawthorne, is now almost inevitably more cultivated, and, as a matter of course, more Europeanised in advance, more cosmopolitan. (H 138-39)

James's patronizing treatment of Hawthorne, Richard Brodhead notes, "is the work of a recently emerged author bent on putting the tutors of his youth behind him" (138). His strategy, Brodhead says, is to reverse the mentor/student roles by associating Hawthorne with a "time of immaturity" and thereby to relegate his literary mentor to a less worldly state (138). Indeed, in his critique of Hawthorne as a failed cosmopolite and in the pledges he makes to Europe in his American notebook, James appears to declare his independence from family, literary forefathers, and country. Yet, at the same time he remains American. As he makes clear in his notebook, he cannot escape the unique "burden" of choosing between America and Europe. Nor does he seem to wish to. Generation by generation, Americans are maturing, he observes in his discussion of Hawthorne, and this presents him with a unique opportunity. Implicit in his critique are the possibilities that James might through his writing articulate a new, cosmopolitan ideal for Americans and that through his own example he might provide a model of that ideal.

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[1] James finds "an extraordinary blankness" in Hawthorne's American diaries, which he says reflects "the crude and simple society in which he lived." A novelist needs "an accumulation of history and custom, . . . manners and types" in his surrounding environment, James argues, in order to work (H 47-48). James's inventory of what America lacks becomes faintly ironic at the end, where he specifies examples that are uniquely English--"no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow . . . . no Epsom nor Ascot!"

Twenty-five years later, just before embarking on his second self-appraisal in the prefaces to the twenty-four-volume deluxe edition of his works, James wrote a biography of the American sculptor William Wetmore Story, a near contemporary of Hawthorne and a friend of James who had recently died in Rome after living there for forty years. Clearly, the intervening years of life abroad and his own explorations of the "international theme" had softened James toward the preceding generation. The biography opens, not with a presentation of Story, but rather with a chapter titled "The Precursors," in which James offers tender expressions of filiopiety toward "the light skirmishers, the *éclaireurs* who have gone before," who like pilgrims or pioneers in reverse, made Europe "easy" for James's generation (S 3-4). The frustration James expressed in 1879 over Hawthorne's parochialism is gone, leaving only his pleasure in the opportunities that the early, "primitive" expatriates give him for creating dramatic fiction:

> The dawn of the American consciousness of the complicated world it was so persistently to annex is the more touching the more primitive we make that consciousness; but we must recognise that the latter can scarcely be interesting to us in proportion as we make it purely primitive. The interest is in its becoming perceptive and responsive, and the charming, the amusing, the pathetic, the romantic drama is exactly that process. (S 6)

In presenting himself as Story's biographer, James in fact models himself after Hawthorne in his role as the antiquarian who rummages through attics: "A boxful of old papers, personal records and relics all, has been placed in my hands, and . . . I avail myself of an existing instance and gladly make the most of it" (S 7). Like Hawthorne when he immerses himself in events of revolutionary times, James also confesses a tendency of his imagination "to lose itself" in "that period of touching experiment" (S 4) in which his artist forefathers suffered "the tribulations from which we are exempt" (S 10). James, too, like Hawthorne and Child, must come to terms with his status as follower of a founding generation: "All the discoveries are now made," he laments, "and, with this, most of the feelings, the sweetest and

strangest, have dropped. We know everything in relation to the objects that used to excite them--everything but that we do feel. We are in doubt of that--everything has been so *felt* for us" (S 12). Here James presents in new terms a familiar generational quandary. Just as the children of the founders of the nation were tormented by what to *do* , the children of the original artist expatriates are confounded by what to *feel*

In the winter of 1902-1903, after completing the biography of Story and while he was starting to write *The Golden Bowl*, James came upon a surprising solution to this quandary. He would return to America for a visit of six or eight months. It would be the first trip home since 1882. His reasons, he told his friends and family, were the same ones that had drawn him from America to Europe in the 1870s. Europe was growing familiar and dull, while America was emitting the hazy lure of the unknown. In America discovery would be possible again. "[M]y native land, in my old age, has become, becomes more and more, romantic to me altogether," he wrote to Sarah Butler Wister. "[*T*^]*his* one, on the other hand has, hugely and ingeniously ceased to be" (L 259). To his brother William he said:

> I *should* like to think of going once or twice more again, . . . to Italy, where I know my ground sufficiently to be able to plan for such quiet work there as might be needfully involved. But the day is past when I can "write" stories about Italy with a mind otherwise pre-occupied. My native land, which time, absence and change have, in a funny sort of way, made almost as romantic to me as "Europe," in dreams or in my earlier time here, used to be--the actual bristling (as fearfully bristling as you like) U.S.A. have the merit and the precious property that they meet and fit into my ("creative") preoccupations . . . . (L 272)

He wanted to "see everything . . . to see the Country" (L 273), he told William, and proposed that he support his travels by writing a book about what he had seen. Accordingly, after finishing *The Golden Bowl* in the summer of 1904, James sailed for New York and spent a year travelling through the "bristling U.S.A." visiting

friends, lecturing, and making the notes that would provide the basis for *The American Scene*.

The return to America was only one part of James's solution to the expatriate dilemma. The other part was to revisit his own work. In 1900 Scribners had proposed publishing a deluxe edition of James's fiction. Riverside had put out deluxe collections of the works of nineteenth-century American writers and Scribners had enlarged the market by putting into special editions the works of living authors, such as Stevenson and Kipling (Culver, "Ozymandias" 45). These efforts were partially a response, Stuart Culver notes, to "a growing desire among American readers to occupy a different and more privileged relationship to the text and its author" (44). James had dismissed the 1900 proposal to re-package his own work as being too vulgarly commercial (46-47). But by 1904 he was reconsidering. Throughout his writing career James had negotiated diligently with his British and American publishers to gain maximum exposure for his work.[2] Yet, in spite of these efforts, while he was writing what would be his last novels in the early years of the twentieth century, he saw his standing with the marketplace grow less secure. The *Century* reneged on serialisation arrangements for *The Golden Bowl* and royalties for *The Ambassadors* fell short of advances (Anesko 169, Kaplan 473-74). James began to view a deluxe edition of his works as a means of refreshing his relations with his readers and of enlarging his audience. He decided to try both to engage the public by telling the story of the writing of each work and to shape their critical responses through presenting his own analysis. The vehicle for these discussions would be the preface. He told Scribners:

> I desire to furnish each book, whether consisting of a single fiction, or of several minor ones, with a freely colloquial and even perhaps, as I may say, confidential preface or introduction,

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[2] In his study of James's relationship with the literary marketplace, Michael Anesko notes that James was one of the first writers to work successfully enough with American and British publishers to gain from both "the security of American law and the ambiguity of the English" (36).

> representing more particularly, perhaps, a frank, critical talk about its subject, its origin, its place in the whole artistic chain, and embodying, in short, whatever of interest there may be to be said about it. (L 367)

Like the return to America, this endeavor held both a practical and a romantic allure for James. His fiction, he felt, had not yet received the attention it deserved. The deluxe edition would put his work forward in a style more appropriate to the quality of his writing than past presentations. The more dignified appearance of these volumes and the serious, yet engaging critical tone of the prefaces would attract the recognition previously denied him:

> My hope would be, at any rate, that [the prefaces] might count as a feature of a certain importance in any such new and more honorable presentation of my writings. I use that term honorable here because I am moved in the whole matter by something of the conviction that they will gain rather than lose by enjoying for the first time . . . a form and appearance, a dignity and beauty of outward aspect, that may seem to bespeak consideration for them as a matter of course. Their being thus presented, in fine, as fair and shapely will contribute, to my mind, to their coming legitimately into a "chance" that has been hitherto rather withheld from them, and for which they have long and patiently waited. (L 367)

James reminded his publisher that he had never "committed" himself in print "in any way" about his writing and asserted that his prior reticence would enable him to bring "a certain freshness of appetite and effect" to the preface-writing endeavor (L 367).

In his letter to Scribners James portrayed his fictional works as disenfranchised beings patiently awaiting a "chance" for their cause to be righted. James would be their advocate and the prefaces the texts with which he would argue. James's conception was a bold one. Hawthorne had spoken confidentially and frankly with his readers in his longer prefaces, but had not directly pressed his novels and stories upon those readers. He had treated the life and culture surrounding the writing, not the writing itself. James, of course, was writing his prefaces at a different stage in his career; each of the works in the New York Edition had already appeared in print. Nonetheless, for an American novelist to address

readers at such length about creative ambition and process was unprecedented. And as already noted, James was seeing a decline in the sales of his novels at the time that the New York Edition was being planned. The uncertainty of James's standing in the marketplace during this period prompts the question of what emboldened him to take up the preface-writing project.

One experience that clearly fueled James's literary endeavors during the years 1902-1908 was the writing of *The Golden Bowl*. As he was composing this novel he formulated his plans for returning to America and for revising and republishing his previous work. By the time he was writing the preface to *The Golden Bowl*, the New York Edition was nearing completion and *The American Scene* had already appeared. *The Golden Bowl* , then, and its preface constitute a textual frame for this period. They also constitute a thematic frame. If one reads *The Golden Bowl* through its preface, one becomes aware that beneath the narratives of familial and marital relations in this novel run stories of a writer's emergence, separation from family and country, and contention with a misapprehending audience--the same struggles out of which James spun creative autobiography and a theory of fiction in the prefaces to the New York Edition. From this perspective the writing of *The Golden Bowl* was an essential precedent and complement to the writing of the prefaces.

Before exploring this relationship further it is necessary to acknowledge the problems that critics have pointed to in reading James's prefaces and in examining any one of James's novels or stories alongside its preface. Blackmur's collection of the prefaces, *The Art of Fiction*, published in 1934, remains a touchstone for critical controversy, as does his assumption that the prefaces "made an essay in general criticism which had an interest and a being aside from any connection with [James's] own work, and that . . . they added up to a fairly exhaustive reference book on the technical aspects of the art of fiction" (xvi). As Anne Margolis points out, Blackmur

and subsequent critics--like James's character Hugh Vereker in "The Figure in the Carpet"-- "have been only too eager to search for a . . . unified pattern in 'the order, the form, the texture of the New York Edition.'" Citing James's remark to Howells that the prefaces, if taken alone, would provide a guide for aspiring novelists, Margolis suggests that James "himself paved the way for and did much to foster this highly idealized version of his own career" (184, 185). Reading James's prefaces as a unified theory, Margolis argues, has perpetuated "a seriously skewed image" of James as a writer exclusively concerned with craft (184). Hershel Parker sees another kind of distortion--one produced through Blackmur's divergences from the order of composition. Parker proposes testing previous critical conclusions regarding the "development" of James's theory of fiction by reorganizing and rereading the prefaces according to the sequence of composition (288-91). In the strongest and most recent critique of the Blackmur tradition, John H. Pearson argues that *The Art of the Novel* constitutes a "parasitic supplement" that has "devoured its host," the novels and tales. At the same time, in Blackmur's edition, Pearson says, "[t]he prefaces are stripped of their transformative power" as "critical discourse that relates two realms--the literary and the extraliterary . . . . [I]n Blackmur's presentation of them, the literary realm has been amputated and the extraliterary is suppressed" (20).

Indeed, when readers attempt to explore the relationships between the literary and extraliterary realms potentially joined by the prefaces they run across difficulties. As Carren Kaston observes, "The prefaces often distort the fiction they evaluate by sponging it of emotional complexity and moral ambiguity in favor of the relative clarity of propositions about theory and technique." They produce in the end, Caston says, "a different version of the novels' material" than that offered by the novels themselves (13). Stuart Culver finds that they also take an oblique approach toward problems of composition: "Invariably for James the trivial, superficial circumstances

prove the ones most necessary to the actual work of composition," Culver says. "[C]onsistently the prefaces make marginal conditions appear central" ("Representing the Author" 123). In response to these types of difficulties Paul Armstrong proposes a manner of reading the prefaces that draws upon James's narrative technique. "Reading James's prefaces is a strange, often bewildering experience," Armstrong says, "because they both . . . [raise] and [refuse] to satisfy the reader's expectation that they will provide anticipatory structures of interpretation to help make sense of the works they introduce" (125). But paradoxically, Armstrong argues, the usefulness of James's prefaces lies precisely in their independence from the novels. The prefaces "discipline the reader's attention," he says, by requiring a "doubled reading"--the same kind of reading that the novels require. While the reader is absorbing James's account of his writing experience and his theory of writing he or she is also responding to James as a centering consciousness whose "interpretive attitudes. . . are as much on display and as much an object for the reader's scrutiny as the impressions of a Lambert Strether or a Maggie Verver" (128). Armstrong concludes that "[t]he prefaces should be read like the fictions they introduce, and the fictions should be read like the prefaces, both requiring an impossibly doubled attention to the object represented (novel or tale, character or event) and to its mode of apprehension (James's critical consciousness, the attitude of the central registering intelligence)" (128).

Armstrong's approach is a useful one for examining the autobiographical elements of *The Golden Bowl*. His method rests on the assumption that James functions in the preface in the same way that Maggie Verver functions in the novel. Indeed, writer and character do make common assertions within their separate spaces in these texts. Both figures demonstrate the power of creative action. In the preface to *The Golden Bowl* James turns back to questions about reviving and revising originally raised in the preface to *Roderick Hudson* in the first volume of the New

York Edition, and he invites the reader to reflect with him on the shared experience of revisiting his work. Then, in a culminating manifesto, he declares writing to be the supreme form of action--precisely because of the "traceable" relation between writer and work. Since the writer always has the chance of revisiting what he has written, he is "always doing" and never done. This is "conduct with a vengeance" (P 1340-41). Such a recognition and assertion is a triumph for James. During the 1890s, writing in his notebooks, he repeatedly wished for the ability, as a writer, to *do* with a vengeance:

> To live *in* the world of creation--to get into it and stay in it . . . this is the only thing--and I neglect it, far and away too much; from indolence, from vagueness, from inattention, and from a strange nervous fear of letting myself go. If I vanquish that nervousness, the world is mine. (1891) (N 62)
>
> Oh, soul of my soul--oh, sacred beneficence of *doing*. (1894) (N 94)
>
> Ah, just to let oneself go--at least; to surrender one's self to what through all the long years one has (quite heroically, I think) hoped for and waited for--the mere potential, and relative, increase of quantity in the material act--act of application and production. One has prayed and hoped and waited, in a word, to be able to work more. And now, toward the end, it seems within its limits, to have come. That is all I ask. Nothing else in the world. I bow down to Fate, equally in submission and gratitude. (1895) (N 114)

These passages are expressions of what James refers to in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* as his "religion of doing" (P 1340). The need to give his writing a sacred cast in the notebooks and the prefaces compensates for James's early fear, as described by R. W. B . Lewis, "that to be a writer was to be merely a passive observer, uninvolved with the actions of life" (160), a fear exacerbated by the service of his younger brothers Wilky and Rob in the Union Army during the time that Henry was striving to launch a literary career. Forty years after the Civil War, James is able to declare resoundingly that "to 'put' things is very exactly and responsibly and interminably to do them" (P 1340). Writing is as viable an activity as soldiering, governing, or commerce.

Paralleling James's affirmations about "doing" in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* is Maggie Verver's discovery, in the novel, of her own brilliant capacity for action. Maggie is a passive figure in the early sections of the novel. She is the daughter who has been given a million a year and the generous friend and wife who must not be taken advantage of (GB110). She seems perfectly content with her role. But after the assignation of her husband the Prince with Charlotte, her friend and step-mother, in Gloucester, Maggie begins "to doubt of her wonderful little judgement of her wonderful little world" (GB 307). She begins to "put" things both to herself and the people around her. She contrives gestures to effect a change in her "practically unattackable" situation. The terms James uses to describe Maggie's campaign to rebalance familial and marital relations are the same terms he uses in his notebooks when he celebrates the capacity to let oneself go with writing. They are the same terms he uses in the preface to *Roderick Hudson* when he describes the tendency of the writer's canvas "to lead on and on" (P 1041). At the moment that she begins to doubt, Maggie lets herself loose. Determined not to reveal her suspicions about the Prince and Charlotte, she engages them with lively interrogations about the Matcham houseparty and their Gloucester sightseeing:

> Maggie went, she went--she felt herself going; she reminded herself of an actress who had been studying a part and rehearsing it, but who suddenly, on the stage, before the footlights, had begun to improvise, to speak lines not in the text. It was this very sense of the stage and the footlights that kept her up, made her rise higher: just as it was the sense of action that logically involved some platform--action quite positively for the first time in her life, or, counting the previous afternoon, for the second. The platform remained for three or four days thus sensibly under her feet, and she had all the while with it the inspiration of quite remarkably, of quite heroically improvising. Preparation and practice had come but a short way; her part opened out and she invented from moment to moment what to say and to do. She had but one rule of art--to keep within bounds and not lose her head; certainly she might see for a week how far that would take her. She said to herself in her excitement that it was perfectly simple: to bring about a difference, touch by touch, without letting either of the three, least of all her father, so much as suspect her hand. (GB 348)

In this passage Maggie becomes James, inventing her role as she goes, while also inventing the rules for invention. The labor is hard but exhilarating. It works invisibly, by a charm, "touch by touch," without her audience suspecting how much she understands. She is a reservoir of "ideas" and she rejoices in her sudden capacity to translate them into action.

To gain greater insight into the shift in relations after Charlotte and the Prince become involved, Maggie arranges a dinner party of the group that went to Matcham so that she can observe them: "Oh she was going, she was going--she could feel it afresh; it was a good deal as if she had sneezed ten times or had suddenly burst into comic song. . . . [S]he was dancing up and down, beneath her propriety, with the thought that she had at least begun something" (GB 360-61). What Maggie has begun is the piecing together of a narrative by which she will win authority within her world. The authority she reaches for is the same kind that James is seeking to achieve through his fiction. Her audience--her intimates--are not attending her; they misread her, they ignore her, just as, in James's view, his reading audience was not giving his works their "chance." The actions she takes to draw their attention to her and to correct their misreadings are quintessentially literary--and Jamesian. She is "the witnessing consciousness," as Millicent Bell describes James's central characters, who through:

> [o]bserving, deciphering, appearances . . . dramatizes the effort which is not only the character's but the author's and . . . the reader's, to create a history. The labors of the Jamesian consciousness are narratological. They aim, often with only partial success, at a putting-together of event to make a story and at the discovery of meaning in this story. (33)

Maggie's actions involve the same activities associated with writing that James describes in the prefaces. She observes, she notes, she wonders, she walks the London streets. She encounters a man who gives her the "germ" for the narrative she is struggling to compose--the shopman who, in his concern over having

overcharged Maggie for the golden bowl, visits her and provides her unwittingly with something far more valuable than the bowl--the story of his encounter with the Prince and Charlotte and hence the evidence of their prior intimacy. The shopman supplants Maggie's husband at this point. "He did for me more than he knew, " she tells the Prince in their confrontation over the affair with Charlotte. "He took an interest in me, and taking that interest, he recalled your visit, he remembered you and spoke of you to me. . . . I inspired him with sympathy--there you are! But the miracle is that he should have a sympathy to offer that could be of use to me" (GB 460).

Maggie's relation with the shopman is primarily, though, a literary one. The shopman is a muse who, in the transaction over the golden bowl, invests her with the capacity to produce the story that will empower her in her marriage and her family. The shopman also demonstrates James's faith in the potential for the literary to guide and influence the social. In his feelings and gestures the shopman is an exemplary partner. The story of Maggie and the shopman, which the Prince asks "to hear over again" (GB 479), drives the Prince into a long phase of self-scrutiny during which he slowly turns toward his remarkable wife. Maggie savors the power that her imaginative endeavors give her in the midst of stultifying social constraints. She circles the card players at Fawns, "holding them in her hand," knowing that "in a single sentence" she could ruin the game (GB 486-87). "[T]hey might have been figures rehearsing some play of which she herself was the author. . . . [T]he key to the mystery, the key that could wind and unwind it without a snap of the spring, was there in her pocket" (GB 488).

James's conception of action in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* is a theorizing of Maggie's peformance as writer in the novel. In his later novels, Millicent Bell observes, James deprecates action in a way that critiques the Victorian work ethic and its social repercussions (37). Yet while he is critiquing what Bell

calls the Victorian "worship of *productive* energy" (37) he is also reconceiving action in social rather than material terms and asserting a place for writing at the pinnacle of social action. In the preface to *The Golden Bowl* James not only asserts that writing is action, he goes further by posing a dichotomy of social acts and literary acts that places the literary above the social:

> [O]ur literary deeds enjoy this marked advantage over many of our acts, that, though they go forth into the world and stray even in the desert, they don't to the same extent lose themselves; their attachment and reference to us, however strained, needn't necessarily lapse. . . . We are condemned, in other words, whether we will or no, to abandon and outlive, to forget and disown and hand over to desolation, many vital or social performances--if only because the traces, records, connexions, the very memorials we would fain preserve, are practically impossible to rescue for that purpose from the general mixture. We give them up even when we wouldn't--it is not a question of choice. Not so on the other hand our really "done" things of this superior and more appreciable order. (GB 1340)

Next to intuitive and imaginative play, social action and arranging are ephemeral. James demonstrates this principle in the competition between Fanny Assingham and Maggie Verver for control over the relations in their circle. Social "complications" are Fanny Assingham's metier. Driven by an "irrepressible interest in other lives," she cannot resist arranging a marriage between Maggie and the Prince, even though the Prince has had a prior liaison with Maggie's friend Charlotte Stant. Fanny's excuse for her intervention is that the Ververs, in spite of all their resources, don't know how to live. They were "making a mess of such charming material," she explains to her husband Bob (GB 313). In this sense, Fanny, too, is a writer, but a far too conventional one for James. Charlotte's appearance in London for the wedding and her subsequent marriage to Maggie's father threatens disaster for Fanny's arrangements and for Fanny herself. When Fanny realizes that Charlotte and the Prince are using Maggie's inability to separate from her father as a cover for their attentions to each other, she retreats in terror over her "mistake." "I always pay for it, sooner or later, my sociable, my damnable, my unnecessary interest," she

laments to Bob (GB 313). Fanny's remorse and her fear that she'll be "dished" socially for her meddling paralyze her. Her skills are only effectual for the social superficialities of the courtship phase of romantic relations. As a writer, she can cope only within the limited scope of the marriage plot, which does little more in a moral sense than confirm conventional social values. Once her subjects are cast adrift on the deeper and more treacherous waters of married life she is unable to help them.

But Fanny has redeeming virtues--her self-knowledge and her ability to recognize, as no one else does, a more powerful arranger in Maggie. "She'll see me somehow through!" Fanny proclaims to Bob (GB 307). Fanny accordingly cedes the narrative to Maggie--although only temporarily. In their confrontation over the golden bowl Fanny struggles to wrest the narrative back. "I don't believe in this," she says as she examines the flawed crystal. "[Y]our whole idea has a crack." To destroy the traces of her role in arranging the Prince's affair with Charlotte and thereby maintain the superficial social integrity of their world, Fanny drops the bowl on the floor after holding it high. She wants to destroy the evidence--"the traces, records, connexions, the very memorials"--of feelings and actions that James, in his preface, and through Maggie, "would fain preserve." But Maggie's narrative--of a "superior and more appreciable order" than Fanny's--prevails. The bowl breaks into three pieces, confirming Maggie's new knowledge of her triadic relationship with Charlotte and the Prince.

Reading Maggie's behavior and her relations with Fanny through James's discourse on writing and action in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* brings to the surface an underlying story of an American writer's growing self-awareness and self-assertion. Concomitant with this narrative is a story of separation from family and America. Through Adam Verver James inaugurates a consideration--followed up explicitly in "The Jolly Corner" and implicitly in the prefaces to the New York

Edition and *The American Scene*—of the man he might have become had he remained in America and not become an artist. James was an exact contemporary of the great businessmen of the Gilded Age and had similar social traits. The sons of Protestant businessmen or professionals, these men grew up primarily in New England in urban environments and avoided service in the Civil War (Licht 150). If James had followed in the footsteps of his entrepreneurial grandfather William James, he might have become an Adam Verver, a manufacturer, "forging . . . sweating . . . polishing," and a speculator who liked "transcendent calculation and imaginative gambling all for themselves, the creation of 'interests' that were the extinction of other interests, the livid vulgarity even of getting in, or getting out, first" (GB 142). Instead of producing art himself, James might have made a fortune that would buy it, as Verver does when he endows his native city with "civilisation condensed, concrete, consummate" in the form of a museum (GB 142-43).

Verver is not only a collector of art; he is also a collector of people. He acquires the Prince and Charlotte to make his overly attached relationship with Maggie more decorous. But Maggie's production of the story of the Prince and Charlotte makes Verver's separation from his daughter inevitable. Like James when he dismisses America in his 1881-82 notebook, Maggie recognizes that the only way she can prevail as an active consciousness is by letting her father and her origins go and by embracing the life she has chosen in Europe. As James's surrogate she enacts a separation process that relieves both author and character of paralyzing regrets and responsibilities. All conditions and necessities of Adam's and Charlotte's return to America are negotiated between father and daughter without words, and Maggie accepts the immensity of her loss without complaint. "[We're] lost to each other really much more than Amerigo and Charlotte are," she observes to Fanny, "since for them it's just, it's right, it's deserved, while for us it's only sad and strange and not caused by our fault. But I don't know. . . why I talk about myself,

for it's on father it really comes. I let him go" (GB 555). The man James might have been, the man he shows in "The Jolly Corner" to have haunted his consciousness, must return to America and remain there. Such distances are a necessity of life, "sad and strange and not caused by our fault." In banishing Adam James clears a space for representing his own labors and speculations, which might be said to accomplish on an artistic level what his grandfather accomplished as an entrepreneur. As Anne Margolis suggests, the New York Edition had the same significance to James that the museum holds for Verver as "a gift, primarily to the people" and a monument to "perfection at any price" (GB 186). In the prefaces to the New York Edition James's readers will see a writer at work "forging . . . sweating . . . polishing."

Through Charlotte James portrays his relations with his readers. The pain for Charlotte in the separation arrangements is palpable. She appears to be a victim of Maggie's emergence in the novel and of James's assertions in the preface of the "superior order" of the literary. Her return to America with her husband will be an exile. As Charlotte leads her guests through the galleries at Fawns, lecturing them in a quavering voice that sounds "like the shriek of a soul in pain," she seems to be paying too great a price for her inappropriate marriage and her affair (GB 526). But she has committed an error that to James is unforgivable. She has underestimated Maggie's abilities; she has misread her. Inured to Maggie's intuitive and creative energy, Charlotte assumes that Maggie will always live narrowly, through her father. And fearful that any change in the family situation will foreclose her relations with the Prince, Charlotte advises the Prince that they must "learn to take" the Ververs "as they are" (GB 255). As Maggie observes to Fanny Assingham, "They thought of everything but that I might think" (GB 555). The Prince is a better reader than Charlotte. While at first he seems to share Charlotte's limited perspective, as Maggie begins to transform herself and their circle he notices her gestures, he watches and

considers. By the time Adam and Charlotte are ready to leave for America the Prince is caught up with Maggie. He sees the powers that Charlotte has missed. "She ought to have *known* you," he tells Maggie. "That's what's present to me. She ought to have understood you better. . . . She not only doesn't understand you more than I, she understands you ever so much less. . . . She's stupid" (GB 565).

If Maggie is a surrogate for James as writer in *The Golden Bowl*, Charlotte is the inattentive and uninspired reader by whom James feels neglected. The Prince, on the other hand, is a potentially appreciative and sensitive reader. It is he, not Charlotte, who notices the flaw in the golden bowl on the first expedition to Bloomsbury. And he interrogates Maggie after she reveals that she knows about his affair with Charlotte. He continues to observe and ponder after Maggie instructs him, "I've told you all I intended--find out the rest--!" (GB 464). The Prince is the reader whom James will hope to influence through his prefaces. The Prince allows Maggie to guide him toward reading creatively. In Charlotte and the Prince James expresses ambivalences about his readership that he will not be able to put forth directly in the prefaces. Through Charlotte's misapprehension and betrayal of Maggie James can demonstrate the pain and frustration of being neglected and misunderstood--and he can arrange a dramatic vindication. Maggie refuses to confront Charlotte about her affair with her husband. Instead she offers Charlotte a lesson in reading. When she spies Charlotte retreating to the garden with the wrong volume of a book she has loaned her, she goes after her: "I saw you come out," she says, "saw you from my window and couldn't bear to think you should find yourself here without the beginning of your book. *This* is the beginning; you've got the wrong volume and I've brought you out the right" (GB 540). In the conversation that follows Charlotte defends her erroneous reading of Maggie and of Maggie's book with a stern accusation that Maggie has worked against her through her continued possession of her father. Maggie pretends to agree, yet silently claims to

herself that "[y]es, she had done all." Maggie has shown her most resistant reader where and how to begin in a world that she herself has transformed.

Through Charlotte's underestimation of Maggie in *The Golden Bowl* James vents his anger toward the audience that has heretofore denied his works their "chance." His condemnation of Charlotte's misreading links *The Golden Bowl* to the prefaces. The novel becomes a prefatory act to the assembling of the New York Edition. It is a demonstration of feelings about the experience of authorship that James may have felt would be inappropriately placed in a preface. Having represented the bitter side of his authorial experience obliquely in *The Golden Bowl*, James could then proceed, in the prefaces, to a formal and public discussion of his writing that might win his works greater recognition from American and English readers.

Just as we view Maggie's labors of invention through her narrating consciousness in *The Golden Bowl*, we view James's writing process through his accounts of "the story of one's story" in the prefaces. And just as Maggie's ultimate task in the novel is to guide Charlotte to the starting point of the book she has given her, James's ultimate task, through the prefaces, is to show his audience where to begin their reading of his works. To read properly is to sift down through the stages of the making of the work. Reading begins, not with the novel itself, but with the moment when a thought or a piece of conversation touched James's imagination like "the prick of some sharp point" and infused "the virus of suggestion" for the story (P 1138). In retrieving this moment James uncovers "scenes of labour" that he incorporates into the prefaces along with responses to the experience of rereading his works. "Addicted to seeing 'through'--one thing through another . . . and still other things through *that* ," he has an "incorrigible" need to see "*all* the dimensions," he confesses, so as to render "a certain fulness of truth--truth diffused, distributed and, as it were, atmospheric" (P 1168). The

consciousness at work in the prefaces is aware of a multi-layered drama, of scenes overlaying scenes, which together allude to multiple potentialities of truth. That consciousness is simultaneously wondering at a scrap of dinner-table gossip, "straining" to shape it into a story, and rereading that story to see its pages "flower" before him. "The teller of a story," James asserts, "is primarily, none the less, the listener to it, the reader of it, too" (P 1089). This form of attention is impossible for James's readers, as Paul Armstrong points out. We must take the scenes of the novels and prefaces sequentially. In the prefaces James capitalizes on this difference between reader and writer to demonstrate that writing is a form of heroic labor. Aware that readers can focus on only one level of the multi-layered drama at a time, he channels our attention in the prefaces toward the drama of his own creative life. He applies the "divine principle of the Scenario"--the technique he developed for composing his later fiction[3] --to produce a history of his own writing process. Scattered through the prefaces, the scenes of composition become a loosely structured narrative of inspiration, speculation, and dedicated labor. This narrative becomes, as Laurence Holland describes the prefaces, "the celebration of a process, a mission, and a form rather than a statement of theory" (156).

Given James's early quandary over which side of the Atlantic to live on, it is interesting that physical location is clearly to him the crucial feature of these scenes.

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[3] James formulated this principle as he strove to redirect his attention from playwriting to fiction after the failure of his play *Guy Domville* in 1895. The notion of the scenic method occurred to him as he was developing the germ for *The Golden Bowl* in a notebook entry for February 14, 1895. "[M]ay I not instantly sit down to a little close, clear, full scenario of it?" James wonders. "As I ask myself the question, *with* the very asking of it," he continues, "and the utterance of that word so charged with memories and pains, something seems to open out before me, and at the same time to press upon me with an extraordinary tenderness of embrace" (N 115). The lesson of his five years in the theatre, he realizes, is that he can synthesize his drama- and fiction-writing techniques. The "divine principle of the Scenario" becomes "a key that, working in the same *general* way fits the complicated chambers of *both* the dramatic and the narrative lock" (N 115).

When he seeks to recreate the moment of inspiration for *The American* he can remember the setting, but not his state of mind:

> It had come to me, this happy, halting view of an interesting case, abruptly enough some years before: I recall sharply the felicity of the first glimpse, though I forget the accident of thought that produced it. I recall that I was seated in an American "horse-car" when I found myself, of a sudden, considering with enthusiasm, as the theme of a "story," the situation, in another country and an aristocratic society, of some robust but insidiously beguiled and betrayed, some cruelly wronged compatriot: the point being in especial that he should suffer at the hands of persons pretending to represent the highest possible civilisation and to be of an order in every way superior to his own. What would he "do" in that predicament, how would he right himself, or how, failing a remedy, would he conduct himself under his wrongs? This would be the question involved, and I remember well how, having entered the horse-car without a dream of it, I was presently to leave that vehicle in full possession of my answer. (P 1054)

The isolation of the moment--unanticipated before the ride and completed by its end--and its containment within the horsecar dramatizes James' notion of the "germ," the particle of thought that holds the potential for a story. Although the idea for *The American* comes to James while he is seated among strangers, usually the germ emerges through conversation with others--at a dinner party, for example, or among a group gathered around a fire, or with travellers in the compartment of a railway carriage. Nearly all of the scenes of conception in the prefaces revolve around social intercourse. Writing is born out of society. In the exchange of gossip someone mentions an incident or a situation that piques James's interest almost by virtue of its "inveterate minuteness." The writer of James's prefaces is a minimalist. Unlike the novelists of Child's and Hawthorne's prefaces, he generally eschews historical documentation and references and provides only the briefest sketch to set up a scene.[4] This approach, Pearson says, is neither antihistorical nor ahistorical, but historicizing. "James subverts the methods of historical inquiry," Pearson argues,

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[4] A notable exception is James's allusion to Jane Clairmont and Byron's circle in the preface to "The Aspern Papers." For a discussion of James's use of Jane Clairmont's history in this preface see Pearson 52-56.

"by subordinating them to the creation and empowerment of authorial consciousness. . . . The prefaces provide that consciousness with its own narrative existence as it perceives itself in the act of creating the text and, ultimately, of reading it" (49-50). James works with the smallest unit of material--the shred of conversation forgotten by all but one listener. "[A]nything more than the minimum," he says, "spoils the operation." There must be room for art to perform its function, for pursuing "the hard latent value" that life in its "inclusion and confusion" obscures (P 1138). The trope of the germ enables James to exalt imaginative labor before his audience. The construction of an entire novel out of a single speck of material becomes a heroic task. Through elaborations on the metaphor of the germ James places himself among the most powerful achievers of his time--the speculators. The artist performs like the venture capitalist, James argues. In the "splendid waste" of life he recognizes "the opportunity for the sublime economy of art, which rescues, which saves, and hoards and 'banks,' investing and reinvesting these fruits of toil in wondrous useful 'works' and thus making up for us, desperate spendthrifts that we all naturally are, the most princely of incomes" (P 1139). Writing is not just born out of society, it also preserves and proliferates for society what it would normally squander.

Through the loosely structured narrative of his writing experience in the prefaces James makes himself, as hero, an exemplum of faith. Looking back on the composition of *The American* he sees himself as an inexperienced and ill-equipped sailor "with no harbour of refuge till the end of my serial voyage" and no recourse but to "stop my ears against the noise of waters and *pretend* to myself I was afloat" (P 1054). "The explanation of my enjoyment of it," he goes on, "no doubt, is that I was more than commonly enamoured of my idea, and that I believed it, so trusted, so imaginatively fostered, not less capable of limping to its goal on three feet than on one. The lameness might be what it would: I clearly, for myself, felt the thing *go*--which is the most a dramatist can ever ask of his drama" (P 1054). At the root of

James's faith is the pleasure he takes in the opportunities he finds. The story told to him in a hot Italian railway-carriage about the American family who will become the model for "The Pupil" prompts a joyful outburst, followed by an expression of unwavering belief in the project: "Here was more than enough for a summer's day even in old Italy--here was a thumping windfall. . . . I remember at all events having no doubt of anything or anyone here; the vision kept to the end its ease and its charm; it worked itself out with confidence" (P 1165-66). These pleasures of discovery and fulfillment culminate in James's description of the writing of *The Ambassadors*. They reside in what James sees as a perfect relation between the conception of the novel and its realization: "Nothing can exceed the closeness with which the whole fits again into its germ" (P 1305). The germ--a friend's report of advice given him by an older man[5] --is contained, James says, in the scene in Gloriani's garden when Lambert Strether says to little Bilham, "Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular so long as you have your life. . . ." (P 1304). Nowhere else in the prefaces does James indulge in quoting his own text at such length. And nowhere else does he point so definitively to a center of meaning:

> The idea of the tale resides indeed in the very fact that an hour of such unprecedented ease should have been felt by [Strether] *as* a crisis, and he is at pains to express it for us as neatly as we could desire. The remarks to which he thus gives utterance contain the essence of "The Ambassadors," his fingers close, before he has done, round the stem of the full-blown flower; which, after that fashion, he continues officiously to present to us. (P 1304)

While other germs for other fictions may have sprouted and diffused, the seed for *The Ambassadors* still lies embedded in the novel like a nugget containing the essence of the work. In directing his readers' attention to the seed James can

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[5] William Dean Howells is said to have offered this advice to Jonathan Sturges, a friend of James. See Lewis 518.

demonstrate the control achieved with the writing of his penultimate novel as well as the wisdom of his technique for composition.

During his discussion of the writing of *The Ambassadors* James rates this novel as the best of his "productions." In making this judgment he sets a standard for "supremely good" writing that draws upon his own experience as a model. Such writing must demonstrate "glowing" faith in itself:

> What it comes to, doubtless, is that even among the supremely good--since with such alone is it one's theory of one's honour to be concerned--there is an ideal *beauty* of goodness the invoked action of which is to raise the artistic faith to its maximum. Then truly, I hold, one's theme may be said to shine, and that of "The Ambassadors," I confess, wore this glow for me from beginning to end. Fortunately thus I am able to estimate this as, frankly, quite the best, "all round," of all my productions; any failure of that justification would have made such an extreme of complacency publicly fatuous. (P 1306)

As already noted, James does not draw upon the public past, as Child and Hawthorne do, to authenticate his writing projects in these scenes and to promote his own endeavors. Whatever history he presents in his prefaces is personal. The faith he professes is a faith in the process of the individual artist, without reference to deity, community, or nation. And although he brutally interrogates that self in the privacy of his notebooks, he celebrates it unqualifiedly in the prefaces. Whether an ill-equipped sailor or a seasoned critic the self as writer is reliable and productive; he discovers opportunities and makes the most of them. His constant ingenuity and productivity invest him with authority. James offers these abilities in exchange for the license to perform as a critic in his prefaces, that is, to direct his audience in their interpretations, to assess publicly his own works, and to place a supreme value on the novel as "the most prodigious of literary forms" (P 1321).

The scenes of conception are not the only phase of fiction writing that James seeks to foreground in the prefaces. He also makes his readers witness to the writing process. As he rereads each work he recalls the particulars of its composition, which

together comprise a history. Reencountering this history revives for James "an all but extinct relation" with each work. It unfolds "a thrilling tale," "a wondrous adventure" that recovers "buried secrets" and slips him back into intimacy with his past. Again the addiction to seeing one thing through another, to experiencing all the dimensions, takes hold. What fascinates James in the "scenes of labour" that emerge through rereading is the recurring oscillation between the settings of his stories and the settings in which he has written them. He recalls writing the final chapters of *Roderick Hudson* during a winter in New York and the:

> felt pleasure . . . of trying, on the other side of the world, still to surround with the appropriate local glow the characters that had combined, to my vision, the previous year in Florence. A benediction, a great advantage, as seemed to me, had so from the first rested on them, and to nurse them along was really to sit again in the high, charming, shabby old room which had originally overarched them and which, in the hot May and June, had looked out, through the slits of cooling shutters, at the rather dusty but ever-romantic glare of Piazza Santa Maria Novella. The house formed the corner (I delight to specify) of Via della Scala, and I fear that what the early chapters of the book most "render" to me to-day is not the umbrageous air of their New England town, but the view of the small cab-stand sleepily disposed--long before the days of strident electric cars--round the rococo obelisk of the Piazza, which is supported on its pedestal, if I remember rightly, by four delightful little elephants. (P 1042-43)

Scenes set in Florence bring back recollections of New York, while scenes set in New England revive images of Florence. At the same time, part of the labor of writing is fighting off local distraction. Rereading calls back not only the labor itself but also the interferences--the sight of the cab-stand in the piazza during the writing of *Roderick Hudson*, the sound of the hooves of the cavalry passing below the window in Paris with *The American*. In fact, the local setting--provided it is European--threatens to engulf both the writing and the rereading of the story. James's first concern in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* is not with the themes of the novel, or even with its conception, but with the site of writing, in this case Venice, and its role in inhibiting the novel's composition:

> I had rooms on Riva Schiavoni, at the top of a house near the passage leading off to San Zaccaria; the waterside life, the wondrous lagoon spread before me, and the ceaseless human chatter of Venice came in at my windows, to which I seem to myself to have been constantly driven, in the fruitless fidget of composition, as if to see whether, out in the blue channel, the ship of some right suggestion, of some better phrase, of the next happy twist of my subject, the next true touch for my canvas, might n't come into sight. But I recall vividly enough that the response most elicited . . . was the rather grim admonition that romantic and historic sites, such as Italy abounds in, . . . are too rich in their own life and too charged with their own meanings merely to help [the artist] out with a lame phrase; they draw him away from his small question to their own greater ones; so that, after a little, he feels, while thus yearning toward them in his difficulty, as if he were asking an army of glorious veterans to help him to arrest a pedlar who has given him the wrong change. (P 1070)

Rereading *The Portrait of a Lady* calls back not only the wonders of Venetian atmosphere and culture but also "one's old impression of . . . the divided, frustrated mind" (P 1071). This mind seeks authentication and support for its efforts from its rich surroundings. But Venice doesn't deliver; it only works to call attention to itself. The writer then must practice self-reliance. He must resist the lure of the window. He must keep hold of his own "small question" and settle his difficulties with the cheating pedlar on his own terms, without help.

James's scenes of conception and labor represent a mental process that he tracks from place to place, from stage to stage. James strives, through the prefaces, to fashion that process into a method. In these discussions a novel comes to resemble a scientific problem. After the germ presents itself and a central character emerges, the same question repeatedly comes up: what will he or she do? James uses this question to shape a hypothesis. The experiment is then "dropped . . . for the time into the deep well of unconscious cerebration" (P 1055). James's notebooks harbor many such hypotheses. The prefaces describe the experiments brought to fulfillment. The work resumes when the idea lodged in the unconscious suddenly becomes vivid again. In Paris, for example, several years after the inspiration in the horse-car, the figure of Christopher Newman arises before James in the Louvre:

"The objectivity [the idea] had wanted it promptly put on, and if the questions had been, with the usual intensity, for my hero and his crisis--the whole formidable list, the who? the what? the where? the when? the why? the how?--they gathered their answers in the cold shadow of the Arc de Triomphe" (P 1055). When the answers begin to gather the writing, too, can begin.

By tracking his creative method, demonstrating it dramatically through scenes where we can watch him thinking and writing, James makes the work of writing visible to his audience. Stuart Culver argues that "the scene of writing described by the prefaces is too reduced and too immediate to allow any comprehensive account of the conditions of literary production. We are given only glimpses of the author at work, partial view more arbitrary than systematic" ("Representing the Author" 123). Nonetheless James's limited depiction of himself at work is an unusual undertaking. Even though the preface offers a unique opportunity for self-representation, other preface writers avoid showing themselves at work. Child makes her avid young novelist compose his New England novel offstage. And Hawthorne shows himself gardening, reading, working at the Custom-House, awaiting inspiration in his parlor, but never writing. Where work is invisible in the writing of the American Renaissance, Nicholas Bromell observes:

> the specific meaning of work remains fluid and inconclusive, and specific representations of work--explorations of what work is and descriptions of how it feels--are allowed to appear but seldom to cohere into an authoritative whole. At the same time, this very fluidity means that work's meaning will always be contested as one class, or group, or profession, tries to establish a privileged claim to work's fountain of values. (4)

In the prefaces James claims for writing values commonly associated with other kinds of work. He shows the ardors of writing and the protracted commitment that a single project requires. His impulse to foreground the act of writing and to work so insistently to give it meaning and authority derives from his childhood experience of American middle-class life. As James describes the difficulties of fitting into

American society after the family's wanderings in Europe, he shows that being the son of a writer meant having no identity:

> I remember well how when we were all young together we had, under pressure of the American ideal in that matter, then so rigid, felt it tasteless and even humiliating that the head of our little family was *not* in business, and that even among our relatives on each side we couldn't so much as name proudly anyone who was--with the sole exception of our maternal uncle Robertson Walsh, who looked, ever so benevolently, after our father's "affairs," happily for us. Such had never been the case with the father of any boy of our acquaintance; the business in which the boy's father gloriously *was* stood forth inveterately as the very first note of our comrade's impressiveness. *We* had no note of that sort to produce, and I perfectly recover the effect of my own repeated appeal to our parent for some presentable account of him that would prove us respectable (A 278).

Although he had surely gained respectability by 1905, James still showed through the prefaces a need to overwrite with a positive image the humiliating "*not* in business," to find a "note" to produce that would serve as a "presentable account" for writers in American society. Yet while James was defending writing as labor he was also asserting a privileged place for it. His efforts to foreground the writer and writing in the prefaces are evidence of what John Carlos Rowe sees as a unique understanding among his contemporaries of the extent to which "bourgeois 'capital' resides in its command of representation, rather than in money or lands" (82).

The composition of a novel becomes in the prefaces a formal process of inquiry and invention through which James can demonstrate the high achievement involved in creative labor. Analyzing the central problem of a novel through his dramatization of the germ allows James also to show how much ingenuity and courage have gone into solving that problem. "By what process of logical accretion was this slight 'personality,' the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl, to find itself endowed with the high attributes of a Subject?" James asks about Isabel Archer. To recognise through fiction the value of such a girl "is an example," James asserts, "exactly of the deep difficulty braved." Here again, as in *The Golden*

Bowl, we see a parallel experience of author and character. James's phrase for the challenge he struggled with in writing *The Portrait of a Lady* perfectly describes Isabel's own achievement in the novel. But if we note the collapse of boundaries between James and Isabel and James and Maggie in these novels we must then recognize that the accounts of writing in the prefaces are, like the novels themselves, fictions. "To see deep difficulty braved," James continues, "is . . . to wish the danger intensified" (P 1078-79). The artist who compulsively sets before himself and his central character the greatest dangers is in James's terms a romancer. Without detection he cuts the cable that ties "the balloon of experience" to the earth and artfully makes "the way things don't happen . . . to pass for the way things do" (1064-65). As R.W.B. Lewis warns in a discussion of James's autobiographical writings, "[O] ne takes many of James's reminiscences as literal only at one's peril" (30). James's application of the scenic method in the prefaces shows a conscious intention to absorb his readers in the drama of thinking and writing so that they will not stop to ask whether this is the way "things"--and writing in particular--really happen.

In his demonstrations of the achievement involved in creative work James displays ambivalence toward his readers. He is a worker like them, but a special kind of worker. Likewise, in his discussions of the revision process James shows divided feelings toward his audience. Critics find widely varying tones in James's treatment of his readers. Anne Margolis, for example, sees James achieving "a unique kind of intimacy with his highly mixed audience" in the preface to *The Golden Bowl* (189), while Vivienne Rundle argues that James alienates the reader by inducing performance anxiety (75). Indeed, although James's engagement with his "productions" and process is undeniably constant and wholehearted, his engagement with his readers is a mixed affair. James is as ambiguous a persona in his prefaces as are his characters in his novels. Just as the writing of the novels

begins with the conception of a central figure and progresses by means of questions posed about that figure, the prefaces, as mirroring romance, proceed as an inquiry into the author as character. What will he do? "The question James asks in the New York Edition," David McWhirter argues, "is . . . less 'What was it?' than 'Who am I?' And any attempt to answer this latter question depends for James not on a totalizing narrative of mastery but on a capacity for establishing multiple, often contradictory lines of connection, relation, and responsiveness to the many Henry Jameses who inhabit this extraordinary text" (15).

When James discusses rereading and revision in the prefaces he takes contradictory positions with his readers. In his first preface, to *Roderick Hudson*, he distances himself from the reader by focusing on his private relationship with the texts he is rereading, describing his work with his early novels as "the revival of an all but extinct relation" (P 1039). Further on in the prefaces James calls this work of recovery a "re-appropriating impulse" (P 1174), a term that implies a feeling that his works have been in the possession of others and now have to be retrieved. In reappropriating his novels and stories from his readers he seeks to strengthen his authority over them. He poses himself not only as the artist who conceived the work in an inspired moment and carried it to birth after arduous months of labor, but also as the sole figure who can re-animate his work after it has lived on its own in the world: "The thing done and dismissed has ever, at the best, for the ambitious workman, a trick of looking dead, if not buried, so that [the artist] almost throbs with ecstasy when, on an anxious review, the flush of life reappears" (1120). The artist is essential to this enterprise, James argues. Only he knows the creative ferment out of which the work arose:

> [T]he effort to reconstitute the medium and the season that favoured the first stir of life, the first perceived gleam of the vital spark, in the trifle before us, fairly makes everything in the picture revive, fairly even extends the influence to matters remote and strange. The musing artist's imagination--thus *not* excluded and

> confined--supplies the link that is missing and makes the whole occasion (the occasion of the glorious birth to him of still another infant motive) comprehensively and richly *one* . (P 1194-95)

In the preface to *The Golden Bowl*, James's last preface, he contradicts this godly stance. Here James strives to meet his readers on their own ground by showing himself to be like them. He recasts the "historian"--the writer who is reliving the private experience of composition--as a reader. Going through his most recent novels he becomes his own audience tracking the writer/historian's footsteps through the text: "Into his very footprints the responsive, the imaginative steps of the docile reader that I consentingly become for him all comfortably sink; his vision, superimposed on my own as an image in cut paper is applied to a sharp shadow on a wall, matches at every point, without excess or deficiency" (P 1329). The natural matching of footprints poses an ideal version of writer/reader relations. But James quickly acknowledges that these relations can't always be so harmonious. In rereading his earlier works he finds himself out of step with his younger self: "[M]y exploring tread . . . had quite unlearned the old pace and found itself naturally falling into another, which might sometimes indeed more or less agree with the original tracks, but might most often, or very nearly, break the surface in other places" (P 1330).

It is significant that James's "present vision," as J. Hillis Miller notes, "is the standard of measurement, not, as one would expect when it is a question of an act of reading, the text to which the reader should submit as to his sovereign law" (112). Choosing this vantage point enables James to remain at one with the reader in his discussions of revision. And lest readers already familiar with James's works be anxious that he has adulterated the original power of his novels, he redefines the activity of revision by reducing it to the act of rereading, an activity that the reader herself can perform. He had previously maintained, he says:

> a too abject acceptance of the grand air with which the term Revision had somehow, to my imagination, carried itself--and from my frivolous failure to analyse the content of the word. To revise is to see, or to look over, again--which means in the case of a written thing neither more nor less than to re-read it. I had attached to it, in a brooding spirit the idea of re-writing--with which it was to have in the event, for my *conscious* play of mind, almost nothing in common. I had thought of re-writing as so difficult, and even so absurd, as to be impossible--having also indeed, for that matter, thought of re-reading in the same light (P 1332).

In spite of this effort at redefinition, James did make substantive revisions in his earlier novels, as Edel points out.[6] James plays with the truth here to maintain an identification between himself and his readers. He is enlisting the reader in his project. The purpose of the prefacing endeavor, he asserts, is to join writer and reader in an appreciation of imaginative work: "What has the affair been at the worst, I am most moved to ask, but an earnest invitation to the reader to dream again in my company and in the interest of his own larger absorption?" "It all comes back" he adds a moment later, "to my and your 'fun'" (P 1338). Given the underlying message to readers in *The Golden Bowl*, this address to the reader is essential. James needs to form an understanding with his readers that will counterbalance the antipathy toward audience that he expresses through Maggie's relations with her family in the novel.

If, as McWhirter asserts, the prefaces constitute attempts to respond to the question "Who am I?" they also involve an effort to show who we, that is, James and his readers, might become. Lewis characterizes James's wanderings in Europe during the 1870s as the search by "an incipient social novelist" for a society (242). James's letters to friends and family proposing the 1904-1905 trip to America betray a renewed restlessness, as though he were taking up that search again. America holds more romance, he imagines, than Europe does. In the prefaces, written after

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[6] See Edel 326-30. For a survey of critical analysis of James's revisions for the New York Edition see Mazzella.

the return to America, James reflects on the societies that he has represented in his fictions. He sees a shift in his treatment of the international theme. In earlier decades he was "shut up to the contemplation" of American "innocence" abroad, he says, "the most general appearance of the American (of those days) in Europe, that of being almost incredibly *unaware of life*--as the European order expressed life" (P 1198). But in his final novels and in *The Portrait of a Lady*, he notes, his Americans and his Europeans are not essentialized: "[*E*]*mphasized* internationalism has either quite dropped or is well on its way to drop," he observes. "[T]he subject could in each case have been perfectly expressed had *all* the persons concerned been only American or only English or only Roman or whatever" (P 1208-09). Thus James claims in the prefaces to have progressed from drawing lines between characters of different nationalities to blending characters in a cosmopolitanized world where there is "a mixture of manners." Whether or not his novels and stories bear out this observation, the movement James describes is fundamental to his social vision. In the prefaces James avoids particularizing his experiences or his thought with references to American historical events or cultural life. He derives his identity entirely from his personal history. In this he makes himself a model for a cosmopolitan world. He describes what that world might look like in the preface to a group of international stories:

> Nothing appeals to me more, I confess, as a "critic of life" in any sense worthy of the name, than the finer--if indeed thereby the less easily formulated--group of the conquests of civilisation, the multiplied symptoms among educated people, from wherever drawn, of a common intelligence and a social fusion tending to abridge old rigours of separation. This too, I must admit, in spite of the many-coloured sanctity of such rigours in general, which have hitherto made countries smaller but kept the globe larger, and by which immediate strangeness, immediate beauty, immediate curiosity were so much fostered. Half our instincts work for the maintained differences. . . . It is a question, however, of the tendency, perceptive as well as reflective too, of the braver imagination--which faculty, in our future, strikes me as likely to be appealed to much less by the fact, by the pity and the misery and the greater or less grotesqueness, of the courageous, or even of the

> timid, missing their lives beyond certain stiff barriers, than by the picture of their more and more steadily making out their opportunities and their possible communications. . . . Behind all the small comedies and tragedies of the international, in a word, has exquisitely lurked for me the idea of some eventual sublime consensus of the educated . . . . *There* , if one will--in the dauntless fusions to come--is the personal drama of the future. (P 1212)

Although we could easily label James's vision of a "sublime consensus of the educated" elitist, we must first consider what James means by education. Characters like Lambert Strether and Maggie Verver, whose lives might seem to exemplify James's drama of the future, are not wholly privileged. They have been hobbled by their own timidity. Conversing among expatriates in Gloriani's garden in Paris, Strether sees that he has not lived. Circling her porcelain pagoda hung with tinkling silver bells, Maggie realizes that she has kept herself from knowledge. The education of these proto-cosmopolitans is their drama. Such experience is available to anyone who possesses an imagination capable of seeing "opportunities and possible communications" beyond the conventional and is willing to experiment with them. What binds these figures into a consensus is their education. The reader, having followed James's characters through their experiments and their enlightenment, is implicitly part of this consensus. It is a social fusion formed out of notions of self rather than conceptions of history. It is also a world where individuals are relieved of the burden that weighed heavily on James in his youth--that of choosing one nation over another.

In the prefaces to the New York Edition James formally and publicly proposed a utopian social vision based on the expatriate artist experience. He hardly mentions America. In editing his work for the New York Edition he also omitted most of his fiction with an American setting from the New York Edition, even while naming the collection after his native city. Responding to Edel's argument that James wanted to project the image of a cosmopolitan novelist through these omissions,

Margolis notes that most of the omitted works "were regarded by James as partial or total failures, mere apprentice works or potboilers" and that their omission was designed to strengthen "enduring loyalty of his avant-garde public, the only segment of his audience which could be relied upon to keep his reputation alive among subsequent generations of writers and readers" (186, 188). Martha Banta sees James striving, through his omissions, to foreground the Master figure by wiping out the "lingering traces of those decades during which he was the brash young man with comic talent and the keen eye of a journalist" (250). The naming of the collection was a "gesture of reconciliation," Michael Anesko says, designed to repair the alienation he had generated through expatriation (77). While James was at work on the prefaces he was also writing *The American Scene*, in which he delivered a frank and unflattering critique of his native land. We should not consider James's treatment of America as it emerges in the prefaces to the New York Edition without asking how that vision is related to the return to America in 1904-1905 and the subsequent writing of *The American Scene*. Like the writing of *The Golden Bowl*, James's travels in America and his writing of *The American Scene* were prefatory acts to the assembling of the New York Edition. And like *The Golden Bowl*, *The American Scene* fills a complementary purpose. If in the prefaces James is asking "Who am I?" in *The American Scene* he is asking "What is America?" His critique comes out of a frustrated study of the ways in which American landscape and life resist his attempts to draw coherence out of them. Identity and meaning once again derive from the personal--from the New York streets James wandered as a child, from the house in Boston where he began to write.

In his preface to *The American Scene* James describes his approach to studying America. "[I]ncapable of information," he is gathering impressions--the "features of the human scene" that newspapers and reports overlook. As an observer he has an advantage, he asserts, because of his twenty-one-year absence:

> [I]f I had had time to become almost as "fresh" as an inquiring stranger, I had not on the other hand had enough to cease to be, or at least to feel, as acute as an initiated native. I made no scruple of my conviction that I should understand and should care better and more than the most earnest of visitors, and yet that I should vibrate with more curiosity--on the extent of ground that is, on which I might aspire to intimate intelligence at all--than the pilgrim with the longest list of questions, the sharpest appetite for explanations and the largest exposure to mistakes. (AS 353)

Although James's dual perspective of stranger and native does produce unique observations and insights, it also generates tensions. Native and stranger are unequally rewarded by America. James the native takes joy in revisiting sites of his past and finding at least part of the "sunk" surface recoverable. James the stranger can't find any surface to settle on. Every scene he views is "provisional" and at the same time ahistorical. The "story seeker" and the "restless analyst," two common self-depictions in this text, is also the hamstrung critic. "To be at all critically . . . minded . . .," James says in his introduction to his commentary on Philadelphia:

> is to be subject to the superstition that objects and places, coherently grouped, disposed for human use and addressed to it, must have a sense of their own, a mystic meaning proper to themselves to give out . . . . From the moment the critic finds himself sighing, to save trouble in a difficult case, that the cluster of appearances can *have* no sense, from that moment he begins, and quite consciously, to go to pieces; it being the prime business and the high honour of the painter of life always to *make* a sense . . . . The last thing decently permitted him is to recognize incoherence--to recognize it, that is, as baffling; though of course he may present and portray it, in all richness, *for* incoherence. (AS 579)

Baffled time and again by the senselessness he finds in the American landscape James the stranger comes to recognize that "there will be little for him in the American scene unless he be ready, anywhere, everywhere, to read 'into' it as much as he reads out" (AS 593). But what is the distinction between these two ways of thinking? In the writing of a novel, for example, is James's expansion of a speck of conversation into a novel a reading into or a reading out of the original germ? Likewise, in *The American Scene*, are his descriptions of the crowd on Wall Street or

of the audience at a Bowery theatre projection or extraction? The critical point here is that where James found vestiges of the past in the American scene he was satisfied, but where he found evidence only of the present he felt short-changed. Altogether, he wanted more from America than he felt he was given.

James is at his best in *The American Scene* when he speaks as a native. He would have liked to have called his book *The Return of the Native*, he told his publisher. The working title became instead *The Return of the Novelist* (Kaplan 500). Indeed, the most resonant moments in *The American Scene* are those of James the novelist. They are the incidents where James discovers a multi-layered drama of the kind that he depicts in his scenes of inspiration and labor in the prefaces. Like the scenes in the prefaces, these moments involve the attempt to recover a beginning. In New York, for example, alarmed after the visit to Ellis Island in which he is forced to confront the changing face that immigration is giving his homeland, James retreats uptown to the neighborhood of his childhood on lower Fifth Avenue. Here he takes pleasure in familiar sights--"the lamentable little Arch of Triumph" in Washington Square, the dame's school on Waverley Place, the bakery on the corner of Eighth Street. But not all of his personal landmarks look the same:

> These were the felicities of the backward reach, which, however, had also its melancholy checks and snubs; nowhere quite so sharp as in presence, so to speak, of the rudely, the ruthlessly suppressed birth-house on the other side of the Square. That was where the pretence that nearly nothing was changed had most to come in; for a high, square, impersonal structure, proclaiming its lack of interest with a crudity all its own, so blocks, at the right moment for its own success, the view of the past, that the effect for me, in Washington Place, was of having been amputated of half my history. . . . This was the snub, for the complacency of retrospect, that, whereas the inner sense had positively erected there for its private contemplation a commemorative mural tablet, the very wall that should have borne this inscription had been smashed as for demonstration that tablets, in New York, are unthinkable. (AS 431)

The American scene is far less reliable than the European. While James can rest assured that the Piazza Santa Maria Novella and other European sites of writing will

remain intact, he cannot expect such permanence from any American location of his past. His birthplace has been overshadowed by "a high, square, impersonal structure," and there remains no surface on which James can project the commemorative tablet that he carries in his mind. No surface in New York is permanent enough to bear such a record. Here, as in all changes to the cityscape that he records, James sees a reduction of the human.

This point comes home more dramatically when, revisiting Ashburton Place in Boston, where he began his writing career, James is delighted to find the "pair of ancient houses" where he lived keeping "their tryst . . . a conscious memento, with old secrets to keep and old stories to witness for, a saturation of life as closed together and preserved in it as the scent lingering in a folded pocket-handkerchief" (AS 543). Just a month later, when he revisits, the houses are gone. "[I]f I had often seen how fast history could be made," James says, " I had doubtless never so felt that it could be unmade still faster. It was as if the bottom had fallen out of one's own biography, and one plunged backward into space without meeting anything" (AS 544). For an artist with an "incorrigible" need to see "*all* the dimensions," to see one layer of experience through another, the erasure of one of the layers is the worst form of trauma. America disrupts the process of seeing and representing that James presents as his creative practice in the prefaces. Scenes intended to recover become scenes of loss. The physical sites that should correspond with the tablet in the mind and that give shape to "one's own biography" become distorted or emptied. Having lost his reference points the artist falls out of time.

As with the landscape of James's imaginative life, if the American landscape is to make sense there must be reminders of a personal past or there must be evidence of a society's history and practices. Wherever he goes in America James strives to gain an insider's understanding of the social world. But again he cannot gain access. The landscape interferes with the human:

> the social question always dogging the steps of the ancient contemplative person and making him, before each scene, wish really to get *into* the picture, to cross, as it were, the threshold of the frame. . . . "The *manners*, the manners: where and what are they, and what have they to tell?"--that haunting curiosity, essential to the honour of his office, yet making it much of a burden, fairly buzzes about his head the more pressingly in proportion as the social mystery, the lurking human secret, seems more shy. (AS 384-85)

In Cape Cod, at the Jersey Shore, wherever the inquisitive James sees "the social mystery" eluding him, he must resort to the question of whether there is anything to see. "And that was doubtless, for the story-seeker, absolutely the little story," he concludes after a trip to Cape Cod. "[T]he constituted blankness was the whole business" (AS 365). Life in America is all outward projection. In American social life, James decides, "there couldn't *be* any manners to speak of . . . . [T]he basis of privacy was somehow wanting for them; and . . . nothing, accordingly, no image, no presumption of constituted relations, possibilities, amenities in the social, the domestic order, was inwardly projected" (AS 364). Where does the story-seeker discover a germ, then? And even if presented with the germ for a story or novel, how does he develop it, given the scanty resources, the lack of evidence of private life? America offers the artist of the prefaces little to work with. The romance that James had felt calling to him from his homeland continuously eludes him. He is left alone with his own story, already partially erased.

In this condition James resembles the American to whom he gives the most concentrated attention in *The American Scene*--the newly arrived immigrant seeking a foothold in a foreign America. But throughout his discussions of "the alien" James resists the resemblance. Just as he seeks in the prefaces to reappropriate the stories he has written and thereby assert authority as a novelist, James seeks through his American travel writing to reappropriate the story he has lived and in so doing reassert his status as a native. "One's supreme relation, as one had always put it,"

James says in his commentary on Ellis Island, "was one's relation to one's country--a conception made up so largely of one's countrymen and one's countrywomen" (AS 427). The American scene disrupts the reappropriation effort, just as it disrupts James's processes of seeing and representing. In the nearly twenty-five years since James's expatriation immigration has changed the picture of America's countrymen and countrywomen. The relation that James has returned to recover has been claimed by others and therefore, as Charles Caramello says, he can "find no native perspective to take" (456).

James goes about New York with a sense of dispossession. He strives to distance himself from the competing alien through dehumanizing rhetoric, speaking of "the introduction of fresh. . . foreign matter into our heterogeneous system," for example, or comparing the fire-escape-laden facades of tenement buildings to cages in "some great zoological garden" (AS 408, 466). He describes himself as "a questionably privileged person who has had an apparition, seen a ghost in his supposedly safe old house" (AS 426-27). In making the immigrant into a figure associated with past time rather than with the present or the future James implicitly recognizes his affinity with him. He himself has been twice a newcomer--in Europe during the 1870s and '80s and now, in 1904, facing a barely recognizable America. In regarding the alien he must confront himself. The mediative figure of the ghost prompts a shift in the discussion of Ellis Island from a rhetoric infused with race and class prejudice to a ruffled, conciliatory language of *noblesse oblige* :

> The combination . . . of [the aliens'] quantity and their quality--that loud primary stage of alienism which New York most offers to sight--operates, for the native, as their note of settled possession, something they have nobody to thank for; so that *un*settled possession is what we, on our side, seem reduced to--the implication of which, in its turn, is that, to recover confidence and regain lost ground, we, not they, must make the surrender and accept the orientation. We must go, in other words, *more* than half-way to meet them; which is all the difference, for us, between possession and dispossession. (AS 427)

This vision of unsettled adaptation to social change contrasts strongly with the smooth fusion of the cosmopolitan world that James imagines in his prefaces. In James's "sublime consensus of the educated" promoted in the prefaces, social bonds grow out of the recognition of a common internal life--the life of the self. That kind of compatibility is only hinted at in *The American Scene*. Here James cannot let go of "the old rigours of separation," "the maintained differences" of national, ethnic, and class divisions. Like *The Golden Bowl*, *The American Scene* becomes a repository for the feelings of frustration and alienation of a writer who is discovering that he must reconstitute his internal picture of his native land, of his audience, and ultimately, of himself.

James's disappointments early on in his travels prompt a sharp and emotional critique of American values as he finds them evidenced in the landscape. Although New York still holds vestiges of James's past it also stands for a new order epitomized in the "pin-cushion" profile made by the cluster of new skyscrapers. James sees a brutality implicit in the city's skyline. On Wall Street "new landmarks" crush the old "quite as violent children stamp on snails and caterpillars" (AS 423). He wonders whether an American novelist might make of New York what Zola made of Paris, and discards the possibility. The "monstrous phenomena" of New York business, "with their immense momentum," have run too far to be captured ironically or poetically (AS 424-25). Observing the city's wealthy at leisure at the Jersey shore, James shapes a critique of American materialism that juxtaposes the values and practices of American business with those that drive the making of art. James's rhetoric is suffused with class tension. Wealth should present itself discreetly, James asserts. Yet here the lavish, newly built houses carry "the air of unmitigated publicity," he complains, without "a foot of garden wall or a preliminary sketch of interposing shade" to tastefully ensure privacy:

> The highest luxury of all, the supremely expensive thing, is constituted privacy--and yet it was the supremely expensive thing that the good people had supposed themselves to be getting: all of which, I repeat, enriched the case, for the restless analyst, with an illustrative importance. For what did it offer but the sharp interest of the match everywhere and everlastingly played between the short-cut and the long road? --an interest never so sharp as since the short-cut has been able to find itself so endlessly backed by money. Money in fact *is* the short-cut--or the short-cut money; and the long road having, in the instance before me, so little operated, operated for the effect, as we may say, of the cumulative, the game remained all in the hands of its adversary (AS 365).

James's critique culminates in a question that serves as a frame to his commentary in *The American Scene*: "Never would be such a chance to see how the short-cut works, and if there be really any substitute for roundabout experience, for troublesome history, for the long, immitigable process of time" (AS 366). If money represents the short-cut in this argument, then art stands for the long road, and the prefaces, through their scenes of labor and discussions of literary technique, demonstrate how one is to move along the long road. The prefaces chronicle the "roundabout experience" and the crucial role of the "long, immitigable process of time" in creative endeavors. Through the simultaneous enterprises of *The American Scene* and the New York Edition James set up a "match" between the short-cut and the long road.

At the end of *The American Scene* James pronounces the short-cut inadequate. In a diatribe addressed to the Pullman carrying him north from Florida he accuses America of indolence and of indifference toward its own resources. Twice in this diatribe he identifies himself with the dispossessed Indian as a way of authenticating his claim to an unspoiled American landscape. "See what I am making of all this," the rumbling Pullman seems to say to him as the southern landscape speeds by. James replies:

> I see what you are *not* making, oh, what you are ever so vividly not; and how can I help it if I am subject to that lucidity? . . . If I were one of the painted savages you have dispossessed . . . I should owe you my grudge for every disfigurement and every

> violence, for every wound with which you have caused the face of the land to bleed. No, since I accept your ravage, what strikes me is the long list of the arrears of your undone; and so constantly, right and left, that your pretended message of civilization is but a colossal recipe for the *creation* of arrears, and of such as can but remain forever out of hand. You touch the great lonely land--as one feels it still to be--only to plant upon it some ugliness about which, never dreaming of the grace of apology or contrition, you then proceed to brag with a cynicism all your own. You convert the large and noble sanities that I see around me, you convert them one after the other to crudities, to invalidities, hideous and unashamed; and you so leave them to add to the number of myriad aspects you simply spoil, of the myriad unanswerable questions that you scatter about as some monstrous unnatural mother might leave a family of unfathered infants on doorsteps or waiting-rooms. (AS 734-35)

The negligent mother who leaves unanswerable questions around like abandoned progeny seems a close relative of Hawthorne's American eagle, which hovers truculently over the Custom-House door ready at any moment "to fling off her nestlings" (SL 123). There is a common anguish over the destructiveness both writers see in the American character. In addition, there is an implied relationship between this passage and James's prefaces. The writer who subscribes to "the religion of doing" in his own endeavors rebukes America most pointedly for its "arrears," for its "undone." He cannot find in the American scene "the germ of anything finely human, of anything agreeably or successfully social" (AS 736). In these terms America is unfinished, in fact it is barely started. James's own productivity, foregrounded in the prefaces, demonstrates an alternative set of values. As Kenneth Warren says, "The logic of *The American Scene* dictates that text and author have to make up for what is lacking in the United States. There is, James suggests, an 'aesthetic need, in the country, for much greater values, of certain sorts, than the country and its manners, its aspects and arrangements, its past and present and perhaps even future, really supply.' James must provide the nation's inhabitants that which they cannot provide themselves" (116). Through his exhaustive attention to the complexities of consciousness and social relations in his fictions and prefaces

James poses for America a model of the done, an example of the long road completed.

Ironically, the New York Edition, James's model of productive enterprise, was a commercial failure. Royalties totaled only $211 and the edition drew little critical attention (Kaplan 504, McWhirter 1). The revision work and preface writing took three years and were, in James's words, "the most expensive job of my life" (Edel 434). While working on the New York Edition and *The American Scene* he had written little other income-producing work (Anesko 161). James's grief and anxiety over the failure of the New York Edition brought on depression and heart palpitations. As Fred Kaplan notes, he never completed another novel. In an age of speculation he made an enormous speculation on the New York Edition and lost. In response to the question of what went wrong, Kaplan suggests that Scribner's and James Pinker, James's literary agent, did not give thought "to whether [the edition] would pay monetarily for the author or, if they had, had assumed that the author cared more about presence than about money. In fact, he cared about both" (504).

Hawthorne did not hesitate to incorporate a critique of America's shortcomings in his preface to *The Scarlet Letter*. Nor did he omit "The Custom-House" from the second edition of his novel, in spite of the objections of Salemites to his uncomplimentary portrait of his native town. In the works he wrote between 1902 and 1908 James avoided interweaving his social critiques and his creative productions in this way. He compartmentalized his writings, producing in the prefaces a sanitized document, an official "monument" to his art,[7] while containing his social criticism and his emotional responses to the experience of authorship in surrounding texts. Might the New York Edition have made a stronger impression and more money if James had integrated his experience of America into the prefaces?

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[7] James himself used the term "monument" to describe the New York Edition in a letter to Edmund Gosse toward the end of his life. See McWhirter 1, 218; Culver, "Ozymandias" 39-40.

Just as James could not be an artist in America he could not let America enter his fictional work or his prefaces in anything more than an oblique way.

In spite of, or perhaps because of his need to maintain a clear distance between himself and his homeland, James insisted on mutual accountability, as the prefaces to the New York Edition and *The American Scene* jointly attest. James's 1906 story "The Jolly Corner," termed by Bell "a fictional twin of *The American Scene* " (275), poignantly shows that he was haunted during the years of writing the prefaces and *The American Scene* by the question of what he might have been--or more painfully, the question of whether he might have been better--had he remained in America. In this story James takes a deterministic view of social environment. "What would it have made of me?" Spenser Brydon wonders on the eve of his search through the house of his childhood for his American alter-ego (JC 319). The man whom Spenser discovers in the New York dawn is "a horror." He has made himself a millionaire but his sight is ruined and his writing hand is crippled (Edel 315). This nameless alter-ego as Spenser sees him bears a painful resemblance to the American landscape as James describes it at the end of *The American Scene*. Pearson observes that "[o]ne of the primary tasks of the New York Edition prefaces is to draw a defensible boundary around James's works and thereby to protect his aesthetic of fiction, which is to say, his literary career" against literary historians, second-guessing critics, "arbiters of literary economics," and the "untutored reader" (29). James's prefaces were not only a defense against the literary establishment, they were also a defense against the destructive impulses he saw and feared in American life. They were a sheltering edifice he constructed around his work in the effort to establish and preserve his own country.

Works Cited

Key to Abbreviated Titles:

Works by Nathaniel Hawthorne

AN = *The American Notebooks*
CE = *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*
F = *Fanshawe*
SL = *The Scarlet Letter*
TS = *Tales and Sketches*

Works by Henry James

AS = *The American Scene*
GB = *The Golden Bowl*
H = *Hawthorne*
JC = "The Jolly Corner"
L = *Letters*
N = *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*
P = *The Prefaces to the New York Edition*
S = *William Wetmore Story and His Friends*

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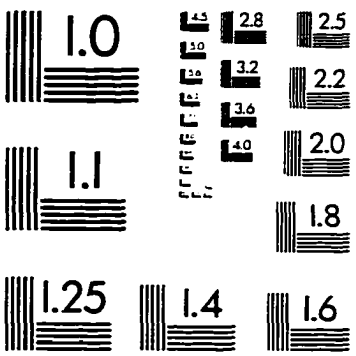

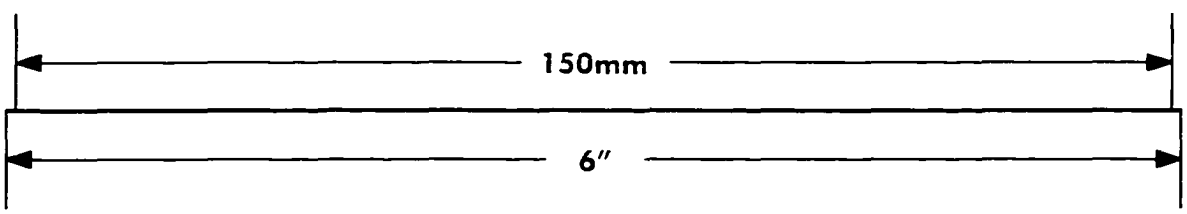

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