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THE PRACTICE OF ASSOCIATION

by

MARC BOUSQUET

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

1997

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Abstract

THE PRACTICE OF ASSOCIATION

by

Marc Bousquet

Advisor: John Brenkman

The nineteenth century sponsored a theatricality as varied and vital as today's cable television and internet, a vivid culture of performance and participation conducted face-to-face between small groups and large crowds. More often than not, this theatricality of everyday life took place in masonic temples, barrooms, workplaces, streets, churches, schools and homes—and not in a theater. Schoolroom exhibitions, fraternal ritual, benefit productions, and the amateur performances of every sort of voluntary association (temperance advocacy, abolition, trade unionism, utopian socialism, and the like) all contributed to a vital performance culture sustaining a complex associational life well into the twentieth century, supporting habits of civic participation, social activism, and collective being. These often-humble productions of ordinary persons were generally subcultural events, establishing a subordinate group's cohesion and locating its aspirations to social agency. These theatrical "practices of association" completely saturated social life: through them, persons and groups sustained alternate and even oppositional lifeways—even as a

national consciousness and the logic of possessive individualism ascended to cultural dominance.

The performance culture of this associational life was chiefly a drama of participant-observers: the spectators were equally performers and belonged intimately to the social scene of the performance in a complex field of relationships. It tended to depress individualism, encourage combination, and enable resistance to the Benthamite, claustral theater of mastery and control—offering a "technology of the subject" which foregrounds intersubjectivity and needs to be understood as countersurveillant. Even as minoritarian structures, the practices of association and their subcultural inventions serve as the cement and the ground of an alternate order. Where the theatricality of nineteenth century prose is traceable to collective theater practices—versions of the "pleasure room" which Louisa Alcott describes her autobiographical Nurse Periwinkle establishing in a civil-war Sanitation Commission hospital ward—the subjectivities articulated in those scenes can often be seen as mutually constitutive, multiple, even overlapping and, as Homi Bhabha says, "an after-effect" of intersubjective experience.

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Early on in this study it came to me that dissertations, too, are collective productions. Without the active support and participation of innumerable others, only some of whom will be named here, this project could not have been completed. From the librarians throughout the City University system, who patiently processed hundreds of overdue books, and their helpful colleagues in Concord, Worcester, Newport, Cambridge and New York, to the hands at countless copying machines, shirt laundries and steam tables, scores of persons contributed their labor directly or indirectly to this effort.

Perhaps one day it will be worthy of their contribution.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Performance Culture And Associational Life

The nineteenth century sponsored a theatricality as varied and vital as today's cable television and internet, a vivid culture of performance and participation conducted face-to-face between small groups and large crowds. More often than not, this theatricality of everyday life took place in masonic temples, barrooms, workplaces, streets, churches, schools and homes--and not in a theater. Schoolroom exhibitions, fraternal ritual, benefit productions, and the amateur performances of every sort of voluntary association (temperance advocacy, abolition, trade unionism, utopian socialism, and the like) all contributed to a vital performance culture sustaining a complex associational life well into the twentieth century, supporting habits of civic participation, social activism, and collective being. These often-humble productions of ordinary persons were generally subcultural events, establishing a subordinate group's cohesion and locating its aspirations to social agency. These theatrical "practices of association" completely saturated social life: through them, persons and groups sustained alternate and even oppositional lifeways--even as a national consciousness and the logic of possessive individualism ascended to cultural dominance.

Very recent historical work (e.g. Blumin, Wiebe, Gilkeson, Ryan, Banner) has begun to address the pervasiveness of associational life in the

century and argue for the social as a primary ontological sphere (Hanson). The performance culture of this associational life was chiefly a drama of participant-observers: the spectators were equally performers and belonged intimately to the social scene of the performance in a complex field of relationships. It tended to depress individualism, encourage combination, and enable resistance to the Benthamite, claustral theater of mastery and control— offering a "technology of the subject" which foregrounds intersubjectivity and needs to be understood as countersurveillance. Practice theory's redaction of Foucault, that a society is "composed of certain foregrounded practices organizing its normative institutions and of innumerable other practices that remain 'minor,'" (emphasis de Certeau, 48) is relevant here: the practices of association and the cultural formations of participant-observership were a) not always so 'minor' as they are today and b) socially and culturally operative even as they became so. Even as minoritarian structures, the practices of association and their subcultural inventions serve as the cement and the ground of what Said, for example, has called the "filiations" of "a kind of compensatory order, that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship. . . which is also a new system" (19).

There have been extremely significant recent studies of the social logic of melodrama (Hadley's contestatory "melodramatic mode" and McConachie's hegemonic "melodramatic formations") and of the operation of that genre in other cultural formations (Jameson, urging its police-function; Brooks, urging its radically-democratic epistemology; Sollors, remarking on it as an agent in constellating the discourse of ethnicity). And some sophisticated treatments within the Foucauldian discourse have persuasively

described alternate uses of theater-structures in other cultural formations (including, for example, the extremely interesting subversive performativity recently developed by Litvak in which "making a scene" interrupts the larger hegemonies of realistic narrative and the gender regime--this is the subversive performativity which might be characterized as saying, "You are not spying on me. I am showing myself to you."). But the actual practices of the performance culture of everyday life in the nineteenth-century United States are relatively unstudied. Important exceptions include Wilentz, Chants Democratic; Denning, Mechanic Accents; discussions of militia parades and civic pageantry by Davis and Glassberg; and studies of masculine subcultures by Yacovone, Carnes, and Rotundo. Haltunnen's Confidence-Men and Painted Ladies examines the middle-class vogue for drawing-room theatricals in connection with conduct books and mourning ritual.

Elaine Hadley's Melodramatic Tactics and Peter Brooks's The Melodramatic Imagination manage to serve both as a meditation on melodrama and discussion of melodramatic structures of knowing and being in other cultural formations. Similarly, The Practice of Association seeks both to distinguish the generic features of associational theater and render visible the structures of associational practice in nineteenth-century American prose.

Of primary concern is a distinction between melodramatic and associational performance. The present effort argues that the tremendous variety of theater practices produced correspondingly various logics of social relations. Generally speaking, melodrama produces the economies of spectatorship, spectacle, and self-display that lead to the modern subject-under-administration. It sustained (and arguably continues to sustain in new media) the ascendant values and practices of possessive individualism

(see McConachie and Chapter Three below, "The Emergence of the Melodramatic as a Social Instrument"). In describing the operation of (melodramatized) theater in other cultural formations, Jameson observes "the obsessive repetition through the nineteenth-century novel of theatrical terms like 'scene,' 'spectacle,' and 'tableau,'" arguing that these "urge on the reader a theater-goer's position with respect to the content of the narrative," and that this organization of point of view by way of "the metaphor and ideal of theatrical representation" necessarily reproduces the passive subject of supervision featured in what might be termed strong-Foucauldian accounts of Victorian subjectivity (231). This is an important story, not least because the theater practices of today—including film and television viewing—are in some ways similar to the bourgeois spectatorship upon which Jameson bases his critique. And yet the vast majority of theater practices in the period didn't involve "theater-going" at all.

As Hobsbawm observes, invented-tradition ritual and the theater-practice of voluntary association/imaginary community ("establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities") was in the nineteenth century even more prevalent subculturally than nationally (9). Yet most studies of the period focus on nationalist invented tradition performing statist or hegemonic legitimization and indoctrination functions, and not on the subcultural inventions. This effort is looking for an alternative to strong-Foucauldian and specular/spectacular accounts of nineteenth-century theatricality (not contradicting these efforts, but aiming to supplement the narrative marked out by them). Contemporary public culture is profoundly melodramatized (television, film, political speech, and most journalism is characterized by melodrama's ethical binarism, epistemology of exposure, and pressure to

adjust the subject to administrative necessity), and the tale of this ascendance to cultural dominance is perhaps just beginning (the most persuasive evidence for the melodramatic as a mode of liberal-democratic hegemony being its virtual disappearance as a category of cultural criticism).

In venues other than the theater, associational life sustained ritual inventions and collective theatrical practices that retarded the melodramatization of public culture through 1945. It is noteworthy that Quentin Anderson's Imperial Self locates the "post-social" triumph of American liberal individualism in the twentieth century, describing Emerson, Whitman and Henry James as "the original proponents of the emotional logic we are now employing" (205), but refraining from the further claim that this emotional logic dominated the century that proposed it. Anderson's view of imperial selfhood as a cultural emergent of the "American Renaissance" period differs in emphasis from those who tend to view it as a cultural dominant in the period, such as Wai-Chee Dimock, for whom the autotelic "self-propelled and self-governing, autonomous and free" individual "is the centerpiece of Jacksonian culture" (25) and Richard Poirier for whom American literature is defined by "an evident distaste" for "the necessity of social intercourse" (16, 33).

This emphasis on a lesser-told story shares into the effort of historical investigations of associational life in the United States, and also the strains of feminist philosophy and postcolonial theory assigning new importance to other-than-individualist accounts of subjectivity. Consistent with the sociological approaches to literature supported by practice theory and British cultural studies (especially Jameson, Williams, and Hall), it gives its particular attention to the historical practices and cultural formations of groups and persons seeking to uphold alternate lifeways under an emergent liberal-democratic social order. The

study as a whole responds to an enduring feature of the discourse surrounding American cultural and literary criticism, in which the proper objects of study are to an extent determined by what Christopher Newfield describes in Emerson's lifetime as "the power of individualism to present itself as the 'American' outcome even in a social modernity driven by the forces of the group, the mass, the statistical aggregate, the organization" (662). The discourses surrounding various individualisms--Jacksonian, Emersonian, rugged, Lockean-possessive, Cartesian-epistemological, Romantic, aesthetic-modernist--travel in a pack with the question gnawing at the foundations of our discipline: what is American about an American book? To the extent that individualism is generally previously understood as the answer to that inquiry, the objects of study are selected (or seem to self-evidently present themselves) for their hospitality to discussions of individualism. Though there are numerous practical and disciplinary reasons for a focus on the public stage, the relative neglect of collective theater practices is partly due to their inhospitality to prevailing mythographies of the American individual. The subject of collective theater is often marginal--Fourierist rather than free-enterprise, imaginatively bound to the parlor rather than the frontier, temperate rather than hard-drinking, radically political rather than self-reliant, a speaker of English as a second language and a singer of opera in the mother tongue.

Of course a deep concern for the social character of being informs the authoritative, performing, and liberal individualisms of the influential studies by Mathiessen, Poirier, and Quentin Anderson--any idea of the individual being, among other things, an instrument for shaping social relations. But the collectivist yearnings of nineteenth-century American subjectivity have been masked in the study of theater arts and literature alike: by the selection of texts, authors, and genres which facilitate the institutionalization of literary value in democratic-imperial subjectivity, and

also by the treatment of texts (the historiography of the Melville and James revivals is also a history of their recovery as different sorts of strong individualists under the twentieth-century North American liberal imagination, all but completely obscuring the fraternal, forecastle subjectivity of the one and the distaste for practices of the "self" of the other). This project aims to go a little way in the other direction, focussing on authors, texts and genres which get at the social character of being by way of the collective.

The Practice of Association tries to show some of the ways that "the obsessive repetition through the nineteenth century novel of theatrical terms" documents an active, associational subject in a social field. Where the theatricality of nineteenth century prose is traceable to collective theater practices—versions of the "pleasure room" which Louisa Alcott describes her autobiographical Nurse Periwinkle establishing in a civil-war Sanitation Commission hospital ward—the subjectivities articulated in those scenes can often be seen as mutually constitutive, multiple, even overlapping and, as Homi Bhabha says, "an after-effect of the intersubjective" (188). This is not to say that individualism wasn't the predominant mode of articulating self-understanding and social relations, only that there were other ways also, many of them hitherto unremarked.

This introductory chapter surveys associational life and neglected theater genres 1800-1833, discussing an 1808 Tammany parade, Masonic ritual in ethnic discourse c. 1825, the schoolroom exhibitions of Susannah Rowson 1804-1811 and William Bentley Fowle 1817-1835 (Fowle after 1840 becomes the first impresario of parlor-theater handbooks), and the "republican" private theatricals of a jeweler's apprentice c. 1831 discussed in a biography written by Catharine Sedgwick. It observes that voluntary

association and the participant-observer theatricality of associational invented tradition was a widespread social fact for persons of either gender and most classes.

Tracing the participant-observer values and communitarian subjectivity supported by associational theater practices—increasingly institutionalized in the schoolroom—a second chapter argues that the participatory subjectivity featured in Catharine Sedgwick's bestselling fiction provided the chief opportunity for constituting persons and groups as social agents in the period. Chapter Three, "The Emergence of the Melodramatic as a Social Instrument," theorizes melodrama as an instrument of liberal-democratic statism, reviewing heroic melodrama, its precursor formations, and its successor formations as instruments for distributing individualism more democratically. It provides an extended discussion of the melodramatic subject's relationship to administrative culture, and describes how what Hadley calls "the melodramatic mode" detaches itself from actual melodrama to inflect other forms of cultural production. Two instances of this pervasion are studied: 1) the remarkable working-class popularity of Shakespeare's Coriolanus during the Jacksonian era (in productions that emphasized the hero's scorn of the plebiscite), and 2) Cooper's The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish (1829), which through its explicit reliance on melodramatic ways of knowing and being—especially melodrama's hostility to mystery—returns radically democratic sympathies to administrative purpose. Special attention is paid to the intertwined symbolic fields of the Native and Rome. The Cooper discussion, with some further remarks on Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, makes up the fourth chapter.

Chapter Five, "Rites of Dissent: Mystery, Utopia, and Demobilizing the Subject, 1840-1865," unfolds in three parts. The first relates the

oppositional theatricality of workingmen's movements and city-mysteries fiction (Sue, Lippard) to the festival practices of experimental communities (Hopedale, Oneida, Brook Farm, and others). The early nineteenth-century artisan-republican recovery of guild "mystery" is traced into city-mysteries fiction, arguing that the specular economy of "exposure" and "revelation" is balanced by a positive construction of mystery as workingmen's association in Sue's The Wandering Jew and Lippard's Quaker City. Sue's novel, which appeared in two rival translations at the peak of Fourierist community in the U.S. (c.1845-1847), was read as associationist propaganda. Supporting evidence is provided by the literary criticism of Charles Dana, together with the remarks on festival by Elizabeth Peabody and George Ripley in Brook Farm's Harbinger 1845-1848, and the ritual of Lippard's labor fraternity, the Brotherhood of the Union (1847-1854). This leads in the second section to a critique of Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance, arguing that Hawthorne misrepresents the theater practices of Brook Farm as disabling spectacle and self-display, rather than as a technology supporting the socially-enabling "mystery" of associational life. The third section briefly describes the remarkable role of women's benefit theatricals during the Civil War hospitals funding effort, 1862-1865, noting how the local Women's Aid Societies, and regional women's benefit organizations, struggled with the Sanitary Commission and War Department, leading to a fully-operational "alternate administration." Alcott's performances at a Sanitary Fair, her hospital performances (in the recovery ward she designated her "pleasure room") and other private theatricals are studied en route to an interpretation of parlor theatrical as a technology of partial-yet-concrete utopia in her prose.

The final chapter, "Intersubjective Epistemologies: Henry James and Private Theater," describes private theater as an ethical specular practice in

James's late prose. This chapter was in fact the first written: a future elaboration will employ a discussion of Delsartism (an actor's philosophy of gesture promoted by the James family friend Steele MacKaye c. 1870 that became the basis of a women's physical-culture movement at least through 1917) to bring together the vogue for community pageantry 1890-1917 with related material in Wharton and Adams. The expanded project will read utopian, naturalist, and proletarian fiction against the vigorous performance culture of unions and activist associations between 1870 and 1945, developing the idea of subculture historically--as a crossing point between the literary and social-science discourses of the plural, and the performative, in group life.

Theater and Theatricality 1800-1833

Numerous antitheatrical sermons and pamphlets were published during the first third of the nineteenth century, and various statutes restricted or banned performances in New England states: as late as 1815, Connecticut laws forbade the institution of theaters (Clapp 159). But these outcries against the stage only underline its rapid growth: as Foster Dulles dryly remarked of the 1774 interdiction of "Exhibitions of Shows, Plays, and other expensive Diversions" by the Continental Congress, "It is interesting that these amusements should have had a sufficiently wide vogue to warrant such action" (65). Despite religious and occasional Whiggish opposition to professional histrionics, few Americans appear to have missed an opportunity for playgoing. No friend of the stage, Timothy Dwight reluctantly confesses in his account of his travels through New England that about 1821 the principal amusements included "unhappily, in some of the

larger towns, cards and dramatic exhibitions" (qtd. in Dulles 72). While the melodramatic theaters which multiplied after 1825 catered chiefly to young men and boys, women and children belonged to the audience in the other houses. Recalling her own first visit to the New York theater at the turn of the century, Catharine Sedgwick exclaimed, "What an exquisite portion of the pleasures of imagination come, or have come, to the young through the drama! To this day, the drying at the fire of a wet newspaper recalls the eagerness with which I dried the daily paper to read the play-bill, and truly it is now a sweet odor to me!" (*Autobiography* 76). Susannah Rowson's dialogues and playlets written for the annual exhibitions of her Medford, Massachusetts school for young women between 1807 and 1811 frequently portray teen-aged girls as moderate playgoers. Nor was it a steady diet of Shakespeare. Rowson's "Dialogue Spoken By Two Young Ladies" (*A Present* 45-50) refers to scenes in the popular sensation drama *Tekeli* (1809) in the expectation that her elite audience of boarding-school girls and their families enjoyed a wide familiarity with the text.¹ The predominant attitude seems to have supported moderate and moral playgoing. "Harriet," one of the characters in Rowson's dialogue, complains that she has seen only one play in three weeks; her interlocutor, "Mary" deprecates Harriet's desire to go to the play "ev'ry night in the week," but does not condemn the stage (Mary, after all, has seen *Tekeli* herself).

It does appear that during the revival cycle, 1817-37, religious fervor did sporadically also revive antitheatricalism: during the writing of her first

¹The success of *Tekeli* inspired numerous productions of similar sensation dramas, billed as suitable for "juveniles." Playtexts were sold for 12 1/2 cents (Clapp 113-114).

novel (originally intended as a tract), the same period in which she resolved to convert to Unitarianism, Sedgwick wrote of her avid attention to the performances of "the unrivaled Kean" during the 1820-21 season that she had "not had the satisfaction" she would have had from the plays if she had been certain they were "a right indulgence" (*Letters* 116; 118-119). On the other hand, she continued, "If I had been sure it was wrong, I think I should not have been tempted to go." In the same letter she notes that her playgoing was not "in conformity to fashion, for nothing is more unfashionable in New York than the theatre." Sedgwick's remarks indicate a social ambivalence about playgoing that did not depress the stage's phenomenal growth any more than today's pious complaints regarding the perniciousness of television have reduced the viewing habits of the public.² Like most of her contemporaries, Sedgwick reconciled playgoing with a pronounced piety without undue struggle. During the 1820s, she went to the New York theater eagerly and unembarrassed while writing numerous tracts and Christian juvenile fiction in between novels. She sought out the acquaintance of three

² Philip Hone demonstrates the complexity of attempting to use antitheatricalism in elite rhetoric as a measure of theatrical practices in the early national period is underlined with his remark that "No act of my public life cost me so many friends" as the speech he gave, as Mayor, at the cornerstone-laying of New York's Bowery Theatre in June 1826 (qtd. in Shank 15). While this official act in support of the stage drew fire, his own theatergoing apparently did not, nor did the elaborate private theatricals he threw for his friends after leaving office 1831-1836 (diary entries reviewed in Pessen, "Hone's Set" 298). One measure of the emerging acceptance of the stage during the 1820s is its new appeal as a business investment. Whereas previous theatres were generally floated by actor-managers, the Bowery Theatre, for example, was founded in 1826 on a \$200,000 investment by a group of eight men (two lawyers, two manufacturers, a wealthy master butcher, and three others) with no connection to the stage except the desire to profit from it (Shank 1-3).

prominent actresses during the decade including Ellen Tree and Fanny Kemble (with whom she became intimate, resulting in Kemble's settling in the Berkshires), and she indulged her favorite niece's own passion for the stage: her correspondence with young Kate Minot often reads like the drama notes of a daily newspaper.

The theater was only one venue in which Americans viewed drama during the period. Complete plays were performed by professionals as "moral dialogues" at lecture halls, taverns and museums. Professionals also performed in homes before private parties: the season after her avid attention to Kean, Sedgwick records a recitation by the actress Mrs. Nicholas in her brother's home before a literary gathering that included Bryant (Letters 147-48). Beginning about the middle of the eighteenth century, amateurs performed in the colleges, and collegians took their productions off campus into the neighboring communities (Dulles 49). Observing the consistency and pervasiveness of antitheatrical rhetoric, Nye observes that "student and amateur performances were nevertheless tolerated and even encouraged" (140). After the Revolution, this practice mushroomed with the institution of literary societies such as Yale's Linonia and Brothers in Unity or Dartmouth's Social Friends (f. 1783) and United Fraternity (f. 1786): the literary business of these societies throughout the early national period seems to have been chiefly play production (Clark 526, 529). In April 1782, Ezra Stiles complained to his diary that college theatricals "have become of a notoriety no longer to be concealed," and that while many collegians were "against carrying dramatical exhibitions to the greatest length," others "have been zealous for the whole drama" (qtd. in Clark 526). College performers were visible to the larger community both in off-campus halls and in commencement exercises. College exhibitions were traditionally public

affairs attended by a festive (and often rowdy) spectatorship (Dulles 31). While college presidents worked to restrain the commencement excesses, these affairs remained important community affairs as late as 1837: in that year, Sedgwick wrote, "We had tickets to the [Columbia] College celebrations, and went, and such a jam I have seldom witnessed" (Letters 262). Literary and dramatic societies increasingly held their own exhibitions before the public. In 1808 at Schenectady's Union College, for example, the young John Howard Payne played the heroine of "Pulaski," a romantic drama penned by a fellow student and produced by the literary Adelpic Society: delivering the epilogue in skirts and wig, Payne humourously contrasts his own attire with that of the numerous young women of the town attending the exhibition (W. Hanson 110).

These college players continued their histrionic careers after university in three venues: the professional stage, amateur theatricals, and the schoolroom. Many American playwrights of the early national period were first university players, including David Everett, whose dialogues and plays were most widely disseminated by Caleb Bingham's inclusion of selections in the popular Columbian Orator, and John Linn, for whom the theater was the "chief passion" during his career at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1790s (Meserve, Emerging 149, 156). Amateur theater was widespread. Gentlemen playwrights produced diversions for "waffle frolics" and evening parties in mixed company; sailors and military men performed plays in barracks, on quarterdecks, and—like the collegians—in taverns (Dulles 53, 62; Gilje, Mobocracy, 72). The long tradition of European military and naval theatricals provided many of the earliest performances on the American continent: both men and women attended and performed in Tory and British-military theatricals in British-occupied cities; rebels and

American troops also participated in similar amusements, despite the Congressional sumptuary law.³ Early-republican American military men continued this institution: Sam Houston and Andy Jackson performed as young soldiers; somewhat later, U.S. Grant raised no eyebrows playing Desdemona in an army camp during the Mexican war (L. Levine, Highbrow 37). Organized amateur thespian clubs were widespread in Philadelphia and points south by 1800 (Meserve, Emerging 185, 207; Grimsted, Unveiled 50). The 1750 ban on stage-plays in Massachusetts immediately gave rise to a "clandestine" culture of private theatricals in the state; by the 1818-1819 season Boston sported an openly "Philo-Dramatic Society" of young adult men in the professional classes that gave its original productions in the Washington Garden Ampitheatre (Clapp 3, 165). Coincident with the economic explosion following the completion of the Erie Canal, Albany established an extremely vital culture of amateur theatrical performance: the Albany Histrionic Association maintained their own "Thespian Hall" between 1827 and 1834 until moving to larger quarters (seating 300) that lasted them until the 1842-1843 season when revivalism dissolved the society and briefly discouraged amateur performances (Stone 129-138). Teen-aged boys belonged to the amateur New-York Histrionic Association by about 1830 (Harrison 16). Debating societies often in addition to their weekly meetings produced amateur theater. On the borders of the expanding nation, this form of theatrical production often attended urban growth, as in Cincinnati's transition from "but a small and dirty county town" to

³ Jared Brown's recent study (1995) of revolutionary theatrical practices emphasizes the economic basis of much late 18th century antitheatricalism "on the ground that it competed with and detracted from the development of American mercantile enterprises" (1).

metropolis c. 1805, where the local debate society first put up plays in a large barn with the community's approval: deeming them "harmless amusement," one of the players remembered, "as this village playing was unattended with any of the stimulants to vice and dissipation, so disgraceful to modern theatres" (Mansfield 70-73). The audiences were decidedly mixed company, even where the players were mostly men (and they were not always: of a New Jersey private theatrical authored by himself the future governor of the state remarked that "kissing constitutes a great part of its entertainment"). Professional touring companies often recruited supernumeraries and actors for small parts from among the local amateurs--frequently resulting in humorous mishaps, such as the Ludlow company's unsuccessful quest for "virgins" in Pittsburgh (Dulles 53, 108).

The first third of the century supported a busy intersection between theater and everyday life. Masquerade balls were frequent in the early republican era and New Yorkers developed a positive mania for them in the 1820s, the practice moving from private homes and the wealthier classes to the middle and working classes in masquerades held at all of the New-York theaters (including the two circuses) at the end of the decade (Shank 224-228).⁴ The Bowery Theater sponsored Firemen's and Military Balls in addition to masquerades, providing a venue for groups and persons without access to more genteel assemblies to act out and negotiate their relations. Persons of every description moved from amateur theatricals to the public stage, and from the public stage to religious, political, and educational careers. Susannah Rowson, who published Charlotte Temple before going

⁴ See also Catharine Sedgwick's attendance at "the fancy-ball at Berteau's" (Letters 229).

on the stage with her husband, converting amateur theatrical experience into professional profit, subsequently left the theater to become one of the most respected schoolmistresses in Boston. (A few years later, she adopted a girl whose father had abandoned the legal profession for the stage [Nason 178].) While a schoolmistress, she continued to write, publish, and produce both poetry and drama that was exclusively occasional, for schoolroom or benefit performance. This last category of performance could involve a large public audience in a concert hall or theater, like Rowson's 1820 "Ode for the Fatherless and Widows' Society" (an organization founded 1817 of which she was president). With music composed by a friend amateur, the piece was sung by Boston's premier amateur performing group, the Handel and Haydn Society (Nason 171). Judith Sargent Murray's plays were similarly produced on the public stage in 1796 on the justification of benefits "for the widows and orphans of Boston" (Meserve, Emerging 154). The Democrat Mordecai Noah, later the architect of a Zionist plan to purchase Grand Island (in the Niagara River) and settle it with American Jews as a "New Jerusalem," played as a teenager in an amateur theater company associated (apparently as a kind of talent farm) with Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theater in the first decade of the century. While a diplomat during the War of 1812, Noah wrote under the excuse of benefit performance; afterwards he wrote a series of successful plays before giving them up to resume an influential career in New York Democratic politics. In September 1825, after succeeding in purchasing Grand Island, Noah presided over a dedication ceremony for the new Jewish homeland in Buffalo's Episcopal Church--garbed in a Richard III costume and gilt medallion on loan from New York's Park Theater. The Native leader and orator Red Jacket accompanied Noah and participated in the ceremonies (the Indian belonging to the lost tribes in Noah's view, and

the 1820s offering tremendous enthusiasm for seeing actual Native Americans perform war dances and orations on the stage). Having timed the dedication to coincide with the opening of the Erie Canal, Noah returned to New York in the governor's flotilla, admiral of a craft tricked out appropriately as Noah's ark.⁵ Some decades later, Melville's 1850 famous horseback "kidnapping" of the former actress Fanny Kemble at a Berkshire train station while costumed for the evening's masquerade ball was remarkable not for innovating the introjection of theatricality into everyday life, but for reviving it.

Performance and Pedagogy

Perhaps the single most common means by which dramatic performances were mounted in the first third of the century was the schoolroom. Earlier records are spotty, but by 1798, a plethora of documentation shows widespread and rapidly accelerating playgiving by academies and schools, both public and private.⁶ Boys performed more often, but girls' schools quite commonly performed also, especially the moral

⁵ Account of the dedication: Johnson and Wilentz 66.

⁶ Sophia Hayes Wyatt, the itinerant schoolteacher and pubkeeper, describes the traditional festivities in Dover, New Hampshire, c. 1810: "On the last quarter of this long school, much ambition and excitement was created, to see who would excel at the examination and exhibition that were to come off at the close of the school. The books were taken home, their studies reviewed, pieces and dialogues carefully spoken at home and at school. The young ladies' uniform was to be white, with pink sashes. The lads' were to be blue sashes. All preliminaries were made, parents, friends and all, were invited" (54). For further documentation, see the section on schoolroom theatricals below.

plays of Madame de Genlis and Hannah More. Contemporary accounts in the last decade of the eighteenth century and in each of the three first decades of the nineteenth observed that many schools gave plays as often as five times in the school year, at the annual exhibition and at the quarter-day examinations. As with the collegiate performances, attendance at academy exhibitions included an audience larger than the friends and family of the schoolchildren. Establishing a public Latin School in 1825, the Boston Schools Committee noted this tradition in instituting a monthly examination, "open for parents, and any other persons interested" (AJE 1: 266). Fowle's memoir relates an instance of another "interested person" attending a latin-school examination (the Boston Latin School, not the later public institution) where he and several of his grammar-school classmates from the unfashionable North End had risen to lead the academy classes. His proud grammar-school master attended:

at the exhibition, Master Little rose in the midst of the company, and wished to be permitted to state a singular circumstance, which was, that but four northend boys were in the school, they were all from his school, and they headed the four classes now before the Committee. His immense size, and loud voice caused a sensation, and a laugh" (23)

These events were important locations for the community, its members, and factions to contest each other and define themselves: English-language exhibitions were broadly attended. Often the school was not large enough to hold the exhibition's audience, and the performances were held in a church. Local politicians, clergy, professionals, merchants, school trustees and other schoolmasters attended with their families; moral-reform groups sometimes attended, particularly when the topic of the play interested them; many of

the numerous persons who were involved in education reform , the various elocutionary movements, self-improvement, or mutual improvement, attended frequently.

Occasionally children from other schools and their parents were present, either as spectators or participants: exhibitions were often scheduled jointly, facilitating productions throughout the period which included parts for both boys and girls. Some of the spectators just came hoping to see a good show, as Catharine Sedgwick often did throughout the antebellum period, writing disappointedly to her brother after an 1821 visit, "I went to the school the other day to hear the boys speak off Demosthenes and Cicero, and I was quite amused, for I had almost forgotten to what seeming torture the human body can be put without stretching it on the rack" (Letters 121). The local press often reprinted the texts of these performances, particularly when they were topical, as The Boston Weekly Magazine did in 1802 when one of Rowson's students performed a poem with traces of Wollstonecraftism at the exhibition (J. James 156-157).

These performances were often quite elaborate. One of the earliest books devoted entirely to original schoolroom plays, a hefty 500-page tome written in 1797 by Charles Stearns, preceptor of the Liberal School in Lincoln, Massachusetts, contains extensive instructions for constructing an elevated proscenium stage in the schoolhouse, complete with curtains, green room, and multiple entrances. An obituary memoir of John Howard Payne written by one of his boyhood classmates at the Berry Street Academy (where Payne's father was master and which Catharine Sedgwick attended at about the same time) vividly recalls "the exhibitions which we used to have [c. 1796-1807] where a mimic theatre was got up, with stage, curtain, and pit, and in all but dresses and properties we flattered ourselves that we rivalled

the regular practitioners in the Federal Street Theatre across the way" (qtd. in Clapp 104). Contemporary accounts show schoolmasters devoting the entire energy of the school to preparations for as much as six weeks prior to the event (and being criticized for this non-pedagogical attention to the performance by the same audience that expected a good show); the Boston Schools Committee saw fit to regulate preparations for examinations and exhibitions in the public institutions, decreeing that just "one fortnight shall be given to instructors to prepare their pupils to advantage on these occasions" (AJE 1: 321). These exhibitions could grow spectacular in scale: four years later, Lafayette was feted in New York "at an exhibition of about three thousand scholars at the Park" (AJE 1: 460).

The schoolroom exhibitions are of particular importance in the dramatic productions of the period for several reasons. While few individual exhibition plays attracted so large an audience as the productions of the public stage (though some eventually reached acclaim on the public stage, like Everett's pieces and Breckenridge's Bunker Hill, written shortly after the battle for exhibition at his boys' academy in Maryland), the number of schools giving exhibitions vastly exceeded the number of theaters. The first half of the century saw college theatricals increasingly become the province of secret societies, as at Yale and Princeton (a trend reversed during and after the Civil War). Meanwhile, academies grew increasingly public in their displays. Lower schools promoted wide participation in theatricals, including the vast majority of non-collegians: during 1823-1826, only about 750 men were graduated from the universities each year (AJE 1: 695). The school plays help to recover the theatricality of women, immigrants, and non-elite men in a rich and vital culture of participant-observation (rather than spectatorship or less). Productions were very often original, written by

the schoolmaster or other local figures, and sometimes quite local in their content. Unlike many plays and novels written by Americans (and the vast majority of novels read and plays viewed, because bookstores and theaters were dominated by cheap, pirated British work unprotected by copyright), the schoolroom plays frequently represent contemporary American life.

Where these texts survive, they sometimes spotlight the manners and morals of the early republic, reflecting emergent and divergent lifeways in a period of sharpening class, gender, racial, and ethnic conflict. But as much as these texts can be pressed to reveal, the performances they supported can provide even more: the spread of these performances to near universality among schoolchildren during the period provides a link not only to the stage, but to the theatricality of everyday life, the rich culture of participant-observation which structured the quotidian social agency of persons in both their individual and group character.

Groups in Public

Early republican theatricality vastly overspread the boundaries of genre, spectatorship, and the idea of "entertainment" associated with playgiving and playgoing. Students of artisan republican culture (Wilentz, Rock, Gilje, Laurie and Hirsch) have already reconstructed the "dramaturgy of the crowd" (Wilentz, *Chants* 67) represented by the parades, processions, pageants, songs, rituals, carnivals, mobs, rowdyism and strikes of the era. It was impossible to evade an intimate relation with theatricality simply by avoiding the stage and the school play: with festival regularity and unpredictably as occasion demanded, the streets, wharves and waterways of

metropolitan American would erupt into living theater. In addition to the annual Fourth of July celebrations, New York for example mounted giant festivals at the ratification of the Constitution (1788), the re-interment of Revolutionary war dead discovered in mass graves (1808), the various victories of the 1812 war, and the opening of the Erie Canal (1825). Many of these massive public demonstrations took place at night. The streets were illuminated by candles in every window, and huge transparencies were hung representing victories, associations, appeals, memorials and moral exemplars. On October 25, 1813, for example, the New York Evening Post described the city's public buildings, illuminated by order of the corporation: "transparencies were everywhere seen;" on one hanging from the city hall the motto "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP" was inscribed "in letters so large they could easily be distinguished across throughout the Park" (qtd. in Rock, NYC Artisan 15). The festivity closed in the manner of the European Lenten carnival, with a signal for the extinguishing of the lights: "and, as if by enchantment, an orderly and scarcely broken silence prevailed, in that place so lately alive with merriment and revelry." It wasn't necessary to wait for the end of the war, nor the fourth of July or the New Years' revels. Beginning by the first decade of the century to be well organized into trade associations, at least in metropolitan centers (New York, Philadelphia, Newark), artisans paraded to celebrate their association both ritually (on the anniversary of the founding of their association, for instance) and occasionally (to call attention to wage or trade policy disputes). These craft rituals alone "were constant features of early national New York life" (Wilentz, Artisan 45).

Nor were artisanal associations the only supplier of pageantry. After 1817, the Sunday-School movement sponsored large annual parades in New

York. In 1829, twelve thousand students marched with eight thousand teachers and sympathizers, and Paul Boyer estimates that more than forty percent of all New York youth between the ages of 4 and 15 participated (41). Political, masonic, benevolent, mutual-improvement and ethnic associations paraded on their saints' days (Andrew, Patrick, Tammany) or to mark lodge anniversaries, election days, the investment of new members, the death of old members, the building of a hall, the granting of a charter, the birth of Washington and the death of the occasional tyrant. Volunteer militia and fire companies were particularly avid and it seems just about any excuse would do: the volunteer "Republican Green Rifle Corps" turned out one year to conduct maneuvers in the streets of New York and "paraded to celebrate the seventh anniversary of Mr. Jefferson's elevation to the Presidency" (Stiles 35). The visibility of the militia groups was particularly high in the post-revolutionary decades (see Davis 48-75). Even before achieving fame on the public stage, the prepubescent John Howard Payne "made his name a household word" in Boston by organizing a uniformed boys' volunteer militia company that paraded on the Commons under its own flag (Harrison 21-22). Sedgwick's story "The Deformed Boy" (Stories for Young Persons, 1840) features a troupe of boys playing at Revolutionary soldiers, mock-parading through the streets in masquerade uniforms, possibly drawing upon the Payne episode but in all likelihood representing a common practice of boys imitating adult male pageantry (see Rotundo and Davis). The chief business of many associations was to invent and sustain civic pageantry for its members to enact (Wilentz, Chants 88 and passim). In the case of some particularly informal collections of youth, carnival misrule was apparently the sole object of their association, as in the case of the "Callithumpians" who made themselves known annually in New York during the 1820s, "a

company. . . formed by a number of ill-bred boys, chimney sweeps, and other equally illustrious and aspiring persons" who began by thumping on kettles in their New Year's procession, annually progressed to a more fully-equipped discordance, window-breaking, and festival kidnappings, and--in a mob four thousand strong--by 1828 ended in running battles with the police watch and the near-demolition of the African Church in Elizabeth Street (Gilje and Rock 63-65). As Susan Davis's study of Philadelphia's nineteenth-century parades demonstrates, nearly all classes of antebellum Americans found a way into pageant culture by the 1830s.

Even when officially organized under corporatist auspices of unity and order, these festivities provided an opportunity for groups to renegotiate, rather than sustain, the social order. The Evening Post account of the New-York victory celebrations concludes with the observation that "the Butchers of the city distinguished themselves on this occasion, by illuminating their stalls in various markets, with a profusion of lights placed in such a manner as to produce the most striking effect. They too had their transparency with Free Trade and Butchers' Rights" (Rock, NYC Artisan 15). In thus "distinguishing themselves," it did not escape contemporary observers that the Butchers agitated for their own "Rights" rather more than they promoted the interests of the community of the whole. Davis's study emphasizes the relationship of festive culture, especially among the poor and working class, to neighborhood life: for her, along with the "laissez-faire" localist origins of most ceremonial production in the early-national period, this suggests that American "invention of tradition" differs from the "invention of tradition" by the French republican state or the British monarchy during the same period (9-11). While most of the contributions to Hobsbawm's seminal study of invented tradition focus upon the symbolic

practices of the nineteenth-century state, Hobsbawm's introduction observes that invented traditions of the type that established "social cohesion or the membership of groups" was "prevalent" (9-10).

The extent to which the invented traditions of non-hegemonic cultures contributed to the social agency of non-dominant groups during the period remains to be studied. Hobsbawm identifies three types of invented tradition:

- a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status, or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems, or conventions of behavior (9)

It's not entirely clear, when he describes type a) (the "communitarian") set as prevalent, whether he includes statist practices in this group or in group b) (legitimizing authority) or c) inculcating beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Doubtless practices of the state involve all three types, as do the practices of most groups engaged in tradition-inventing, especially when those practices are subjected to Foucauldian scrutiny. But many of the complexities of nineteenth-century festival creation, especially where they involve subcultural efforts toward cohesion, legitimacy, and agency, have been overlooked. Hobsbawm, for example, emphasizes that "the nature of the values, rights, and obligations of the group membership [such as] 'patriotism,' 'loyalty,' 'duty,' 'playing the game,' 'the school spirit' and the like" (12) are vague, while the (statist) practices symbolizing them are compulsory, suggesting the social-control function of statist invented tradition. But in the associational life of the early-national United States, the

nature of group affiliation was often explicit , even platform-based: the group defined itself by the nature of its aspirations to social agency . Similarly, Hobsbawm's observations that the invented new traditions even "in the self-contained lives of small sub-cultural groups" occupied a "much smaller place " than older traditions, is not borne out by the new-tradition-filled lives of antebellum Americans (12). Lastly, the social effects of associational invented tradition were not limited to the achievement (or failure) of an association's agenda: where certain types of association were prohibited, especially trade unions, potential clients often joined other sorts of organizations, in order to attain the positive dimension of type a) invented tradition without falling under the spell of its type b) legitimation or type c) indoctrination functions

During the antebellum period, in fact, massive patriotic celebrations of the nation or urban corporate community were the exception rather than the rule in large metropolitan circumstances. At a joint pageant organized in Boston on the death of Washington, William Bentley Fowle remarks on the duration of the event, "I was wearied by the length of the procession," observing that "The different mechanics marched under separate standards" ("Autobiography" 4). Glassberg points out that in urban conditions different ethnic, fraternal, and labor associations usually celebrated apart even when celebrating a national holiday, "sponsor[ing] separate festivities for their members" in different locations (24; Davis 40-41). These divisions often marked not just separation, but opposition. The moral reformer Lewis Tappan, for example, confessed himself "tempted by the fireworks display in Battery Park" on July 4th, 1828, but instead organized "an evening's hymn-sing from a collection called Village Favorites" (Boyer 17). More confrontationally, abolitionist and African-American groups often used

patriotic celebrations, especially the Fourth of July, to stage a "volatile-counter-theatre" (Davis 46). Festival events sponsored volatility within groups as well as between them, as the studies of Irish-American and labor parade culture abundantly display (Meagher, Kazin and Ross). The order and organization of the occasional joint processions was arduous, and revealing: Wilentz's study of the increasing tendency of journeymen to assemble under separate banners from their masters during the 1820s signals the emergent divisions of the workshop and class consciousness that erupted into widespread conflict in 1829; by the following decade, artisan celebrations self-consciously dramatized a community of interest among workers to the exclusion of employers (Chants 96). While much of the festival energy of these events was directed at imagining a national community, the nationalist mandate was far from dominant in the first third of the century. Though emerging and ascendant through this theatrical discipline, the idea of the nation-as-community was clearly less of an ideal than an opportunity for more tangible and face-to-face associations to act socially and politically.

Tammany's Festival Clock

One of the largest and earliest joint celebrations "composed of the different Societies, public Bodies, and Citizens at large" involved a five-year struggle between the planners for dominance, and became in 1808 the first great stroke of the political society later known simply as Tammany Hall. This largest and most elaborate municipal and national event in the first decade of the century was not organized by the national or city government,

but by a network of face-to-face associations most of which met in taverns. When John Jackson, politician and prominent Tammany sachem, discovered the remains of 11,000 American prisoners who died in British prison ships during the revolution on property belonging to him in Brooklyn's "Wallabout" section (subsequently the Navy Yard), numerous groups contended for the honor of establishing an appropriate monument and leading a massive memorial procession (Stiles 176-77, n.3). Jackson stonewalled a Brooklyn municipal committee and rival political societies while the Tammany society tried and failed to interest the U.S. Congress in financially supporting the event under Tammany auspices between 1803 and 1807. With criticism regarding the uninterred bones mounting from other quarters, Tammany finally formed its own Wallabout Prison Ship fundraising committee.

Apparently using members who belonged to other organizations to bring the rival memberships around, Tammany succeeded in persuading various military and masonic organizations to participate and subscribe funds. Support rapidly snowballed. Tammany received (and prominently republished) letters from grateful survivors of the prison ships: "Although your Society has been defamed for the lead they have taken in the business, you will remember it is by those who never suffered, and who perhaps would not be displeased to see the same tragedy again acted on the same Theatre, by the same actors" (Wallabout 59). The commander of the U.S.S. Constitution at first declined to participate, but finally accepted when provided with the excuse of a disingenuous public guarantee by Tammany that the ceremonies were "free from party motives" (Wallabout 69). Reaching the leadership cadre of the Masons, Tammany received a written assurance from the Grand Lodge that the leaders would "with their respective

Lodges, cheerfully co-operate in the measures to be adopted by their brothers" (Wallabout 63). Apparently in order to bring around the Society of the Cincinnati, the elite and influential military fraternity of Revolutionary veterans (a political opponent of Tammany and a hated aristocratic rival), Tammany conceded the Cincinnati first place in the procession.⁷

The procession did not merely reflect Tammany's ascendance, it was the currency and medium of that ascendance. By making this scene, Tammany capitalized on the festival consciousness of the city's associations, a consciousness that was not only occasional, but pervasively active in everyday life. Thirty thousand persons participated in the day-long Wallabout funeral procession. Bearing floats and thirteen giant coffins, they circled through miles of lower Manhattan, forded the East River in a giant flotilla, and paraded through Brooklyn for the interment. After a massive pre-dawn cannonade, the associations forming the constituent parts of the procession assembled separately and passed through the streets in silence to the staging area. When the long parade at last began to unfold, only the clergy, and military escort preceded the Tammany contingent, which reserved to its members (one hundred and four "Revolutionary Characters")

⁷ The placement of the other groups similarly reflected Tammany's urgent behind-the-scenes negotiation: depending most upon the participation of the nautical societies, clergy and the active military, Tammany offered them superior placement. As the group most victimized by British imprisonment, three hundred seamen immediately followed the float. Tammany mollified the Brooklyn city officers--aggrieved that Tammany had usurped their municipal prerogative--by slotting them ahead of the New York city officers. Local officials preceded the Governor, congressmen, and state legislators; the Mechanic Society marched after, followed by the Shipwrights, Hibernians, Masons, Tailors, Hatters, and Concord Society. The unassociated citizenry marched last followed by a final military contingent and the veterans (whose participation was, clearly, taken for granted in Tammany's festival plot).

the right to carry the thirteen coffins representing the dead of the thirteen states. Thus preceding and framing the war dead, Tammany displayed its own symbols, standards, and costumed officers. A "Grand National Pedestal," (an allegorical pageant featuring ten young men costumed as the Genius of America and her nine attributes) separated Tammany from the other associations. This literally placed the Tammany association ahead of the nation—while the other groups were made to follow it.

Tammany's victory was not merely festival, but political. The procession helped to cement its influence in New-York politics: shortly after the Wallabout procession, it was able to remove from the tavern rooms where it had been meeting for twenty years and build the first Tammany Hall. Of course Tammany's ambitions were as large as the symbolic field of the festival (i.e., both "grand" and "national"). By representing the war dead in thirteen separate coffins, Tammany attempted to establish itself as a national organization by associating its thirteen "Tribes" (some of which did not exist prior to the parade) to the war dead of the thirteen States. Briefly successful to varying degrees during the next decade, the Tammany branch societies rapidly lost influence after the War of 1812, and the society's name became after 1830 synonymous with a local politics.

Performing Location

Tammany's failure to sustain a national politics has everything to do with the medium of its influence. Benedict Anderson's description of the nation as imagined community (this "new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" [40]) to print capitalism is relevant here: the immediacy and reality of national community kept pace with improvements

in mechanical production that enabled an ever-expansionist and truly national press: the local print culture characteristic of American communities until 1840 was growing residual by 1860 (Davidson; Brodhead).

The performance culture of associational life nonetheless remained local throughout the nineteenth century.⁸ Localism did not imply village unity: it implied interlocking multiplicity and complexity, rather than unity: even in mid-sized towns and villages such as Seneca Falls, New York, the reality of everyday experience was of multiple communities theatricalized in multiple associational lives: "While 'communities'--aggregates of people who identified with the village and had intimate knowledge of each other's character and background through multiple associations and institutional affiliations--undoubtedly existed in Seneca Falls, community in the the broader sense proved elusive" (Saltzgaber 20). Though powerfully emergent in performance culture, nationalism did not dominate performance culture until the development of film. This underlines Anderson's association of nationalism with mechanical reproduction: by mechanically reproducing performances, film radically inhibited the degree to which performance culture formerly localized printed text.

⁸See in this regard Davis's observation that "Although print media became unprecedentedly important. . . the period's social history reveals that American city dwellers often used collective gatherings and vernacular dramatic techniques--reading aloud, oratory, festivals, work stoppages, mass meetings and parades--to propose ideas about social relations" (3-4). Davis's note that while large national festivals have received historical attention, "less elaborate parade traditions [have] remained outside scholarly scrutiny" can be applied generally to the field of cultural production: the nationalist trajectory of cultural production has received attention, while the localist, communitarian trajectory has been powerfully obscured. See also Zagarell, "Narrative of Community," and Hedrick, "Parlor Literature."

No nineteenth-century play or festival rivalled Birth of a Nation in the dissemination of a national consciousness, or could. Even the half-century phenomenon of stage adaptations of Uncle Tom's Cabin was marked by tremendous heterogeneity: each of the scores of adaptations gave the play different associational inflection--more Christian-evangelical here, more abolitionist there, militant in one version, sensational in another. Because his performances are mechanically reproduced and not easily adapted to local purposes, Arnold Scharzenegger is a far more efficient tool for American cultural empire than Shakespeare ever was for British imperialism--and will probably remain so, until cheaper digital sampling technology enables the democratic re-making of film (as it already does of recorded music). The nationality (or any other characteristic) of a text is easily defeated in performance. This was done routinely in nineteenth-century performance culture: in one of the more obvious applications of this principle, Edward Fitzball made his career as a melodramatist by adapting Cooper's The Pilot to a British audience, reworking the plot and revolutionary American sentiments. Indeed, most melodramatists made their careers similarly. Touring companies likewise habitually adapted the text and properties of their repertory to the city of performance. These superficial examples don't begin to illustrate the pervasive localism of performance culture: while a pressure to perform "the original text" increasingly took hold of professional productions after 1840, amateurs and associations unapologetically produced performances adapted exactly to the values and social purposes of the participating community. Through burlesque, adaptation, re-staging and re-casting, nineteenth-century performance culture resisted and revised the trajectories of print culture, including nationalism. In fact, the intention to adapt obvious in these examples is all but beside the point. Because the

experience of performance was (before film) a face-to-face event, it necessarily reflected, sustained, and invented the values and conditions of face-to-face life—"linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully" for groups as large as a city or as small as a parlor, as ambitious as Tammany or as modest as a clerks' self-improvement circle, but (necessarily) not so large as the community imagined by print culture. If print culture increasingly articulated the power associated with national and imperial imagined community, performance culture articulated the alternate and often opposing power associated with face-to-face invented communities, especially of associations.

Under scrutiny, Tammany's festival of national unity ensured the integrity of its constituent parts far more than the cohesion of those parts with one another. Like the Butchers in the 1813 victory celebration and the Washington funeral procession remembered by Fowle, and all of the joint processions studied by Wilentz, each of the participating societies strove to distinguish themselves. In addition to the usual standards, tools, and articles, every member of these contingents wore or carried a symbol affiliating himself with his cohort (the Coopers wore an oak leaf in their hats; the Masons and Hibernians displayed their lodge pins; the Concord society carried green branches, and so on). Associationism, not nationalism, dominated the symbolic order. Even more important than the competition between the associations for position in the procession at large was the competition between associations for the loyalty of their members. Because members belonged to more than society at a time, the associations which marched in discrete bodies only appeared as discrete: a militia-man and veteran belonging to a Masonic lodge and the Hibernian, Shipwrights', and Tammany society, for example, could only march in one contingent, and was

forced to choose between six different characters in which to appear before the public. Indeed, it was with some glee that the Tammany pamphlet describing the affair noted that the Society of the Cincinnati was unable to collect a contingent large enough to fill the prime spot reserved for it (and published in the advance program) so that its members had to be "redistributed" according to other affiliations. The associations which theatricalized themselves as distinct corporate bodies overlapped in the persons of their membership.

This competition was really a competition for the divided loyalties of their own memberships, exteriorizing and placing in conflict the maze of associational rite and ritual which structured their existence. In addition to the anniversary and occasional processions, fraternal, ethnic, military, and mechanics' associations invented and solemnly performed weekly or quarterly ritual within the membership. The theatricality of participant-observation actively structured social and political life in all of its dimensions, psychological, epistemological, ontological. Through associational theater persons came to know themselves and their world, and act on that world—not as individual agents but as participants in associational life. In a single week, one person could alternately don the Masons' leather apron, the Tammany bucktail, or an ethnic pin and solemnly participate in the secret and exclusive recently-invented traditions of three different societies.

In everyday life, these different associational characters offered persons a multiplied social agency. With Tammany, the member could heel a ward and elect a representative; with the Hatters, a member could set prices and standards, or frustrate a merchant's wish to import cheaper goods; with the Masons, make business contacts and influence the decisions

of decision-makers. These associations were modalities of collective life. There was in them a direct link between the consciousness of affiliation and the reality of social agency: in acting out their fraternity, groups did not merely "create identities," they became social and political actors in a direct, quotidian and unmediated fashion. The members did not "fashion different identities for themselves" with these multiplied associations: they accomplished different things in different theaters of social action.

Richard Sennet's eloquent description of 19th-century community as "destructive gemeinschaft" doesn't account for the social agency of 19th-century associations. While he is quite right to observe that the century gave rise to group life centered around "collective personality," the historical record doesn't appear to support what he calls his "brutal cause-and-effect" conclusion that "the more a fantasied common personality dominates the life of a group, the less a group can act to advance its collective interests. . . . the shared imagery becomes a deterrent to shared action" (223).⁹ Once beyond the social control hypothesis, the contrary conclusion seems inevitable: nineteenth-century social agency presumed some form of intersubjectivity—all the more so for the ever-greater dissemination of romantic subjectivity.

⁹While his claims that "community has become a phenomenon of collective being rather than collective action" describe twentieth century life rather well ("A society with a very low level of interaction between its members, dominated by individual, unstable personality, is likely to give birth through fantasy to enormously destructive collective personalities" [238]) especially with regard to the group life of nations, his sense of the 19th century is limited by his failure to recognize its high level of interaction, struggles over individualism, and high level of social agency through associational life.

The Politics and Principle of Combination

Not everyone imagined themselves heroes of their own stories, at least not in the instant after Jackson's inauguration. While the model of heroic individualism would begin to take hold among the working classes in the late 1820s and slowly gain ascendance in the 30s and 40s, the model of social agency which predominated in the first third of the century was associational. Persons accomplished things on the social and political scene by acting collectively—engendering a vast prescriptive literature against partisanship and the spirit of faction. Like the antitheatrical sermons, the political outcry indicates the explosion of the object fulminated against rather than the opposite. Deploying the rhetoric of the corporate civic body, amplified by the symbolic apparatus of romantic nationalism, critics assailed these "self-created societies" as treasonous combinations, lethal to the life of the whole. Notably, however, the opponents of faction always organized themselves in factions of their own. The 1814 constitution of one anti-Tammany Washington Benevolent Society (so named because it was Washington who warned against self-created societies in his farewell address) argued, typically, that "When bad men combine, it is absolutely necessary that good men should unite" (Rensselaer).

This justification for association was general. Journeymen, facing repeated legal challenges to their union on the grounds of illegal combination, pointed (too often rightly and too often unsuccessfully) to the prior combination of their masters. If the Washington Societies pointed at Tammany, Tammany pointed at the previous combination of the aristocratic Cincinnati (who most historians take as one of the motivations for Washington's warning against combinations). The Anti-Masonic furor that

temporarily suppressed hundreds of lodges resulted—quite naturally, and not ironically—in organized Anti-Masonic Societies and an influential Anti-Masonic political party. In fact, the Masons worked as a lightning rod. In the late 1820s, while hundreds of Masonic lodges briefly shut their doors, thousands of other fraternal lodges and countless other associations mushroomed onto the scene. Where necessary, persons associated under the banner of opposition to association—but Americans did associate, including American women, whose religious benevolent associations in the thirties rivalled men's fraternal associations in numbers and influence by the early 1830s (Ryan 105-144; J. James 121-204). Women saw their charitable associations in the same light as the men saw their fraternal associations: Catharine Sedgwick, for example, humourously compared the 1833 "getting up" of a women's society in her church to Freemasonry, with its "caballing and diplomatizing," mockingly accusing herself of "betraying the secrets of our order" in revealing its pretensions to "public duty" (Letters 230). When children played, they did not play at heroism or stardom—they played, like John Howard Payne, at forming clubs and troupes and secret societies, with their own ritual, codes, and uniforms (see especially Rotundo).

In the first third of the century, the alternative to any given association was less likely to be individualism than another association. The 1815 constitution of the Columbia Moral Society apologized for its organizational principle, to "collect" or "concentrate" an "influence" which was "to be effected by union," observing that "Experience testifies that insolated [sic] individuals, be their motives never so pure and their weight of character never so great, cannot act with success" (qtd. in Grimsted, Notions 97). Most of the conversation surrounding voluntary association pertains to religious or moral-reform societies such as this one: the dominant or "traditional"

(Blumin, Middle Class 195) thesis regarding moral-reform movements is articulated by Paul Boyer. Boyer argues that through reform associations: clergy and upper classes sought "elite moral hegemony" and that aspirants to middle class status climbed upward (14). Of course, moral-reform was only one dimension of associated life, often only one portion of one individual's multiply associated life.

Nonetheless, the social-control thesis has influenced the occasional studies of other forms of antebellum associational life, including the relationship between labor activism and lodge life (Greenberg 89-101) and the ritual life of fraternities (Carnes, Secret Ritual 52). In fact, the interplay of resistance and repression in the multiply associated life of antebellum Americans was tremendously complex, as the ecclesiastical trial of Rhoda Bement c. 1840 demonstrates abundantly (Altschuler and Saltzgaber). Blumin (Middle Class) and, especially, Katz (Poverty and Policy 184-201) offer a strong critique: Katz argues that Boyer casts the public-private distinction backward in history, ignoring the broad acceptance of quasi-governmental operations by private association throughout the century. Heale's study of New-York philanthropy 1817-1823 also complicates the social-control thesis. Lois Banner makes a spirited argument against the elite social-control theories of religious voluntary association, arguing that voluntary association was one of the three "major ingredients" of Christian republicanism, and that "many reformers came to view the voluntary society as [a means of] insuring that democracy would actually function within the republican framework" (314). She usefully surveys the rhetoric of voluntary association in religious benevolence 1818-1830, pointing to the key function of associational life: for persons who were (or felt) "excluded from politics," through association "they looked to society" for agency (315).

Unsurprisingly, the greatest weapon of the associations was ostracism, or enforced individuation (Ryan 119). If the rhetoric of republicanism and romantic nationalism was inconsistent with associations, early republican life was profoundly and increasingly associational. Despite the emergence and democratic spread of heroic-individualist models of subjectivity and agency after 1830, social agency remained dominantly associational throughout the antebellum period: at least one urban historian, basing his study on life-reporting rather than political rhetoric, observes with Tocqueville and Max Weber that after the Revolution "forming voluntary associations for collective action was soon considered essential among a democratic people," calls the explosion in associational life "the antebellum organizational revolution" (Gilkeson 9). After 1820 and through the war, associations for temperance, abolition, communal living, moral reform, racial uplift, universal education, and labor reform dominated the civic life of the nation from the village to the capitol. Only after the war did associations and their theater begin to be gradually privatized and domesticated, pushed—very, very slowly—to the margins of civic life, en route to becoming the residual and faintly embarrassing displays of ethnicity and fraternity of today, all but void of social agency.

The most powerful analysis of contemporary subcultural attempts to attain social agency takes place in cultural studies, pursuing Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson's influential Resistance Through Ritual: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain, and adopts a relatively bleak view. The history of nineteenth-century associations resembles the emergence of modern subcultures (and Bledstein persuasively links the vitality of associational life, even moral-reform association with the emergence of youth culture in the 1820s [220]), especially in their deployment of ritual to "win space," "cluster

around particular locations," "adopt and adapt" objects and create symbols that "express the collectivity of their being-as-a-group" (Hall and Jefferson 45). However, nineteenth-century associational subculture varies importantly from contemporary youth subculture in achieving tangible, traceable historical agency. Hall and Jefferson pointedly observe that contemporary subculture achieves only "imaginary" solutions to material problems:

There is no 'subcultural solution' to working class youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead-end jobs, the routinization and specialisation of labor, low pay and the loss of skills. [Subculture's interventions in the symbolic] 'solve,' but in an imaginary way, problems which at the concrete material level remain unsolved. (45)

Perhaps the structural principles of association (and the accompanying other-than-individualist values and apparatus of organization) distinguished pre-war "subcultures" (the term comes from the Chicago School of Sociology's attempt to describe functioning groups that sustained self-contained or apparently self-contained identity, having much of the meaning assigned by Raymond Williams to his "whole way of life," with the additional meaning that appealed to CCCS, that whole ways of life were also whole ways of contest).

Possibly the larger observable relation between theatricality and agency in nineteenth century associational life springs in part from a similar relation in mob actions, an earlier model of collective agency that survived residually, but visibly and powerfully, in the first third of the century. Gilje's study of the subject describes the degree to which mobbing remained a

legitimate expression of the collective will throughout the eighteenth century, and, to a lesser extent, in the first decades of the nineteenth as well: for many early republicans, "an occasional mob was one of the best ways to maintain a free government" (59; 8-54 and *passim*). Most mob actions were either associated with festive occasions or appropriated festive theatricality in order to make the occasion: theatricality supported the mob's claim to legitimacy (through ritual and ritual inversion, for example); it provided the medium of bonding and address, inviting participation and compelling observation; it structured the mob's behavior, organizing and, importantly, limiting actions.¹⁰ Theatricality functioned similarly for associations, and it was not the fact of association which alarmed contemporary observers, but their access to social agency through rituals of participant-observation. Associations appeared to threaten the corporatist ideal because they regularized and appropriated existing highly theatrical modes of collective agency for themselves, no longer claiming to represent the corporate will of the community but arguing that the parts could act against the whole and yet so act for the benefit of the whole.

¹⁰Where there was destruction, that destructiveness was often limited by the relevant ritual of acting out (the "Tea Parties" in which tea but not other cargo was destroyed; dockworkers' strikes in which ships' rigging was dismantled but carefully stowed away). At the height of its civic legitimacy, American mobbing claimed to represent the civic collective will (i.e. for revolutionary self-government): later, it appeared to represent a community divided against itself, and the first ordinances against public collective disorder were aimed at associations, such as the Hibernians' raucous celebration of March 17th, whose theatricality clearly represented a faction of the civic body and not the whole.

"Our own Lodge, shure:"

The Subject of Association, 1800-1833

During the first third of the century, most scholars assign a relational subjectivity to women: women inside the home and out actively cultivated a self-for-others through formal and informal networks of work, marketing, visiting, and leisure that followed and extended, or invented, kinship lines (Cott, K. Hanson, Kerber, Ryan). But few studies have assigned a similarly relational subjectivity to men.¹¹ While men went outside of the home more than women, it is important to see that men did not go out of the home into "the community," or undifferentiated "public" space; they went out of the home into group life, the subcultures of class, race, profession, drinking habits and sport, or--increasingly--the regularized companionship of voluntary associations (Ryan 105-144; Blumin, Gilkeson). Men went out into identifiable spaces, very often bordered by masculinity but not only by

¹¹ Yacovone is an important exception. In most of the gendered studies of fraternal association (Clawson, Carnes, Williams, Goodman), the emphasis is upon the fraternity's production/maintenance/amelioration of liberal individualism. McWilliams notes that most sociologists and historians ignore the persistence of associational life ("concrete fraternity") in the American polity, focussing instead on fraternal ideals consistent with liberal individualism, such as Emersonian transcendentalism, Enlightenment *gemeinschaft* or radical communitarian utopianism (50-58). The studies seeking to widen the study of voluntary association beyond moral reform (Blumin, Gilkeson) belong chiefly to the historiography of middle-class (or, like Wilentz, working-class) consciousness, rather than a quotidian relational subjectivity. Yacovone's study is of particular consequence because it elaborates the connection between adhesiveness and social agency in "abolitionist fraternity": "Affection cemented the Garrisonian community and provided the emotional support necessary to challenge the social order" (86).

masculinity. Anthony Rotundo's study of "the free nation" of nineteenth-century middle-class American boys, emphasizes that this "subculture" was itself tremendously multiple and mutable in its relations: in clubs, associations, gangs, teams, and quotidian competitions, "boy culture was divided as surely as it was united" (20). Responding to Rotundo's essay, Nancy Cott suggests that the multiplicity of masculine associational life points to two conclusions that run counter to general thinking about nineteenth-century subjectivity. First, she notes, individualism and group culture are not exclusive, and second that men's multiple friendships and group-formations produced affective relations that "may not necessarily have been so different in kind" from "domestic bonds--love, nurturance, and so on" (Carnes and Griffen 210). Associational life was capable of supporting emergent individualisms, and historically did so--the webs of relationality structured so as to support the individual's denial of the fact of his dependence upon them--but it also supported a frankly relational ontology which appears to have been a general (and not exclusively gendered) experience through much of the century.

Nearly all of the studies of antebellum associational life foreground gender, reflecting the debate surrounding the separation of spheres. The studies of women's networks have aimed at re-imagining, extending, and vastly complicating beyond the domestic the "private" sphere of women; more recently, these studies have aimed at historicizing the "separation" of the spheres and illustrating the huge field of the social in which they overlapped. The studies of fraternity and fraternalism are similarly organized by gender: McWilliams offers the avowedly "essentialist" thesis that masculine selfhood transhistorically involves some negotiation of the fraternal "collective self," which is at odds both with a "private self" and the larger

collective of society: except in moments of war or crisis, the fraternal association necessarily, in this view, challenges both egoism and "the values of the surrounding society," a challenge which need not be revolutionary, but rather meliorative or reformist (59-60).¹² McWilliams pursues this insight into the social psychology of masculinity, but ignores the possibility that women, too, participated in collective structures which likewise sought to battle egotism and reform society. Similarly, Clawson's study of fraternal orders in America, while observing the "unrecognized social fact" that "a Masonic type of fraternalism served as the organizational model. . . for literally hundreds of social organizations"(5), restricts her discussion of women's participation in associational life to the very narrow phenomenon of the ladies' auxiliary that began to emerge after 1850, ignoring the eruption of far more vigorous women's groups synchronous with the rapid spread of fraternalism. While much of this group life was homosocial, particularly in the first third of the century, the associations for temperance, abolition, evangelical and moral reform which shaped the political life of the nation in the second third of the century appear increasingly to have included men and women in their ranks.

Associational life did have gendered significance for its participants: men, for example, learned to place associations before other ties, including family; women learned to treat associations like other ties, especially family. Men's associations placed a premium on internal rituals of bonding, passage, and initiation, underlining the "voluntary" aspect of their association;

¹²McWilliams repeatedly challenges the ahistorical centrality of liberal and Enlightenment values in the historiography of American subjectivity while (intentionally) leaving unexamined the "private self" and an "essentialist" view of gender.

women's groups did not emphasize initiation ritual, at least not in the antebellum period, suggesting a greater acceptance of "found" association. Women's groups engaged in less public display than men's groups. Men's organizations engaged in an expressive theatricality; the theatricality of women's groups was usually (but not always) instrumental in nature. Despite these differences, there were great similarities: through association, men and women alike extended, voluntarized, and improvised kin-like relations, created collective consciousness and became social actors. The focus on gender obscures the fact that association was the leading principle of face-to-face social organization during the transition between agrarian colonial culture and industrial nationhood.

While dominant during the period, however, it is difficult to describe the principle of association as "hegemonic," or contributing to the alienation of subjects from their interests (by disabling critical examination of the conditions of consent). For one thing, associational life was hotly contested throughout the antebellum period by political, intellectual, and social elites struggling to represent reality as a relationship between individuals and universals (the "natural" allegiances to family, deity, and state, or transcendental Nature).¹³ Second, despite the consonance of many associations with hegemonic interests (such as moral reform), associational life throughout the period was bewilderingly multivalent and local, irreducible to the platforms upon which the associations were organized—in much the same way that camp-meetings could not be reduced, as a social phenomenon, to a general fervor for Christ. Finally, associations clearly wielded tremendous influence over the symbolic order. Not only did these

¹³See in this regard Emerson's efforts to separate Fuller from associational principles c. 1840.

associations throw off at a dizzying rate new and revised symbols peculiar to themselves, they successfully appropriated the inviolate artifacts of that order to their own purposes. With historically unprecedented access to print and image-reproduction technology (combined with the advent of inexpensive manufacturing of the tokens of group membership) and situated within a national culture itself inventing its traditions, groups had an astonishing capacity and will to organize themselves: no association, however modest and regardless of the class, ethnicity or gender of its constituents, was without its tokens of membership, its own constitution—usually printed in pocket size—and its own songs, poetry, and hymns or ritual.

While associations were chiefly assailed by political elites deploying the rhetoric of corporatism, it was the experience of corporatism which associations offered their memberships. Clawson's long-historical view of the medieval journeymen's associations that provided a model for Freemasonry attributes those groups to the need of single men to establish kin-like relations during a period in their working lives characterized by mobility: the trade was experienced as a corporate body transcending other community borders (31). Motivated in part by the enhanced mobility of industrialization and the increased anonymity of urbanization, persons sought in association the experience of corporate unity not available in large publics, recovering and reinventing the festival traditions of preindustrial society. In the early republican era, these associations constituted themselves as little republics within (and sometimes beyond) the Republic. Adapting the national symbolic apparatus to their own purposes of group solidarity, they created a republican kinship, realizing the promise of a fraternal citizenship within the face-to-face life of the group.

As numerous contemporaries complained, these associations turned the national-republican apparatus to their own purposes. The Tammany society's initiation, for example, featured little more than patriotic rubrics. At these ceremonies, two officials ("sagamores"), one "initiating" and the other "introducing" the candidate, ritually examined the latter's worthiness:

Init. Sagamore. "Does this man love freedom?"

Intr. Sagamore. "Et-hoh" [yes]

Init. Sagamore. "Can he bear fortune and adversity like a true born American?"

Intr. Sagamore. "Et-hoh." (Williams 361)

Framed by ritual gestures, passwords, and paraphernalia, however, these chestnuts became the symbolic property of the society. Of course, the chauvinist content of these oaths lent legitimacy to the ideology of nationhood. But the societies may have borrowed more than they returned in this regard (see Chapter Five below). The candidate's vow to preserve the society's "secrets," for example, calls upon "the guardian genius of Freedom" and "my country's truth and justice" to witness his sincerity: the nationalism of these oaths primarily authenticates the little republic, making the claim that the member's face-to-face loyalty to the society was consistent with the abstract loyalty to the state. The ritual performance of these rubrics only appears to enact the primary relationship of the citizen to the state wished for by Madison in his Federalist discourse against the societies, where the government features as "the sole object worthy of genuine affection." Instead, the primary object of the membership's affection became the society itself. The nationalist ritual specifically answered the unrealized promise of citizenship felt by the unassociated men who approached the fraternity,

making Friends and Brothers of those who felt themselves Strangers in their own republic.

It is tempting to describe associational life in the period as counter-hegemonic by nature. The astonishing legal, social and political strictures against these combinations do give such a claim some weight. Quoting Blackstone, Hattan's review of the judicial regulation of labor points out that throughout the century, in the repeated battering of trade unions by the courts, "combination alone was considered 'the gist of the offense'" (31). In judicial repression not dissimilar to today's RICO prosecutions, the mere fact of confederation was enough to criminalize actions otherwise legal (including speech, such as hissing in a theater). The unions were described as inherently undemocratic and antirepublican—"an aristocracy in a small sphere," and "chartered combinations" of "domestick traitors." In the landmark trial of the Philadelphia cordwainers who had combined for higher wages (1806), the prosecution successfully likened the union to the French Jacobin clubs, inherently revolutionary and hostile to the corporate life of the city: if associations were allowed to proliferate, it was argued, "the whole community will be formed into hostile confederacies" (qtd. in Hattan 55). Unsurprisingly, most Anti-Masons were also anti-union (though not, like the anti-Tammany "Washington Societies," opposed to their own combination). Goodman's study of the organized Anti-Masonic movement points to a similar cry of treason against fraternal life, describing it as the first instance of the enduring American penchant for purging "the enemy within" (21). It wasn't only trade unions that suffered legal repression: women's groups and moral reformers often encountered judicial and legislative obstacles to their activities (Boyer 20). College regulations enacted in the 1820s equated association with conspiracy: West Point's article 112

(1823) informed cadets that "All combinations, under any pretext whatever, are strictly prohibited," including the "sign[ing] of "any paper" seeking to procure a "redress of grievances." Any petition of the Academy authorities, disorderly conduct, or any violation of the rules whatever when "in concert with others" entailed summary dismissal (Regulations 25). During a decade which historians of college life describe as "exceptionally violent and disorderly" (Bledstein 223), civilian campuses prohibited students from organizing "festival entertainment" and "publick exhibitions. . . of any sort whatever" (Brown University Corporation, VI and XII). At the height of antimasonry (1831), even Phi Beta Kappa was assailed as a potentially pernicious corruption of the loyalties of one-third of college youth; it was subsequently purged by Edward Everett, Justice Joseph Story, and John Quincy Adams, who were eager to distinguish between the group and secret societies (Goodman 237). The churches actively participated in the opposition to the newer forms of associational life. In Chillicothe, Ohio, for example, Tammany Methodists were successfully prosecuted in 1810 by an ecclesiastical court convened by the circuit rider, resulting in the expulsion of eight members from the church, including the governor—who was himself a preacher (Williams 357). Though the local finding was subsequently reversed, the conviction on the ecclesiastical crime of "idolatry" foretold the rhetoric and church-divisions of the antimasonic fervor after 1826.

The related political debate regarding partisanship remained inextricable from the debate over the principle (and fact) of association throughout the period. The emergence of a Tammany branch in Rhode Island after 1809 saw the Federalist Rhode Island American opine in a series of vitriolic editorials that "all societies instituted for the purpose of influencing the rights of election. . . pave the way for monarchical

establishments;" that "by their intrigues [and "secrecy" and "nightly orgies"] they continued to draw off many from the system of union," sowing "discord," "anarchy," and "confusion": "their object is ever revolution" (March-April 1810; qtd. in Jennegan 17-21). Upon the July 1810 creation of Federalist "Washington Societies," the paper admitted that the Federalists by forming a political society "degrade themselves," but contended that, just as in the case of religious benevolent societies, the end justified the means--converting the Tammany "savages" to right political doctrine. The rhetoric of the Jackson campaigns was characterized by charges of military cabalism against Jackson and counter-charges by the Jackson party of a conspiracy by "civil chieftains" (Loughborough 21). Associating the social graces with illegal combination, Jackson's orators argued that it was "dangerous" for a President to "be versed in the arts of diplomacy," creating a portrait of government-by-secret-society: "We have happily exploded the mystery in which government was wont to wrap itself from public gaze. Instead of arcana, into which we are not permitted to pry, we demand that our rulers should hide nothing from our view. In the true spirit of freedom we require that the conduct of all [public servants] shall be openly exposed to our view, and be made to coincide with our will" (Loughborough 8-9; for anti-Jackson charges, see "Friends of the Administration").

The prescriptive rhetoric, if inflated, nonetheless expressed real concerns about the real power of associational life to help a self-created group set and achieve goals contrary to those of the whole (at least those interests of the whole as articulated by a governing elite). The republicanism in miniature of the citizen-in-association enacted a kind of treason that was hardly exclusive to overtly political societies. For instance, David Potter's study of college literary societies argues that the literary groups "were, in

many respects, little republics, possessing a student-centered and a student-administered discipline complete with awards and punishments, carefully-guarded rituals" and separate quarters, a private spatial and cultural territory protected by "high walls of secrecy" within "the physical confines of the college." He quotes Jacob Beam's 1933 study of Princeton's American Whig Society, which Beam observed "stood to its members as something within the physical limits of the College yet above it and transcending it." The collegians of the group voted in 1813 "that all collegiate exercises are to be neglected" in favor of any obligations imposed by the society itself; in 1821, they decided the question, "Are the exercises of this Hall of more importance than the studies of the College?" in the affirmative (Wallace 238, 256).

Somewhat more circumspect in their private deliberations, the extracollegiate associations nonetheless similarly placed the exercises and duties of the group before those of the republic at large.

"By what we had performed that evening, we had altered the Charter and made a travelling Charter. . ."

The otherness of this other discipline remarked upon by Potter, administered by the group and consented to by its members, marks the otherness of the group from alternatives, including the discipline of nationhood. These other disciplines could be quite severe, but they could also mark a substantial variance for the member-subjects from the alternative hegemonic associations. The autobiography of Henry Fowle (William Bentley Fowle's father) offers a view into the discipline of New-England

masonry during the first third of the century. Following the recent disavowal of Masonry, among thousands of others, by John Quincy Adams—who had resurrected his political career in 1831 by winning a Congressional seat on the Anti-Masonic ticket—Fowle began to compile his life in the early 1830s, intending it as a contribution to the Boston Masonic Mirror. Fowle divides his tale into two parts, "Personal," and "Masonic": the first part makes little reference to family, friendships, or workplace. Instead, like the latter "Masonic" portion, the "Personal" section describes a profoundly associated life, detailing Fowle's memberships and occasional small office-holding in military companies, the local fireward (and later a fire club), the Humane Society, the Massachusetts Mechanics' Association, and George Ripley's church. Like most life-writing of the period, the narrative is intended as an exemplar of a relational existence, an account of the specificity of group experience to which the occasional obtrusions of the personal are accidental. Similar to slave narrative, Christian lives, and confessional stories, Fowle's autobiography was intended as a social and political intervention: in this case, supporting the battered masonic cause. Himself an artisan who had in time become a master and employer of others (though never terribly successful), Fowle records that in his early maturity he belonged to a number of associations at the turn of the century but "quit all extra societies" as the duties of his Masonic career expanded. Those duties were focussed exclusively upon maintaining the consistency of Masonic ritual and creating consent to that consistency.

In about 1801, he recalls, he resigned the Masons, citing a bout of ill health (and possibly also a failing of prosperity). The highest Masons in Boston, however, persuaded him to rejoin with the special mission of helping them to reform the ritual life of the Craft. Fowle says that he had already

displayed his qualifications in this regard, having "long witnessed the improprieties and errors that had crept into the work, lectures, and government of the Lodges, and could I find a few zealous and active Masons who would assist me without the fear of being denounced as innovators or disorganizers, I thought I could effect a reform which would be beneficial to the Craft" (33). The narrative emphasizes the importance attached to the ritual dimension of associational life.¹⁴ Fowle's unspecified ritual innovation, he notes with a distinct pride, was "adopted almost universally" in American masonry. The Grand Lodge subsequently hired him to supervise the ritual practices of lodges in Massachusetts ("I visited the lodges from Duxbury to Cape Cod, inclusive") and elsewhere: "corrected many errors, reformed many abuses, and brought them to a settlement and upon good terms with the Grand Lodge"). He was paid for these labors at the rather generous remuneration of four dollars a day or one hundred dollars a month (a workingman's wage during the period was something less than a dollar a day). His diary records numerous travels during the first third of the century as a teacher of ritual practice: these missionaries from the Grand Lodges were taken quite seriously (as Fowle's pay implies); they had the power to recommend the suspension or exclusion of individual members or to seek the revocation of charters for entire lodges at once. Fowle tells of two lodges whose charters were revoked and the memberships disbanded: Goodman observes that the Vermont Grand Lodge alone excluded 260 members and suspended 80 between 1808 and 1831, publishing the names of the malefactors in masonic papers (17). Probably as a result of his dedication

¹⁴ See also Carnes' discussion of the extended revisions to fraternity ritual (Constructions 40-43) and his analysis of the psychology of later ritual "dramatists" similar to Fowle (44-45).

to the Craft, Fowle's small proprietorship remained quite small and intermittently on the brink of failure: he did however move in exalted circles, including not only Boston's dignitaries, but DeWitt Clinton in New York. During Louis-Philippe's exile in Boston, Fowle played an evening of chess with Talleyrand and the future king of France (Nason 110).

This power of associational discipline to place the exiled heir to the French throne in the home of a mechanic was a desirable thing to many early republicans--in and out of Fowle's own class of proprietors. Nonetheless that power was not unlimited and in many ways that "other" discipline was not "other" at all, working in concert with oppressive principles of race and class. Despite the commitment of masonry to enlightenment ideals of a universal fraternity, lodges in fact frequently organized on a highly segregated basis. The most obvious example in American masonry is the African-American membership of the "Prince Hall" lodges: African-Americans were generally not admitted to other lodges, and mainstream masonry actively opposed the spread of black masonry even on a segregated basis. Other lodges followed the "natural" principles of association suggested by ethnic, class, professional or military lines of affiliation, reinforcing rather than interrupting lines of social dominance.¹⁵ The centerpiece of Fowle's Masonic life concerns the failed efforts of two ethnic lodges to attach themselves to the alternate discipline of masonry--and official masonry's discouraging response.

¹⁵There has been some discussion about the degree of cross-class membership in lodge life: certain studies credit the Odd Fellows, an originally working-class fraternity which first appeared in the U.S. in Baltimore c. 1819, with a diverse membership in its first two or three decades (Greenberg 89, Blumin *Middle Class*: 223) See Gilkeson for a description of the social composition of other associations (29) .

Both anecdotes take the form of humorous dialect stories, similar to those published by Longstreet and the "Southern humorists," performed on stage and sometimes in schools, widely reprinted in newspapers and journals. Fowle describes, first, the misadventures surrounding the election of chapter officers in a lodge "composed of foriegners,—chiefly Germans" who were ill-versed in Masonic practice. After much wrangling, as Fowle tells it, "Brother A." wins the election and retired with his partisans for refreshments: upon which the losers of the election, partisans of "Brother B.," reconsidered the vote and elected their candidate master of the lodge. A hard-drinking brawl ensues: "broken bottles, glasses, and heads soon covered the floor." Upon the next morning, A. challenges B. to a duel; B. shows up without a pistol, and A. tries to shoot him anyway: "A. cried, 'now then, I have you, Got tam, take dat!'" The pistol misfiring, B. assaults A. and leaves the field. Subsequently Masonic authorities revoked the charter of this group, which had gone by the (evidently unsuitable) title of the "Harmonic Lodge."

Like many groups, the German lodge had formed itself: they were granted a charter, Fowle notes, only after this group "calling themselves Masons" came to the attention of Masonic authorities. These episodes of self-authentication were quite common, and it was apparently Masonic policy to incorporate these groups, where possible, into the mainstream of the Craft. While this assimilation had been the apparent goal of the German lodge, the Irish lodge that Fowle describes next apparently wished to enforce its separation. Fowle gives the tale in the form of a dramatic dialogue between himself and "Patrick," a young immigrant whom he had helped to find work as a servant. One day, Patrick visits him in distress:

P. . . . Sir, I am a Mason!"

F. Well, there is no harm in that I hope: I am a Mason also.

P. Yes sir, I know it; I saw you in the procession one day, with an apron on.

F. Where were you made a Mason?

P. Up in Mrs. Marian's garret, in Elm Street, Muster Fowle.

F. Well, and what Lodge was it?

P. Our own Lodge, shure.

F. But what was your Master's name?

P. Och, he was a countryman of mine, named Hanmar.

F. I know Hanmar, and believe him to be everything but good.

P. Faith, I believe so too. . . Sir, one night Hanmar tells Finnemore to go to Concert Hall, where the Rising States Lodge was held, and take from the trunk, the Charter, Jewels, &c. and bring them to him. Now, Finnemore is their first Steward, and keeps the keys. . . . Hanmar told us that there were many respectable, good men who wanted the degrees, but doubted his authority to confer them; and by what we had performed that evening, we had altered the Charter and made a travelling Charter, which would do away all their scruples. . .

F. Well, Patrick, how many degrees have you taken in this manner?

P. Why, Master Fowle, I'm as yet only Royal Arch [Fowle's own hard-earned degree]; but next Saturday night there are seven of us to be Knights Templars. (36-37)

With its lurid details--the theft of ritual objects, the treason of the trusted Finnemore, the induction of an illicit fraternity by a shadowy (apparently criminal) genius, the repentance of a misled naif--the story in its form and content invokes the immensely theatricalized self-understanding of a group of Irish immigrants seeking to manipulate the symbolic order from a garret room in a lodging house. The theft speaks eloquently of the power which masonic affiliation represented to this group; even more eloquent is their conviction that these symbols, once captured, can be turned to their own purposes. There is both pathos and a kind of evil genius in Patrick's description of Hanmar's creation of the "travelling Charter. " On the one hand--like the moving spectacle of servants and criminals gathered in an attic to nominate themselves in quick succession to the highest ranks of Masonry--Hanmar's need of the document at all testifies sadly to his group's inability to imagine generating authority of its own. On the other hand, there is a fierce creativity in defiantly resolving, like Milton's Satan, to invent by alteration, a marring that is also a making, re-making the productions of higher authority in their own image. Of particular significance to understanding Hanmar's genius is his manipulation of associational ties: the theft of the ritual articles that enabled the founding of his own group springs from his ability to prevail upon the ethnic loyalties of Finnemore, already a lodge member in high masonic standing. The symbolic orders of ethnicity and masonry contribute themselves to Hanmar's group, initiating and authenticating an association which nonetheless exceeded each of these contributions: "Our own Lodge, shure."

The response of official masonry, as Fowle tells it, was no less theatrical: after a series of spyings and infiltrations, twenty masons with ritual swords burst in upon the Irish group and arrested them "in the name

of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts!" All of the members of the Irish pseudo-lodge who were also members of chartered lodges were expelled, except the traitor: "We made interest for Patrick," Fowle recalls, "and he was formally healed in St. Andrew's Chapter." Fowle's highly developed sense of the dramatic did not come from the public stage; it was the exclusive product of his associational life. Through associations and their theatricality, he became a producer in the field of the symbolic, enjoying the sense (as a subject) and the fact (as a participant in a collective agent) of social efficiency. So did "Patrick," Hanmar, Finnemore, Brother A. and Brother B., and—collectively—all of the members of the Irish and German lodges. As the subsequent history of nineteenth-century ethnic associational life makes clear, the failure of the ethnic lodges is not a tale told by its ending. The contributions of official masonry operated on several trajectories at once, reinforcing "natural" distinctions between the native-born and the ethnic other, while simultaneously contributing to a social reality where those distinctions were subject to manipulation, reinvention, and redeployment by the excluded—by theft and treason where necessary.

The sort of subjectivity sustained by associational life was relational and dependent, seeking webs of connection rather than seeking to emerge out of them. Charles Taylor describes the latter ambition as characteristic of Western self-fashioning, "conceptions of individualism which picture the human person as. . . declaring independence from the webs of interlocution which have originally formed him/her, or at least neutralizing them" (36).

As Taylor suggests, these individualisms are historical formations.

Jacksonian individualism for example, began to be widely disseminated after 1830—in subject-formations exactly describable by Taylor's general term for individuation, "taking the heroic stance" with respect to webs of connection.

Throughout the nineteenth century (and really until after the second World War), however, American associational life supported other-than-individualist subjectivities: first, through the antebellum period, as the dominant mode of self-fashioning; then, through the first world war, as a yet-strong alternative to individualism; finally growing residual in the twenties to the point of near-irrecoverability today. This is not to say, as Taylor emphasizes, that modern subjectivity exists outside of webs of connectedness—only that the idea of independence has become so inextricable from ideas of selfhood that these webs are ignored or denied. Today's liberal individualism affirms "coming out of culture" as a universal value (powerfully supported, of course, by the historical opportunity to describe all associational life as fascism in miniature): in Rorty's sophisticated but highly polemical reading, this perpetual overcoming of interconnection by the individual (in the posture of "liberal irony") is one of the great collective achievements of Western liberal democracy.

By contrast, the subject of association affirms webs of connectedness. Allegiance-seeking rather than allegiance-avoiding, he is not an ironist, and sees personhood as compatible with dependence and group life. Suspicious of heroes and heroic individualism, he is other-directed and concerned to promote fellowship over achievement—understanding that the "independence" of one implies the domination of others. Sedgwick in this connection disapprovingly remarks upon a "Captain Percival" in her journal of 1835. "[He] spoke of the bewitching interest of sea life," she writes, quoting him: "A man feels independent aboard his good ship, when he's only to snap his fingers and three hundred men stand before him, ready to do his will." Sedgwick concludes the entry disparagingly, "My sympathy was with the three hundred men that had to obey, not the one that could command"

(Letters 248; emphasis original). Sounding very much like Catharine Sedgwick, Fowle for example wrote c. 1830 in defense of the masonic way of life and against rising individualism:

To make one fellow-creature happy, is more truly great than the triumphs of a conqueror, with ten thousand captives groaning at his heels. Success and triumph may cast a transient gleam of grandeur over the name of an Alexander, a Caesar, a Suwarrow, or a Bonaparte, but the impartial voice of history will ever distinguish such characters as the robbers and murderers of mankind. (xx)

It seems that this revulsion from the heroic subjectivity ("a man feels independent aboard his good ship") was growing gendered between 1830 and 1835. Apparently the general ontology of manhood did not (yet) imply "independence" as a precondition of masculinity. It was possible to emerge as an individual person without emerging as an individual agent: the individuality of personhood was compatible with a view of agency that was socially distributed and associationally achieved.

Resistance to "imperial selfhood" was compatible with ideas of individuality. To be a self did not imply being "by oneself," transcending all borders, but in negotiating those borders in much the way Sedgwick in 1821 described her relation to Unitarianism between other ties: "I go very often to the chapel, but as Lucy says she shall cease to admire my candor if I become a convert, I shall probably remain as I am--a borderer" (Letters 116; emphasis original). Significantly, the term "borderer" was synonymous with the term "pioneer" (as it is used, for example, throughout Cooper's The Wept-of-Wish-ton-Wish)--implying however, not a person "beyond the border" (in, i.e., "virgin land") but a member of a community establishing the border

(between differently populated group realities). Sedgwick's bordering was not a version of liberal irony or liberal dissent—a subjectivity constituted "outside" the group—but was instead constituted at the intersection of groups. Individuality emerged in a complex relation to multiple group life. The consensual otherness of the group's "other" discipline (the volitional component of the "voluntary association") was not a "free choice" but it did leave room for self-fashioning. The description of these groups as "voluntary associations" is something of a misnomer, because it assumes the pre-existence of personal deliberation and private will to have the identity (and do the things) undertaken by the group in an evolving process of collective self-fashioning. Persons invented themselves, but they expected to do so as participant-observers in a deliberative process of negotiating borders rather than transcending them. Furthermore, the "choice" of association, was substantially limited in the first third of the century. After the war, numerous fraternal organizations with different themes (Asiatic, Native, pastoral, woodcraft, military, cosmopolitan) provided something more like a smorgasbord of options for self-fashioning to would-be initiates—a fore-runner to the "multiple-choice ethnicity" described by Sollors and others in the latter portion of this century, in which the content of the association is "largely interchangeable" and not authenticated by daily practice but by "external symbols" (Sollors 10-28, Carnes, Clawson). As Fowle's narrative illustrates, however, early-republican and Jacksonian associations generally followed at least one of the lines of ethnicity, class, trade, political or religious affiliation—while, importantly, enabling individuals to renegotiate the limits of some of the others. One did not choose the affective ties of one's associations "freely" any more than one chose one's religion, trade, or class "freely." Nonetheless, an association

consistent with class determination might permit an individual to re-negotiate religion, race, or politics (as William Bentley Fowle's "Belles-Lettres Society" c. 1816 included only young male clerks, but was multi-racial and non-denominational). Not "free choices," the associations nonetheless enabled freedoms of, both, self-fashioning and social agency.

The subject of association was not alienated from an everyday social agency simply by virtue of dependency upon a group for that efficiency. The space of volition in associational life comes about because every act of loyalty implies a possible treason. The subject answering the call of one group at least potentially refuses the call of another.¹⁶ The double treason of Finnemore and "Patrick" in Fowle's story of the Irish lodge shows the reversibility and optativeness of associational life: Finnemore betrays masonry for his ethnicity; "Patrick" betrays his ethnicity for masonry. Iris Marion Young, responding to the thrownness" of group affinity observed by Heidegger ("one finds oneself as a member of a group" rather than choosing it), underlines the innumerable possibilities for volition in that non-autonomous posture: one can "define the meaning of group identity for oneself; those who identify with a group can redefine the meaning and norms of group identity" (46). Illiberally emphasizing the moral and social agency of a dependent ontology (55), Young offers a useful model for viewing the early decades of the nineteenth century, in which liberal values were far from dominant and in which associational life was imperfectly voluntary. The revolutionary legacy conflating "independence" with ideals of individual subjectivity and individual agency had made inroads, but did not become general during the antebellum period: most participants in

¹⁶The theme of "treason" was widespread in fraternity ritual drama (see for example Carnes, Secret Ritual 41).

associational life, like their colonial precursors, "viewed dependency as a relationship with voluntary features" (Gundersen 62).

While associational life did not presume individual agency, it did contribute to its historical formation by dominating the field of subjectivity from which individualism emerged. The groups' emergence as social agents did not represent the aggregation of individual wills; instead, the groups helped to create the desires to which the members individually assented. Nonetheless, just as associations deployed the symbolic power of the nation to their own purposes, individuals deployed the organizational resources of associations for self-culture. The chief resource of associations in this regard was the theatricalization of identity. At the simplest level, associations enabled individuals to display themselves—as Sedgwick writes, to "mettrent en scene gems and flowers that might otherwise shine and exhale unnoticed and unknown." In more complex terms, however, associations contributed to the experience of individuation and the sense that an "authentic self" existed outside of social performances. While identity was still relational and the choice of affiliations was greatly restricted, the sheer multivalence of associational life made an important difference. Associational life, unlike pre-industrial communitarian life, changed with the interactive context. With the multiplication of associations in an individual life, it was no longer possible to say "I am a Shipwright" (or Hibernian, Mason, Bucktail, Lyceum-man, or Abolitionist) consistently: it became necessary to say, "At this time, I am acting like a Mason; tomorrow I will be acting like a Bucktail, and Saturday, I will behave as an Abolitionist." It was possible to be an abolitionist, a Bucktail, and a Mason at one time; it was not possible to present oneself as all of these things simultaneously, nor was it always possible to vent abolitionist opinions in a Masonic context, or vice-versa.

The theatricalization of social roles (in multiple-associational rather than consistent-organic configurations) helped to represent the individual as something separate from these often conflicting performances, an essence or private self that had no necessary personal agency but which had the capacity to emerge as a social agent in associational life—or not, just as the individual chose.

Indeed, Emerson's individualism and his "doctrine of hatred" emerges out of associational life. Bercovitch's account of Emerson's "liberal dissent" distinguishes the sage of Concord simultaneously from Jacksonian individualists and the "socialist" utopian communitarians, but neglects associational life entirely. The famous July 4, 1839 journal entry that grows into "Self-Reliance" describes an individualism exclusively in terms of a radical voluntarizing of affiliation, emphasizing the "seek[ing]" of company as much as the "shun[ning]" of it: "There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought & sold; for them I will go to prison if need be," he writes, suggesting exactly the enduring fraternal vows consistent with masculine association—or the socially-committed adhesiveness of Garrisonian abolitionists. Like many other men in associational life in the 1830s, Emerson places that voluntary kinship above blood ties and legal kinship, aiming his "doctrine of hatred" at, first, the domestic ("I hate father & mother & wife & brother when my muse calls me & I say to these relatives that if they wish my love they must respect my hatred") and, second, at the feminine benevolent associations: "your nonsense of popular charity, the suckling of fools, the building of meetinghouses, the alms to sots—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb & give the dollar it is a wicked dollar which by & by I shall have the manhood to withhold." This entry precedes by three years the 1842 transcendentalization of affiliation ("The

Union is only perfect when all the Uniters are absolutely isolated"), in which traces of associational volition ("the Uniters") still remain. Indeed, much of the "ambiguity" that Bercovitch finds in Emerson's individualism is resolvable in the unwritten history of associational life: the radicalism of Emerson's individualism is a grafting of associational corporate sensibility onto Jacksonian principles of self-assertion and liberal principles of self-interest, producing a self wholly self-realized in a wholly voluntary union with others (cf. Newfield's attempt to negotiate Emerson's complex relationship to corporate selfhood).

Associational life was not in its origins intrinsically republican, nor did it grow to support liberalism by internal necessity. During the antebellum period, associations supported both republican and liberal ideology, simultaneously supporting a civic self-for-others and producing collectivities that supported demure self-culture, rowdy self-assertion, and mercantile self-interest. Associational life enabled self-constituted groups to engage specific ideologemes and refashion the symbolic, even where membership in the group was imperfectly voluntary by virtue, for example, of ethnicity or gender. It was not "naturally" counter-hegemonic--in fact, it is possible that associational life may have been the dominant organizing principle of society for about three decades. (It is difficult to describe republicanism as clearly dominant after 1820 or liberalism dominant before midcentury; the possibility is worthy of further study.) Where dominant, this multiply-associated life may have approached something like the ideal of a "democratic practice of hegemony" put forward by Laclau and Mouffe (surveyed Brenkman 97-100), in which the social totality sponsored, rather than suppressed, plurality and ideological polyvalence. If, as Brenkman suggests, a democratic practice of hegemony involves a perpetual

overcoming of the division between "society" (plural and processual) and "culture" (monolithic and eternal)—a kind of incessant cultural revolution, characterized by the political elaboration of such "concrete utopias" as are "contained in the experiences of freedom and self-organization which social groups and classes possess, intermittently and fragmentedly, in their everyday existence, political practices, myths, and artistic endeavors" (104)—then the associations of the period strove toward such an ideal, producing and performing culture that was both expressive of group self-organization and socially instrumental.

Robert Wiebe speaks of the antebellum era as characterized by "lodge politics" (including many more groups than the parties or "political lodges") and a fraternal practice of democracy which gave rise to "multiple publics"—many of them dominated by white men—but this multiplicity, he argues, "kept open the possibility of outsiders experimenting with publics of their own—perhaps to challenge white men, perhaps to join them, perhaps even to ignore them" (*Self-Rule* 15-16, 72-85). Recent thinking about Garrison's refusal to form a third political party in the 1830s portrays it as a shrewd decision, locating greater political agency in remaining associational and para-electoral: "we work through both parties," Garrison explained, "but not with them. They do our work. we do not theirs" (qtd. in Kraditor 266-267). Associations self-consciously wielded an interstitial, sophisticated, unprecedentedly democratic and effective mode of political agency that evaded the limits on electoral agency experienced by most Americans.¹⁷

¹⁷ Voluntary associations "took the place of local notables in molding public opinion. . . propagat[ed] new values. . . promoted the social and cultural organization of rapidly growing communities. . . served as surrogates for government. . . evolved into lobbies that framed policy, trained bureaucrats, and mediated between their members and an ever more

In an important essay on Jefferson, Hannah Arendt surveys what she calls "his most cherished political idea," the subdivision of all the counties of the nation into wards of approximately one hundred citizens each. This privately-expressed notion of his last years (elaborated chiefly in letters of 1816) envisioned a face-to-face system of governance, based on "small republics" which would translate "every man in the State" into "an acting member of the Common government, transacting in person a great portion of its rights and duties" (243). Arendt ties this proposal to Jefferson's earlier comments about the social utility of recurring revolution: the ward system, he believed, could prove "the salvation of the republic," re-creating the civic vitality of the Revolution and the "New England townships" which had "shaken the foundations of government" under his feet. Noting that Jefferson was vague about the functions of these little republics ("he was convinced that if one would 'begin them only for a single purpose' they would soon 'show for what others they [were] the best instrument'"), Arendt argues that this proposal "in fact concerned a new form of government rather than a mere reform of it" (244). This new form of government was the system of revolutionary local governments--communes, councils, soviets--that did not long survive the revolutions they sustained but which, Arendt believes, ought to have: the perpetual regeneration of democracy requires "the survival of the revolutionary spirit" in such a form of government, one which provides a way of giving ordinary persons "the opportunity of being republicans and of acting as citizens" (243, 257; emphasis original).

The system of associational life provided such an opportunity. Surveying the influence of European revolutionary thought on the American Renaissance, Larry J. Reynolds notes that Margeret Fuller translated

powerful state" (Gilkeson 9-10).

Fourierist, communist and political-utopian Associationism into a vision reflecting her American experience: "voluntary associations in small communities" (66). Unlike the council forms of revolutionary government surveyed by Arendt, which were betrayed into authoritarian regimes by "professional revolutionists" who viewed the councils as only temporary organs of revolution, American antebellum associations overlapped without interlocking. They generated an open system, self-sustaining, often beyond regulation, enacting a republicanism not premised on allegiance to a Republic, providing everyday participation in civic governance and cultural production. David S. Reynolds has already characterized the subliterate print culture of the period as carnivalesque—expressively, libidinally, and instrumentally subversive. The associational life which supported that literature, invented tradition, and performance practice was that endlessly subversive, regenerative carnival, a perpetual revolution coming into culture.

Chapter Two

A Literature of Participant Observation: Schoolroom Theatricals and the Case of Catharine Sedgwick

In an important essay on antebellum literary practices, Joan Hedrick traces the home literary production—what she calls the "parlor literature" of leisured women—of the Beecher household in Litchfield, Connecticut and Cincinnati, concluding that "The production of literature [was] an integral part of polite society and domestic culture," remarking on the occasionality and localism of this middle-class home-writing and emphasizing its cultural authority 1830-1850 (283). Indeed, before 1840, this sort of literary endeavor was not restricted to the upper-middle-class or leisured parlor, to women, or to those who could write. Male clerks, apprentices and mechanics, Hibernians and African-Americans all participated in this sort of occasional expressivity. This was true even of the most humble conditions of life. Numerous examples of mechanic poetry, essays and journalism survive, composed by working men in their taverns, shops, or homes, and read aloud in the same venues from the newspapers that printed them, often while their fellows labored. (This was evidently the case with Ben Burnisher's nine-

stanza "Most solemn Curse, pronounced. . . upon a Master Bookbinder, who endeavored to injure the business, by working under price": "May rats and mice devour your paste,/Your paper and your leather;/ May your hand-letters be defac'd,/Your types all mix'd together. . ." [Independent Mechanic, 29 June 1811; qtd. in Gilje and Rock 129-130].)

The lines between orality, performance, and literacy are blurred. Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of A Slave Girl records not only the original hymns, songs and tales of slave culture, but the sustained effort ("For a month previous they are composing") which might be called "literary" preceding the Johnkannaus festival at Christmas, in which African-Americans circulated for the entire day, performing for donations (180). William Fowle illustrates the complicated nexus of literary production and performance, remembering that his own very first poetry was inspired by the same Yuletide ritual in Boston, c. 1815:

While an apprentice, I occasionally amused myself by writing rhymes, but nothing deserving the name of poetry was attempted. My first essay was a New Year's Address for a Baker Boy, it being the custom for all carriers to make addresses, and thus beg from the patrons of their masters. My brother Joshua was the Baker Boy, and the Address got him about 15 dollars. . . . I wrote three years successively for the colored man who swept the street before our store. HE reaped such harvests that he would not accept any rhymes but mine. ("Autobiography" 58, emphasis original)

The literature of self-improvement, Fowle's memoir points out, was particularly intended for performance. At about the time of his rhyming, c. 1814, he formed a "Belles-Lettres Society" that met every Saturday evening in

the drawing room of a private home (for which the dozen bachelor clerks paid two dollars' rent): "every member was required to write a composition on a given subject, each member giving one in turn, and each in turn delivering an Address" (34). Noting that the group lasted about two years, Fowle underlines that (though twice winner of city-wide medals for excellence in the Boston grammar schools) "it was here I first began to write English." English-language composition did not enter the grammar-school curriculum regularly until the 1820s, and the fever for self-improvement (encompassing both the elocutionary and lyceum movements) in that and the subsequent decade was accompanied by formal and informal writing circles at all social levels from the apprentice mechanic to genteel society. Most of these groups deployed writing as an occasion for performance.¹⁸ What Hedrick describes as women's "parlor literature" provides one dimension (and by the 1840s and 50s the most visible efflorescence) of what in the first third of the century was a more pervasive phenomenon, describable as a "literature of participant-observation," encompassing the literary efforts of persons deprived of parlors, men, and those whose parlors went unvisited by polite society. This literature of participant observation, though different in its permutations by community and circumstance, appears to have been a general phenomenon of American life before 1840, and only gradually "feminized" 1840-1865, as the idea of the "domestic"

¹⁸Sedgwick, advising her school-age niece Kate in 1826, writes of a typical elocutionary club: "I went to a meeting a few nights ago where there ladies and gentlemen learning to read--that is, to read well, and I heard so much said of the importance of reading well, that I determined to beg you, my dear Kitty, never to read aloud without trying to read as well as you can. . . ." (Letters 190).

became general, schooling became universal, and the idea of "great literature" diverged from the literary practices of all but "great men."

The salient characteristic of the literature of participant-observation was that it was produced, like the compositions of Fowle's group, to be performed or read aloud in social circumstances--as Hedrick's study observes of parlor literature in general, including letters. Novels, too, were read aloud: Rowson's school dialogues 1807-1810 repeatedly document the habit of young upper-class women reading to each other during needlework and domestic labor; Sedgwick once visited a Boston school where the schoolmaster claimed to have read "all of [her] books" between 1822 and 1835 to his students (*Letters* 249). Baym and Davidson, among others, argue that early-republican and sentimental novels were written with this reception in mind. In this respect, novels were much like other literary production of the period. Young middle-class women and men wrote (often collaboratively) hymns, sermons, elegies, funeral monodies, rhapsodies and orations for church congregations, youth groups, and benevolent associations: even Christian tracts were written to be read aloud, on the occasion of the evangelist's appearance in the potential convert's home, tavern, or workplace--subsequently spurring discussion and social change.

Generally, this performed literature was occasional. Sometimes ritually reproduced or adapted, it emerged from and theatricalized a non-reproducible event, frequently a death.¹⁹ This democratic literary production

¹⁹The focus was on the nonreproducibility of everyday life, not morbidity. Entire volumes recorded a particular event, such as a trip to a spa (eg. Thomas Law's "Ballston Springs" [1806], in which the lengthy titles of individual poems record the specificity of individual occurrences: "Upon Curing Miss ____ By My Electrical Box, Shortly After Her Arrival"). While this resonates with the general concerns of Anglo-American romanticism, the emphasis upon the specificity of the everyday is rather different. See the

participates broadly in the ritualization of everyday life characteristic of what Sandra Zagarell calls the "narrative of community."²⁰ It was not necessary to be an evangelical Christian or particularly devout to have occasion to write on the death of a friend: during the two years of his small group's association, Fowle was twice called upon to write eulogies, one of which was published in a Unitarian paper and resulted in his being approached by William Channing and offered a scholarship to Harvard. The periodical press and broadsides of the era frequently served up elegies, often quite homely in their character. Grimsted reprints a typical broadside, "Composed by Elder Joseph Boody, of New Durham, June 16, 1829, and Submitted to the Mourning Widow," affecting in its simplicity: "Is ASA dead? he was my friend/Is DEARBORN'S journey at an end?/The eighth of June he took his leave/And left his friends to mourn and grieve."

The head of the broadside details plainly the occasion of Asa Dearborn's death and the unsuccessful cancer operation that precipitated his demise:

He had a tumour under his arm, and it was thought best by the physicians to take it out, in order to prolong his life. The operation of extracting the tumour lasted more than one hour. The severity of the operation. . . destroyed all the circulation on that side of the body, and mortification took place and death ensued. (Grimsted, Notions 142-143)

distinction made by Zagarell between the "prevailing tendency in nineteenth-century literature to claim significance for the ordinary by analogizing it to classical literature or otherwise universalizing it" and the insistence that significance that "symbolic significance specifically derives from [the] normal context" of quotidian activity" ("Narrative" 518).

²⁰ "The everyday, these writers show, is ritualized, and they provide ways of reading it as such" ("Narrative" 518; emphasis original).

The poem elaborates, dramatizing the details of the illness ("A tumour rose upon his side,/ Which spread its course both deep and wide") and the subsequent operation ("All circulation ceased to flow / All mortified from top to toe"), featuring the physicians and family as dramatic characters. Dying in a Boston hospital, few of Dearborn's friends and family from New-Durham and Portsmouth, N.H. witnessed his last days: even his immediate family arrived only in time for the final hours. Elder Boody's broadside enabled persons who knew Dearborn to ritually participate in the scene of his illness and death in their homes, clubs, churches and taverns, initiating and theatricalizing the mourning process, accelerating healing and renewal. Most of the poetry in the period was similarly dramatic and occasional: sometimes people read the productions of the "Fireside Poets;" just as often they composed their own. While the aspirations to social agency of such literary productions were modest and limited--the healing of a community, the raising of a few dollars for charity, the moral regeneration of a few reprobates--these aspirations were inseparable from these efforts' literariness: the reception of a work was preconditioned by the expectation of occasionality, performance, intimacy, and relevance.²¹

²¹ See in this connection Nina Baym's eloquent "reinvention" of the social function (the Christian-republican "activist and interventionist element") of Lydia Sigourney's obituary verse ("Reinventing" 389-90), especially n.9, where she specifically ties the performance component of the poetry to a revision of Brodhead's and Douglass's construction of nineteenth century readers as socially inert "isolated and passive consumers of mass-produced literary goods." She writes: "I see in the memorial poem that forms part of the public occasion of the funeral and is then used, re-used, and adapted by successive groups of mourners who find it pertinent a very different representation of antebellum reading."

Performing Christianity

The ritual function of these performances reveal their contiguity with a highly theatricalized culture of Christian practice. In the context of an increasingly activist church, then, it is not surprising to see alongside the great production of antitheatrical tracts in the period an even greater theatricalization of religious experience. Churches organized associational life with a vigorous theatricality that did not escape protheatrical contemporary observers, who never tired of attributing preacherly opposition "to the fear of a rival" not--importantly--just as regards the well-documented entertainment value of camp-meetings and captivating revival sermons, but in the moral power of doing social good. The antitheatrical church appears in the character of "an ambitious, or selfish man, [that] feels a strong reluctance at suffering another to perform a good and worthy action; from the doing of which, himself expected to derive praise" ("Philo Dramatis" 34). What David Reynolds calls "the paradox of immoral didacticism" (*Beneath* 57)--the increasing sensationalism of revivalists and Christian reformers that became a major social force by the early 1830s--represents churches competing for social capital (participation) with other modes of association, using the highly theatricalized methods of their competitors to ritually bind their membership and, by making a scene, renegotiate the public compact. The most obvious theatricality of the church appears in the preacher. The school reformer (and architect of numerous books of dialogues for schools and parlor theater) William Bentley Fowle, lecturing in the 1830s on the phrenology and career of the Great Awakening preacher George Whitefield, pointed out the preacher's deep involvement with schoolroom theatricals and continuing attendance at the stage (citing

actors who studied his preaching for audience-management tips), also attributing his ability to relate to an audience to the theatricality of his delivery and gesture (ms. Fowle Papers). Later, Emerson would describe Father Taylor similarly, as "the Shakespeare of the sailor & the poor." Non-revivalist preachers frequently wrote, delivered, and published their sermons in the form of dramatic dialogues (Meserve, Emerging 45). Indeed it is unsurprising to learn that many religious movements of the 1830s and 1840s, such as Washingtonian temperance, explicitly borrowed Masonic associational ritual, or were led by high initiates of that fraternal life, such as Charles Finney, or Mormonism's John Smith (Carnes, Secret Ritual 72).

This Christian theatricality was not restricted to the preacher: it was above all a collective experience, most visibly in the revival. At them by the hundreds or even thousands the faithful "tossed to and fro like the tumultuous waves of the sea in the storm," as contemporary accounts had it, in crowds "barking like a flock of spaniels," and in the Holy Laugh and the Holy Dance, of "more than five hundred persons jerking at one time." These were mixed audiences which produced numerous "camp-meeting babies;" a canny observer of an 1830 meeting discreetly remarked that "the young and the beautiful are there with mixed motives which it were not best severely to criticize" (qtd. in Dulles 80-82). If the revival provided a collective experience similar to the mob and the carnival, radical Christian reformers of the 1820s like Francis Folger (beginning one of the earliest American experiments in urban communal living) staged a "direct confrontation" between praying women and "the power of husbands and fathers" (Johnson and Wilentz, 29). The radical Christian women alarmed elite republicans because, like the Masons and journeymen's unions, the association of praying women actively renegotiated the corporate community.

Nor was this phenomenon restricted to radical Christian activism: as early as 1802, the Christian women's charitable associations excited male opposition, inspiring Charles Brockden Brown to opine in the American Review that, so far from "ephemeral trifles," these "female" [emphasis original] associations marked an "oera in our social and moral history" (vol. 2, [1802] qtd. in J. James 168). Mary Ryan's study of Oneida County illustrates the homely ways in which the religious associations theatricalized everyday life, tracing in particular the early use of deathbed theater for evangelical purposes from about 1814 (87-88). High mortality rates, particularly in childhood and early youth, and the frequency of wasting disease, made lingering deaths a common occurrence. Pious women's groups made much of these deaths, staging conversions of the sufferer's family and friends, inviting townspeople to crowd around the deathbed, to "come and see how a Christian can die" (qtd. in Ryan 88). Every aspect of the death was theatricalized, from the sewing of the funeral clothes to the composition by the sufferer of her own funeral sermon, providing an occasion for the evangelical community to invite participation and compel observation--in doing so often wresting influence away from the male-dominated community, including the pastor. The theatricalized religious practices of Finneyite revival (the door-to-door canvass by teams of women, public confession of sin and conversion) detailed by Paul Johnson (96 and passim) and others as early as 1816 in Philadelphia (Laurie 43) survived revival fervor. They and their analogues (the home visit, the display of the reformed charity case) entered into the liberal-Christian and secular benevolent communities (of women's voluntary associations in the 1830s and throughout the century) precisely because they provided women with a justification for and access to everyday theatricality and the social

agency it implied. Complaining in 1817 of the willingness of teams of women to invade "stews and beer-cellars, to acquire views of vice," James Kirke Paulding observed that female reformers importuned public men on a near-daily basis and that these "venerable ladies. . . go about our cities like roaring lions" (American Monthly Magazine 2, January 1818; repr. James, 170).

While Sedgwick's comparison of her own female church association to the Masons was humorous, these women's groups rivalled Tammany in influence. In a similarly humorous passage, Sedgwick suggests that the women's groups rivalled men's groups in everyday theatricality, introducing Reliance Reynolds, the innkeeper heroine of her "Romance in Real Life" by noting that she

never was presidentess of a 'society for ameliorating the condition of the Jews,' or secretary or treasurer of any of those beneficent association that rescue the latent talents of women from obscurity and mettrent en scene gems and flowers that might otherwise shine and exhale unnoticed and unknown. . . ."
." (Tales 238, emphasis original).

The power to alter the *mise en scene* of quotidian community life was both the medium and currency of Christian association for women and men alike.

Even this Christian theatricalization of everyday life profoundly affected literary production of the period. The deathbed theater sustained by the religious benevolent societies was widely disseminated in Christian autobiographies, tracts, sermons, hymns and poems--becoming, of course, the "beautiful death" that provided the most enduring topos of sentimental fiction. (Like most of the theatrical topoi of sentimental fiction, the deathbed dramatized Romantic affiliation rather than Romantic individuation,

sympathy and affection rather than identification and alienation: the supreme event of individual life becomes the locus of communal participation and observation, marking not the separation of subjectivity but its fundamental relationality.) Indeed, most of the characteristic forms of literary production during the period were similarly conditioned by participant-observer theatricality. The forms of writing which were most common were intended to be performed—read aloud or spoken from memory on an occasion (and perhaps never again, or at recurrent assemblies) before a known social group.

"Cacoethes Scribendi" and The Literature of Participant-Observation

It was not exceptional for the literary work of the first third of the century to be produced in the expectation of social agency, however modest; the exception was for literature to be produced without the expectation of accomplishing something on the social scene. Hence Sedgwick's original plan for producing A New-England Tale (1822) as a tract (as well as her subsequent contributions to that genre), and her insistence upon the moral agency of her novels. This expectation was peculiar to the first third of the century. Afterward, the idea of literariness began increasingly to be divorced from social agency, as Sedgwick reflected in 1837 after initiating a two-decade hiatus from novel-writing, observing a widening rift between "literary ambition" and the "immense moral field opening, demanding laborers of every class, and of every kind and degree of talent" (Letters 271). The consolidation of "literature" into a genre of highbrow culture after 1840,

traced by Richard Brodhead and others, created an historical distinction between writerly work and social agency. This emergent perception, that "literature" shouldn't and couldn't do social work, was ascendant during the "American Renaissance" period (1845-1855) and achieved dominance by the turn of the century.²² This paradigm remains dominant in American literary studies today (though increasingly embattled), usually, however, as an ahistorical premise for defending the post-Mathiessen literary canon or assailing sociological critical practices. If there was a rising literature of asocial "Ishmaels" (and the forecastle fraternalism of Melville's literary subjectivity seems widely underestimated), there was also a dominant literature of those who "self-consciously imitated the biblical love of David and Jonathan."²³

It would seem that by far most literary production of the early republican and Jacksonian periods was ipso facto social.²⁴ In addition to the occasional pieces produced in conjunction with Christian and club life,

²²Taking this historical formation of the 1830s as a transhistorical aesthetic truth, many critics simply assume that social agency and the literary are of necessity mutually exclusive categories. Even Cooper, deeply invested in a Jacksonian-individualist heroism similar to and influential of the "isolatoes" of the American Renaissance, always viewed his literary productions as a social instrument.

²³ See Yacovone's discussion of the "Language of Fraternal Love" among Garrisonian abolitionists, which argues persuasively that the adhesiveness of antebellum male friendship is grossly underestimated, and that the general application of the attributes of "Power, will, force, action, self-sufficiency and struggle" to the "manly ethos" emerging out of the Jacksonian era is a "distorted" representation of antebellum masculine experience: "Friendships among male abolitionists were intensely affectionate and nearly identical to the complex relations of some nineteenth-century women. . . . antebellum Americans accepted no single model of manhood" (85-86).

²⁴ cf. Charvat, "Literature Should Be Social in Point of View, Not Egocentric," 23-26.

young people also wrote secular lyrics--songs, odes, anagrams, dramatic dialogues--for performance at social gatherings, often featuring several parts to be spoken or sung and a chorus to make participants of all present: the enduring vogue for albums and gift-books that began in the late 20s provides a record of this vast occasional literary production. Sedgwick gently satirizes this middle-class literary fever in "Cacoethes Scribendi," which features the town's only eligible bachelor writing a poem in every album in the village (the number of albums being equal to the sum of inhabitants). The story's title ("writing madness") refers not to young Ralph's literary output, but to his aunt's inspiration to take up the pen upon his return from Boston bearing two annual gift-books. Opening one of them, the aunt finds that it features contributions from some of her childhood friends:

All the art and magic of authorship was made level to her comprehension, and when she closed the book, she felt a call to become an author, and before she retired to bed, she obeyed the call. . . In the morning, she presented her article to her public, consisting of her own family and a few select friends.

All applauded. . . (Tales 171, emphasis original)

The poems first written for an occasion in a private album often went on to be published in the gift-books and annuals, or in the local periodical press, alongside the work of professional authors. These amateur successes in fact often lead to a professional writing career, as it did for many of the women who wrote for Lydia Maria Child's Juvenile Miscellany (including Sedgwick's sister-in-law, who began publishing under the signature of "Mater" in the middle of the decade, subsequently achieving successes with several books for children [Sedgwick, Letters 190]). Indeed, this second possibility, of turning professional, is the object of Sedgwick's satire, which

simultaneously compares Mrs. Courland's vocation to a camp-meeting conversion (she "felt a call") and "obey[ing] the call" (of nature) before bedtime. Mrs. Courland does in fact turn professional, and induces her three sisters to emulate her, the foursome producing articles on botany, education, and piety—often taking her niece Alice (the bachelor's love interest) as their inspiration: "Every aspiration of piety to which her young lips had given utterance was. . . printed. She felt as if she were condemned to say her prayers in the market place" (*Tales* 176, emphasis original). Both Alice and the bachelor, Ralph, consistently refuse to have their own writing appear in print: the tale's crisis comes about when, unknown to Alice, her aunts submit one of her school compositions to an annual. Upon being surprised with the publication, the four sisters' "coup de theatre," the mortified girl throws the book into the fire. The next moment, Ralph, who has previously mysteriously agreed to write an article on the condition that it "be true from beginning to end," asks to be allowed to submit his own long-awaited "manuscript" to the stunned aunt—a single sentence, in which he asks Mrs. Courland to approve his marriage to Alice.

It is significant that Sedgwick satirizes Mrs. Courland's professional aspirations, not the fact of her literary production (nor Alice's, nor Ralph's, whose modest parlor talents are treated generously). In fact, Sedgwick satirizes Mrs. Courland's violation of the participant-observer ethos; the exact nature of her "writing madness" isn't her writing, but the manner in which she conceives authorship: "Mrs. Courland divided the world into two classes, or rather parts--authors and subjects for authors; the one active, the other passive" (*Tales* 171). Sedgwick strongly believed that the author should not be the only agent in literary relations: she took seriously the comments of her readership, and when the Boston schoolmaster who had read all of her

books to his students told her he hadn't read the last (*The Linwoods* [1835]) to them because, he said, "'in that were some bad words, some profanity!'" she resolved to correct "this fault" in the next edition (*Letters* 249). The problem with Mrs. Courland's model of writing was that it dissolved affiliations rather than creating them: "Mrs. Courland's interests came to be so at variance with the prosperity of the little community of H. that a sudden calamity, a death, a funeral, were fortunate events for her." Unlike the Elder Boody with his rhyming broadside, Mrs. Courland envisions herself as the only participant in her literary endeavor: the aim, publication, is personal, rather than communal. The lived experience of Courland's village provides the stuff of her fiction and reportage; Boody's poem, by complete contrast, is itself the stuff of his village's experience. Courland's status as a participant-observer is altered by professionalism: the literary is no longer consistent with the occasion; the "passive" subjects of her writing don't participate (or at least not necessarily) in the literary relation between Courland, her publisher, and her public. She experiences the double consciousness of professional literary aspirations: "To do her justice," Sedgwick continues, "she felt to them in a two-fold capacity. She wept as a woman, and exulted as an author" (174-175).

On the verge of abandoning professional novel-writing (though, importantly, continuing to publish extensively) Sedgwick was herself feeling this double consciousness at the time the story was published:

My author existence has always seemed something accidental, extraneous, and independent of my inner self. My books have been a pleasant occupation. . . . But they constitute no portion of my happiness—that is, of such as I derive from the dearest relations of life. (journal, December 17, 1835 in

Letters 249-50; emphasis original)

Literary endeavor, to Sedgwick, had the chief value of bringing people together: in this entry she disavows authorial agency ("I am but the instrument") and the "medium" of happiness to others; all the value of her work is in "the friends, or acquaintance they have procured me," relieving her of the "ennui and blue devils, that are most apt to infest a single person." Shortly after publishing the story she approvingly quoted in her journal Sir James' Mackintosh's affective justification for fiction as one "the great moral instruments of mankind," its power "to teach men the habit of feeling for each other" (Letters 255). She had always disapproved of literature that dissolved affective bonds. This imperative had a personal dimension: after the evident Unitarianism of her first novel (1822), she wrote to explain the care she took not to offend her family: "I could not endure the idea that I had written myself out of the affections of my own people" (Letters 157). It was also literary. Near the end of her literary career (though with a final novel yet to write), she attended a lecture by Thackeray, and observed:

If there were a detective police for the follies and infirmities of the human nature, he would be elected chief by acclamation. But I have no affinities for this sagacity, and no great admiration for his detective revelations. I prefer those nice revelations which find sustenance instead of detecting poison; the one work is for our Channings, the other for Thackeray and the wise in his generation. (Letters 343, emphasis added)

Sedgwick's literary ideal was the give-and-take of letter-writing. In 1829 she wrote, typically, to her brother Charles: "I have taken my pen (would it were a better one), not so much to gratify you, my beloved Charles, as because I feel the necessity of holding some communion with you--a

hankering, a hungering and thirsting to be near you" (Letters 201, emphasis original). In an 1844 meditation inflected by transcendentalism, she wrote to the Rev. Dewey,

Is not letter-writing (sometimes!) the exercise of that principle of love by which we are partakers of the divine nature? [Your letter] was one of those impromptu expressions that, like the grasping of hands in a passing crowd, indicates, more than a predetermined intention, that the current sets right, that the heart of affection beats evenly and soundly. (Letters 290-291)

In the image of the two hands grasping "in a passing crowd," Sedgwick captures the essence of her answer to the "one active, the other passive" literary relation: in the literary handclasp of correspondence, the hands of each partner write the relation; both are active and neither is passive.

Of the tracts that she wrote in the mid 1830s, she wrote that the responding "testimony" of servants and working girls "gratified" her more "than the opinion of half the ministers in New England," because they might respond to her work in their lives (journal, November 11, 1835, in Letters 247). In at least one case, her nonfiction spurred a correspondent and directly responsive literary endeavor in her readership. After the publication of Live and Let Live (1837), which addressed the plight of servants, Sedgwick received a sheaf of poems composed by a servant thanking her "for having done service to the cause of domestics" in that volume: upon meeting the woman for the first time eight years later, she wrote to her niece, "I confess to you, dear Kate, that her expressions of gratitude and affection were very precious to me" (Letters 295). Sedgwick approvingly passed this home literary endeavor on to a Wesleyan missionary: the difference between this servant's writing (as well as Sedgwick's correspondent writerly "service

to the cause") and Mrs. Courland's compositions is the mutuality of the literary relation, productive and not destructive of affection.

Literary Performance

Sedgwick's 1835 journal meditation that her professional "author existence" seemed like a role apart from her authentic self places her in the psychological and social-reception condition of "literary performance" described by Stephen Railton in his study of American Renaissance authors. Pursuing Jauss and Ong, Railton attempts to recreate the theatricality of "the space between the individual author, beset by his own hopes and fears, and the contemporary American reading public" (4). He emphasizes that writing during the American Renaissance was both public and social; the author carefully estimated his audience's reaction and deferred to the "'suffrage of readers'" more than British writers, attributing this tendency to the Jacksonism of the reading public. Railton describes Sedgwick's contemporary, Cooper, as an early example (c. 1830) of a writer grown "extremely uneasy with the demands of literary performance," citing the "melodramatic" shape of his career as an instance of "American writers' peculiarly dependent relationship to the responses of their audience, and the amount of performance anxiety that vulnerability produced" (5). Railton's study importantly characterizes one dimension of antebellum literary theatricality--the heroic-individualist model of American Romantic authorship that was literally traceable to the heroic melodrama that took hold in 1830 (see chapter three below). It is particularly useful for describing dimensions of Cooper's and Melville's theatricality, especially the anxious

combination of what Railton sensitively calls "the irreconcilable ambivalences" between the author's appeal to an audience for "nurturing sympathy" and their simultaneous refusal of any infringement upon writerly authority.

Sedgwick's relationship to this dimension of literary theatricality was rather different. If Cooper and Melville experienced the problem of performance as admitting too much participation by their audience, Sedgwick by 1835 experienced the literary as admitting too little. Like Cooper and Melville, she understood her audience to provide nurture and sympathy; unlike them, she understood herself as being equally obliged to offer it. One dimension of this gendered responsibility was extraliterary: the charge of neglecting family was customarily levelled at women writers. They often indicted themselves in this regard; Sedgwick had as early as 1830 reproved herself for neglecting family in favor of literary labor (Letters 206). But the other dimension of Sedgwick's emphasis upon the mutual reliance of author and reader upon the sympathy and affection of the other is literary, and radically so. Her version of what Jane Tompkins has dubbed "sentimental power" depends upon a radically heimlich face-to-face ideal of the literary relation and an equally radical suspicion of mediation—even literature, including literary sentimentalism. Her 1837 distaste for Felicia Hemans's Life describes this suspicion. Sedgwick found Hemans arrogant and condescending, despite her valorization of, and extravagant claims for, the affective power of Romantic sentiment:

She shows how inadequate sentiment is, how feeble the theory of beauty compared with that sense of duty, that perception and love of God, which gives an interest to the meanest of our fellow-creatures, and a dignity to the commonest office of

social life. In our practical working-day world we can scarcely conceive of such an existence as Mrs. H's [that of "a creature of those times when the elect few had no sympathy with their race, when they were born for music and song, for pas seuls and pas de deux, and not to be linked in with their kind, to lean on the strong and sustain the feeble"] (Letters 266)

Inflected with liberal Christianity and with an elite-republican Jacksonism similar to Cooper's, Sedgwick's complaint of Hemans illuminates her own departure from the field of literary performance represented by novel-writing. It wasn't so much that novel-writing increasingly enabled the "pas seuls" jealously guarded by Cooper and Melville. She objected, rather, that the field of professional literature increasingly disabled the alternative, of Christian-republican "duty" and a literary elaboration of an ethic of interdependence.

As performance, literary effort for Sedgwick aimed to create and sustain the face-to-face ethic of care associated with quotidian intimate relations. The idea (and ascendant ideology) of the domestic necessarily shaped Sedgwick's vision of this performance space. Her image for the failure of Mrs. Courland's model of authorship is the manner in which Courland's literary practice destroys the vital parlor culture of the home. Before taking up professional authorship, Sedgwick observes.

Mrs. Courland and her sisters were all 'talking women,' and too generous to encroach on one another's rights and happiness. They had acquired the power to hear and speak simultaneously. Their parlour was the general gathering place, a sort of village exchange, where all the innocent gossips, old and young, met together. 'There are tongues in trees,' and

surely there seemed to be tongues in the very walls of that vocal parlour. Everything there had a social aspect. There was something agreeable and conversable in the litter of netting and knitting work, of sewing implements, and all the signs and shows of happy female occupation" (*Tales* 177).

This field of participant-observation--the "village exchange," filled with "signs and shows" of quilted meaning, "agreeable and conversable" rather than authoritative, where performance means hearing and speaking simultaneously--while "domestic" in the sense of being located in the home, was however not bordered by the domestic, and sponsored a vast field of extra-domiciliary, "social" relations, hosting "all. . . the gossips." The vocal parlour rendered social relations home-like; it did not restrict women's social sphere to the home. Instead of these ludic, disorderly, pleasurable participant-observer relations, Mrs. Courland's professionalized literary activity substitutes authority: "Now, all was as orderly as a town drawing room in company hours. Not a sound was heard save that of Ralph's and Alice's voices mingling in soft and suppressed murmurs, as if afraid of breaking the chain of their aunt's ideas. . ." (177).

Sedgwick's story--and her own changing practices of authorship--responds to the emergent principle of organizing social relations by the paired (and gendered) mutually exclusive concepts of "public" and "private," in which privacy increasingly denoted domesticity. The emphasis upon the emergence of the public/private dichotomy is necessary and historical. As Karen Hanson's important recent study of antebellum New England culture persuasively argues, a third sphere of relations--"the social"--predominated throughout the antebellum period: "in the social sphere, individuals circulated among neighbors and kin and became both participants in and the

focus of a community audience which observed individuals and held them accountable for their behavior" (10-11). Activities included in this field, Hanson observes, embrace those

that transcend individual households and operate independent of the state, such as visiting, gossiping, churchgoing, attending lectures, joining political movements, baby-sitting a neighbor's child, and shopping [also encompassing] institutions such as churches, schools and lyceums. (9)

This field of "the social" not incidentally accurately describe the mimesis of most of Sedgwick's literary production, especially the contemporary fiction and tracts; even her historical novels strongly subordinate the events and figures of "history" to a communitarian, interactive mimesis. Mrs. Courland's parlour is a prime example of Sedgwick's version of the social, and the value she places upon it.

Sedgwick's "literary performance" belongs to this field. Her profoundly dramatistic view of social relations was conditioned by the face-to-face theatricality characteristic of this field, a theatricality in which all of the players simultaneously performed and observed. It was above all a field of influence—particularly associational influence—in which things got accomplished. This was not an idiosyncratic view. With the exception of those individuals who wielded personal influence in "public life," this view of the pre-eminence of the social appears to have been general in the first third of the century. It was, for most ordinary persons, the "central realm of activity ordering economic, political, and family life" (Hanson 25). Of course, the "spheres"—public, private, social—interpenetrated each other, rather than excluding one another: during the first third of the century it was the social, however, which most powerfully penetrated the activities of the other realms

of life. Encompassing most public institutions, rather than being encompassed by them, the social structured, originated, and continuously transformed community life. Sedgwick's distaste for the emerging identification of literature with the "public" sphere represented her sense of literature's consequent diminished social influence, rather than the reverse. After 1833, she devoted herself and her continued professional authorship increasingly to associational life: participating in the creation of a church women's society, becoming the leader of a prison-reform association, participating in home visits to the poor, creating a plan for a working-class girl's school, writing tracts on the plight of the female servant, providing a discourse on manners distributed in the New-York public schools, and continuing her habit of school visits until the end of her life. She neither became more nor less public in ceasing to write novels; she merely adapted to the changing conditions of the social— a field which remained, through the antebellum period and the end of her life, far more influential than the field of public "literary" performance.

Railton perspicaciously associates the other theatricality, ascendant during the "American Renaissance" period (1845-55) and characteristic of Cooper after 1830, with "the melodramatic." This dramatistic view of social relations was conditioned by a different genre—the heroic melodrama which was the single most frequent form of original American drama performed on the public stage between 1829 and 1855. While there was a participant-observer dimension to melodramatic performances, the theater providing one of the important foci of mechanic and b'hoys youth culture, the melodrama chiefly helped to disseminate a culture of combative self-display, depressing rather than elevating the values of collaboration and negotiation. Similarly, the theater gave rise to associations and sustained the collective

agency of both formal and informal groups, most visibly by serving as the prime location of mob actions, 1825-1855. Nonetheless, as the next chapter elaborates, the melodrama produced in its adherents a sense of social agency rather than its substance. Melodramatic heroes and their fans indulged in a vainglorious expressive individualism (deeply influential of Whitman's poetry) asserting an ever-rebellious independence that, as Simon Frith persuasively argues of the similarly rebellious postures of rock musicians (and their fans and wannabes), did not produce social change.

While this melodramatic theatricality and the heroic subjectivity it sustained was ascendant in mechanic culture, it was not general, and would not become so, even among men, until after the war (slightly transformed to accommodate the genteel pretensions of the burgeoning middle classes). During the first third of the century, most men did not affect the bellicose theatricality of expressive individualism. Instead, during this period (and, for the most part, outside of mechanic culture, until after the war), most men and nearly all women understood themselves in a way similar to Catharine Sedgwick: relational, adherent, committed to sustaining community ties rather than emerging out of them.

The Institution of Associational Republicanism:

Schoolroom Theater 1800-1833

Remarking upon the ascendance of liberal rhetoric among antebellum political elites, Jean Baker observes that despite their talk, "they sometimes behaved like old-fashioned republicans," and that "intellectual history has obscured the degree to which republican behavior had become embedded in

the activities of two institutions—schools and political parties” (538). Arguing that the institutions of the community discarded republican doctrine, but preserved republicanism in “vague behaviors” (539), Baker persuasively describes the ritual and discipline of schools and partisan political competition (especially where these invoked martial patriotism and gestures toward self-government) as “republicanism carried on by other means” (546). Generally speaking, schoolroom elocutionary practices, especially in exhibitions, support Baker’s thesis. Throughout the antebellum period, schoolroom oratory, dialogues, textbooks, readers, and exhibitions presented a markedly republican content even while elite political rhetoric adopted liberal marketplace values. Most readers and orators featured the romantic republicanism evident in Caleb Bingham’s preface to the single most popular orator of the early national period, The Columbian Orator (1797), describing its aim as to “inspire them with the ardour of eloquence and the love of virtue” (emphasis original). But changes in those elocutionary practices make the story of this schoolroom republicanism somewhat more complex, one which moves from an “old-fashioned” production of citizen-speakers to one which produces citizens-in-faction, considering themselves agents in association—not speaking individually to persuade the whole, but acting in concert to re-shape the whole—truly a republicanism by “other means.”

In the final decade of the eighteenth century, the most popular schoolroom elocutionary texts supported a stern, masculinist, republicanism, marked chiefly by oratory or, in the language of school readers, “single pieces” (by contrast to dialogues or full plays). The emphasis upon single pieces appears to reflect revolutionary prohibitions against playgiving, identifying theater and theatricality with toryism and civic eloquence with

republican virtue. The most widely-circulated original contribution to Bingham's orator, David Everett's "Lines Spoken at a School-Exhibition, by a Little Boy Seven years old," makes the early-national case for elocution as a component of civic virtue: "You'd scarce expect one of my age/To speak in public on the stage," but "why may not Columbia's soil/Rear men as great as Britain's isle[?]" (57-58). A "Parent" in a later selection, probably authored by either Everett or Bingham, similarly asks, "What can be more useful for a child, under such a government as ours, than to be able to speak before an audience with a graceful ease and manful dignity? My son, for aught I know, may be a member of Congress before he dies." Bingham's strategy, and that of the compilers of other popular orators and readers in the early national period, appears to have been to separate declamation from other pedagogical practices involving the stage: oratory was a practice of civic virtue; playgiving, in this view, induced light-mindedness and luxury. Bingham's orator contains only a handful of dialogues and playlets, most of them satirical or humorous (reflecting his idea of their place in elocutionary pedagogy as occasional light relief from serious rhetoric).

The same was true of Noah Webster's widely-used An American Selection, of Lessons in Reading and Speaking (1783), which contained in its original edition just five dialogues (four of which together produce a playlet), and also of numerous other schoolroom texts compiled as late as 1811, such as Increase Cooke's American Orator (containing just six dialogues). By 1813 (the sixth edition), however, Webster more than doubled the number of dialogues and excerpts from plays in his reader, and Bingham's apprentice, William Fowle, was similarly revising Bingham's American Preceptor, adding original dialogues and producing his own first compilation, a reader composed exclusively of exhibition dialogues and

plays ("Autobiography" 53). Even Samuel Etheridge's popular Christian Orator, distributed throughout New York state and the Atlantic seaboard, originally containing only "Speeches, Delivered on Public Occasions, Before Religious Benevolent Societies," was revised for the second (and subsequent editions) in July 1818, "to give variety to the Selection by the addition of Poetry and Dialogues" (here, as elsewhere, the term "dialogue" usually implies a short playlet featuring any number of speaking parts greater than one—e.g., Rowson's "Dialogue for Three Young Misses"—usually original to the pedagogical or associational purpose, rather than excerpted from the text of a stage play).

This emphasis upon single pieces was clearly an emergent pedagogy of the early-national period, one which sought to promote monologues and declamations against the alternative of dialogues and plays. It appears to have been successful—though never clearly dominant—for the two decades preceding 1815, or the tenure of Bingham's publishing career. Both Cooke and Bingham include selections which deride amateur theatricals. Ironically, neither selection is an oration: Cooke's is a dialogue excerpted from "Carey's Lecture on Mimicry," which lampoons the pretension of a linen draper who has discovered in himself "a genius for the stage" (397-399). Bingham's satire, "Modern Education" (189-194) is more pointed and contemporary, featuring a "Parent" and "Preceptor" who debate, over several pages, the propriety of schoolroom plays. The piece begins with the Preceptor solus, lamenting the concern of parents for instilling "graceful airs" in their children rather than "the substantial branches of literature": "if I had been a dancing master, music master, stage player, or mountebank, I should have been much more respected" (reflecting the complaint made in another of Bingham's original dialogues of the "drove of stage-players, that have

infested our country from Charlestown to Portsmouth"). When the parent enters to seek admission for his son to the preceptor's school, he asks the schoolmaster to provide special attention to "one branch, of great importance. . . the art of speaking." This is a value which the preceptor (and, obviously, Bingham) share. Bingham has the parent brag about the twelve-year-old's elocutionary accomplishments in order to initiate a debate regarding elocutionary pedagogy: "You will not find him deficient in that respect," the parent says,

though perhaps it requires as much practice to make one perfect in that, as in any art whatever. He has already learned by heart a great number of pieces and has acted a part in several comedies and tragedies with much applause. It has been the custom of our master to have an exhibition at least once a quarter; and my son has always been considered one of his best performers. He lately took the part of Jemmy Jumps in the farce called *The Farmer*, and acted it to universal acceptation.

The Preceptor responds disparagingly, observing that parents "transform their children into monkeys instead of men" through this (apparently widespread) practice, asking "What signs of oratory do you imagine you can discern in a boy rigged out in a fantastical dress, skipping about the stage like a baboon, in the character of Jemmy Jumps, Betty Jumps, or any other jumper?" The parent's weak defense of theater as a school for elocution rapidly brushed aside, the preceptor offers only limited approval for exhibitions, pointing out that the extensive preparations made for them can be better employed than in "speaking the words, and mimicking the actions of others." Bingham's arguments against playgiving echo those of other

elocutionary texts in use on both shores of the Atlantic, such as William Scott's Lessons in Elocution which was in 1798 in its seventh American edition (reprinted from the fifth British issue): that is, that plays sponsored immorality, wasted time, were too difficult, encouraged self-display and expressivism rather than clarity, and so on.

Bingham represents the Parent's cheerful support of quarterly schoolroom theatricals (and the playgoing of his daughter) as typical, and the Preceptor's antitheatricalism as iconoclastic. On the other hand, Charles Stearns of nearby Leominster, Massachusetts in the same year (1798) makes the opposite claim, that "the public mind seems greatly prejudiced against them" (7). Another book of dramatic dialogues "for the use of Young Persons" also published in Boston in 1798 observes that "The Writer of this Work does not, like Madame de Genlis, intend her Dramatic Dialogues to be performed"--not through antitheatricalism, however, but modesty--"well aware that the length of the Scenes, in some places, and the simplicity of the Plot in all, would render them flat and heavy in representation" (Pinchard, "Preface"). It is difficult to say, without extensive further research, how widespread protheatrical elocutionary instruction was in the late eighteenth century, but at the turn of the century at least three well-known schools in the Boston environs (Payne's, Rowson's, and Stearns's Liberal School) practiced elaborate theatricals of the type described. About the same time, Prince Sanders's African School also performed selections penned by William Fowle, probably including drama (Fowle, "Autobiography" 38, 58). Bingham's own publishers, Manning & Loring, issued in the same year that The Columbian Orator went into the second of scores of editions, Samuel Benjamin Morse's School Dialogues (1797), that in its preface observed that "Great complaint has been made, and not without reason, that our Schools

and Academies are unfurnished with books, containing a sufficient number of Dialogues for the use of those Children and Youth who practice in Speaking." Nonetheless, Bingham's compilation and its similarly antitheatrical companion volumes, reissued, imitated, and pirated in scores of editions, were the most popular schoolroom texts of the early national period. Bingham's textbook empire was rivalled by Webster, who placed a similar emphasis upon single pieces: William Fowle recalls that in his grammar school he read from Bingham's and Webster's books daily, and looked up to Bingham "as something more than a mortal" ("Autobiography" 9). By contrast, none of the books prominently featuring exhibition dialogues (such as those by Morse, Rowson, and the preceptor of the Liberal School) appear to have gone into second editions. Nonetheless, after James Rush published the Philosophy of Human Voice in 1827, elocution and theatricality were rapidly accepted as intertwined, most particularly in the extra-curricular elocutionary fervor of the late 1820s and 1830s (Robb).

In fact, the predominance of republican "single pieces" in American textbooks before 1815 does not demonstrate conclusively, even during 1795-1815, that schoolrooms ignored dialogues. Often schoolmasters and ministers, emerging from the secret-society playwriting culture at Yale, Dartmouth, or Union College, wrote the exhibition plays themselves. Numerous European texts suitable for classroom production were in wide circulation during the period, especially Shakespeare and the dramatic works of Madame de Genlis and Hannah More, both of the latter expressly created for school performance (see an account of three plays by More and de Genlis performed at a New York ladies' school c. 1784, Earle 115-116). Despite his opposition to school theater, especially for women, Bingham's orator contained a selection from More's famous "Moses in the Bulrushes"

(featuring all female parts and a standard in American schoolrooms throughout the antebellum period: Twain's *Huck Finn* making an easily-apprehensible satirical reference to the play as "Moses and the Bulrushers" much later in the century). These other sources of dramatic material were evidently used to supplement the orators and readers, and the availability and pervasiveness of these texts featuring parts for mixed and all-female casts argues against taking the prescriptions against performance by schoolgirls by Bingham and others as historical fact.

It is not entirely clear that a republican pedagogy featuring an ideal of masculine citizen-speakers was ever dominant in early-national culture. Schoolroom memoirs and the strenuousness of Bingham's opposition suggest that playgiving remained common in schools, and the shift in editorial practices by about 1815 toward ever-greater inclusion of dramatic selections suggests widespread tolerance to the practice during the 1820s and 1830s. By 1840, after two decades of producing plays in both of the single-sex Monitorial Schools in Boston, the former Bingham apprentice William Fowle determined to replace all of the non-dramatic selections in his New Speaker (1829; a very successful compilation already leaning heavily toward dramatic works) with dialogues and playlets penned by himself for his schools during the 1820s. Renamed Familiar Dialogues and Popular Discussions, For Exhibition in Schools and Academies of Either Sex, and for the Amusement of Social Parties (1841), the success of the text helped to determine Fowle's decision to give up schoolteaching for lecturing, editing and authorship: during the 1840s he and several imitators issued collections featuring exclusively dialogues and exhibition plays to the exclusion of single pieces (though orators continued in wide circulation). Beginning in the 1840s and continuing unabated throughout the next century, many hundreds of

compilations and original pieces for schoolroom exhibition were published in textbook or pamphlet form. By 1870, it was possible for Fowle imitators such as Sarah Annie Frost (Shields) to publish numerous volumes of exhibition dialogues and plays while "frankly confess[ing]" that she is "not writing for [students'] instruction at all, but simply aims at their amusement" (preface, iv).

The schoolroom amateur theatrical experience of the 1820s and 1830s, as the title of Fowle's selection and the subsequent explosion in the publishing of amateur theatrical texts indicates, appears in the succeeding decades to have supported amateur theatrical practices in the home and associational life. In the preface, Fowle makes this connection explicit, expressing the

hope that, ere long, in addition to music, dancing, tableaux &c, the recitation of these or similar pieces will form part of the amusement of our firesides, that hurtful excitement abroad may be superseded by innocent, and at the same time, intellectual recreation at home; for, if there is any one point to which the domestic philanthropist should without hesitation direct his efforts, it is to the invention of new, useful, and interesting amusements for the young at their social meetings. ("preface," Familiar Dialogues)

His hope was swiftly realized. By the mid 1840s, numerous texts offering dramatic selections suitable for social production were in print, many of them pursuing the protheatrical justification articulated by Fowle ("useful, and interesting"). It is evidently a mistake to assume that the appearance of domestic ideology in Fowle's preface ("our firesides," "intellectual recreation at home") represents the performance conditions of this theater. Parlors were frequently the meeting-place of socially activist associations. Furthermore,

the texts of "parlor theater" and "private theater" were frequently performed not only in parlors by informal groups of family and friends, but also in associational settings (churches, masonic halls, lyceums, schoolrooms, and taverns rented or borrowed for the purpose) by literary and philodramatic societies as well as temperance, abolition and lyceum groups. They were performed for instruction and amusement, but also to instill group solidarity and to address the public, most often to offer instruction (i.e., in temperance or the evils of slaveholding) or to raise funds. After the war, numerous dramatic collections were printed, special to the associations or types of associations (such as church groups) that performed them.

Schoolroom theatricals were a training ground for associational republicanism. Schoolmasters who sponsored playgiving in addition to oratory in their schools were often no less republican than Bingham and Webster; only differently so. They may have had a somewhat more inclusive model of the citizenry, as S.B. Morse's preface to his School Dialogues (1798) suggests. The "Advertisement" asserts that the book's "object is the general advantage of both sexes" and "persons of any age." The preface goes on to hint that "Few lads in the country Schools are inclined to speak orations and single pieces" and "as few capacited to speak them with grace and propriety," so that the value of introducing them to elocution by way of a more hospitable format is "very obvious." Morse reiterates the "important circumstance of affording to female scholars an equal advantage for instruction with the males": "As in Schools, there is generally almost as great a number of one sex as of the other, the impropriety of neglecting females in regard to speaking is extremely evident. Single pieces are not so proper for them to speak; but well-chosen Dialogues, as the means of teaching the fair sex a graceful, elegant, and easy mode of conversation, will prove of the

most extensive benefit. . . devoted. . . to the service of both sexes." The appearance of masculinist ideologies of performance ("Single pieces are not so proper") and domesticity ("devoted. . . to the service") in the passage do not outweigh the strength of Morse's language in favor of female elocution ("the impropriety of neglecting. . . is extremely evident"). He echoes a theme reiterated by women writers and educators, amateur and professional, sentimental and rationalist, and the emphasis on a "conversational" model of elocution anticipates the actual practice of antebellum female social activists, who organized less by oratory and mass meetings than by face-to-face encounters in small groups.

A similar concern for the inclusion of women and students disinclined (or unable) to individuate themselves by the declamation of "single pieces" marks the production advice offered by the preceptor of the Liberal School (1798) and the various exhibition speeches made by William Fowle at the Monitorial School exercises in the 1820s and 1830s (Fowle Papers). Sterne advocates that performance be voluntary, that the students be permitted to choose their own parts, and that conflict in the latter be resolved by drawing lots. It appears that schoolmasters who countenanced playgiving generally sought to sponsor student self-government, and repudiated authoritarian discipline, especially corporal punishment. By contrast—in addition to satirizing exhibition plays—Caleb Bingham ridicules an other-than-authoritarian pedagogy in his "Dialogue Between a School-Master and School-Committee" (189-94). The piece features a tippling schoolmaster who retails his teaching philosophy to a barkeep:

"I never flog my scholars; for that monstrous doctrine of whippin [sic] children, which has been for so long preached by our rigid and superstitious forefathers, I have long since

exploded. I have a rare knack of flattering them into their duty." (emphasis original)

The dialogue ends with the dismissal of the drunkard master, and represents an effort by Bingham to conserve corporal punishment as a schoolroom norm. By 1824, Bingham's apprentice, inaugurating his own new school and alternative pedagogy, received the approval of his Boston trustees in describing his mission as "not only to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, but to render that acquisition a source of pleasure" (First Biennial 3). Through the 1820s and 1830s, pedagogies featuring "pleasure" over "whippin" became dominant in northeastern progressive circles.

The production of republican virtues such as oratorical competence by "whippin" the future citizen was widespread. While it is perhaps extreme to associate a stern oratorical (rather than an indulgent protheatrical) bent in elocutionary pedagogy with a commitment to the beating of schoolchildren, the two certainly coincided for William Fowle, who vividly recalls two episodes from exhibitions in which, presumably, he was performing selections from textbooks by either Bingham or Webster. Fowle calls this schoolmaster who kept a "variety of rattans and cowskins" particularly severe, and there is no intention, in the lengthy quotation here, to suggest that Bingham advocated such a pedagogy, only to illustrate the convergence of extreme authoritarianism with the "republican" production of schoolroom orators:

When the selectmen were going to make the annual visitation, notice of six weeks at least was given to the teachers. Then pieces were selected for reading, and lessons set to be recited; every child knew his piece & his answers, reciting or reading every day till exhibition. I

had read the same paragraph twenty days or more, when the boy next before me was absent, & was to be absent. Mr. Little told me to read his part. I remonstrated at what I considered the unfairness of making me change at that late hour. He told me to read. I did not. He struck me two or three times with a heavy cowskin. I refused still to read, and, if had killed me on the spot, he would not have moved me. He beat me as long as he dared to, and I neither read nor cried, but the boys told me I was white as a ghost. Mr. Little found some excuse for leaving off, and I never read the new piece. My back was sadly scarred, and I believe he was sorry for it, because I was a good boy, and a good scholar, and never disobedient. I thought I was right, and usage bore me out in my conduct: Nobody had ever heard of such an outrage as making a boy read a new piece when he had been drilled on an old one, as I had been!

Once when I was preparing in this way for an exhibition, the word sublunary occurred in my part, and I pronounced it sublu~ nary. He corrected me, but so fixed was my habit that every day, I made the same mistake, though I had no wish to be disobedient. At length, the day before exhibition, He told me that if I pronounced it that way before the Selectmen, he would flog me, and the next day, when I rose to read, I got as far as sublu- when I caught the master's eye, was confused, and had just life enough in me to pronounce it right.

("Autobiography" 6-7)

In these anecdotes, the scholar-orators appear more like Roman gladiators, goaded into their performances under the lash, than eloquent Roman citizens. There is in this "republican" schoolroom a complete conjunction of oratory with authoritarian discipline, and no room for negotiating the space in which the future citizens performed their republicanism. The schoolmaster's arbitrary authority, backed by the whip, contravenes all social convention ("Nobody had ever heard of such an outrage as making a boy read a new piece"). In conjunction with his own commitment to educating a broader fraction of the population including women, his dedication to principles of student self-government, and his boast that his application of the monitorial system produced more "love and harmony [than] at other schools" ("Address at an Exhibition May 1824," Fowle Papers), Fowle's anecdotes support the radical difference of his protheatrical pedagogy which was not antidisciplinary but alternatively disciplinary—resting less in a primary relationship between student and authority and more in fostering a relationship between students enacting their education together. Like Bronson Alcott and Joseph Curtis, the mechanic-philanthropist who Catharine Sedgwick eulogized in a full-length biography, educators with a protheatrical pedagogy were increasingly likely to bare their own backs and hand the switch to the student.

Modeling Man

There was a distinct relationship between protheatricalism in republican elocutionary instruction, pedagogies tolerant of pleasure, and the promotion of collective self-determination over authoritarian discipline in the progressive pedagogical environment of the 1820s and 1830s. Sedgwick's Memoir of Joseph Curtis, A Model Man (1858) presents a lengthy meditation on the republican associational life fostered by Curtis's benevolent and educational activities c. 1815-1837. Sedgwick first met him in 1833 and recorded her impressions of him as "a kindred spirit of Mr. Tuckerman. . . a mechanic, a jeweler. . . Simple, apparently quite free from vanity, benignant, and acute, but uneducated, which he deeply regrets. I have enough to fill a folio about him" (Letters 229-30, emphasis original). Curtis was active in New York philanthropy after about 1811, when he joined the Manumission Society. Like Fowle whose Monitorial School was sponsored by Tuckerman, during the evenings Curtis brought together an informal collection of young mechanics "for study and mutual instruction": on Sundays he walked from Manhattan to Flatbush, Brooklyn, to teach in an African-American Sunday school. In 1815-1816, he originated a plan for a "House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents" which was eventually opened in Madison Square under his direction in January 1825. Like Fowle's Boston schools, the "Refuge" was organized on the monitorial system, inviting these criminal children to collaborate in self-government:

It is notable that Mr. Curtis uniformly treated the subjects of his government, whether his own children, his apprentices, or the juvenile delinquents of the Refuge, as peers. He made them

virtually the judges of his laws, and the tribunal to which he demonstrated the justice of their execution in detail.

(Sedgwick, Curtis 47)

During his tenure, none of the one hundred children at the institution died (a statistic widely considered startling), and--while he did employ a variety of typical corporal punishments during his administration--he began to seek alternatives and resigned in May 1826 after a dispute with the trustees over his refusal to corporally punish a runaway: a large section of the memoir is dedicated to testimonials detailing the humanity of his directorship.²⁵ His inventive discipline was premised on the primacy of affective relations: to resolve the incessant quarreling of two sisters under his care, he separated them from each other, barring them from speaking or playing in the same company until they recognized in themselves the longing for each other's companionship. Upon leaving the Refuge, Curtis became a partner in a jewelry concern and brought thirty apprentices together who had been living all over the city into the house adjoining his own, where he helped them to create what Sedgwick called a "little in-door republic" (114).

The organization of the apprentices represented a substantial and explicitly republican advance upon Curtis's administration of the Refuge. Upon first meeting Curtis, Sedgwick delightedly called this system "a republican self-government" (Letters 229). In the memoir, she elaborates that

²⁵ Copious records of the institution survive, including Curtis's papers (Syracuse University), and at least one historian has made use of Curtis's diary to illustrate the conventional severity of corporal punishment in juvenile institutions (Rothman 231-233). Rothman is of course quite right to question the independence of a children's jury awarding "three lashes" to its peers, but his portrait of Curtis stresses the punishments without observing that Curtis resigned within eighteen months rather than continue them, after seeking alternatives which were unacceptable to the trustees. Curtis's replacement spoke of himself, by contrast, as "of the old school" of discipline.

after bringing the boys together under a single roof, Curtis convened a breakfast meeting at which he "told them that as they were henceforth to live together, they should adopt some rule of life, and in the evening, they would again meet to consider what that rule should be" (109). That evening a committee of boys reported to the body as a whole with a proposed constitution. Sedgwick quotes from the text entitled "Our Practice":

Mr. Curtis is our executive. Each boy is a member of the republic, and all rules and regulations, and the execution of the same, shall be made and judged by the body. The hour for going to bed shall be ten o'clock. . . No member can attend a fire without the permission of the executive. The body can pardon or release from any punishment. . . (110-112)

Sedgwick compares the boy-authors of this text to "the audacious politicians of the French Revolution" (117). The overtly republican tenor of this document is reflected in similar constitutions drafted by members of mechanic lyceums throughout the 1820s and 1830s, such as the Gardiner (Me.) Lyceum, which advertised itself as an alternative to "absolute tutelage," placing a "large share of the government of the institution, in the hands of the students," by permitting the election of a general committee every term including legislative, executive and judicial bodies. Though the principal retained a veto power on the laws, explicitly aping the Federal constitution, the Lyceum self-consciously characterized its organization as "republican in its spirit" and placed primary faith in the student collective, "who possess a knowledge of each other's character, which instructors [sic] cannot always obtain" (Catalogue 8-12). Like Fowle and Curtis, the mechanics' lyceums focussed on the production of a self-governing republican association, not the production of model citizen-orators, describing "the common methods"

of discipline in other schools as "now the only vestiges of [absolute] governments, to be found in countries like our own. . . they are not popular, for they do not breathe the popular spirit" (Catalogue, section III). The term "self-government" did not mean "self-discipline," but collective enactment of collective self-determination.²⁶ The ambition of the Gardiner Lyceum, to ensure that "the part, which he acts in this small community" prepares the student "to discharge his duty, as a citizen of a free republic," encouraged individuals to discover republican behavior in collective practice. American deployments of the monitorial system often led to "radical" republican schoolroom self-government, as it did for Harriet Beecher (later Stowe) and Sara Parton (later Willis; "Fanny Fern") at Catharine Beecher's school for young women in 1829 (Hedrick, Life 33-58).

This republicanism of apprentices, mechanics and non-elite youth in the schoolroom elevated to a primary value the face-to-face experience of association ("knowledge of each other's character, which instructors [sic] cannot always obtain")—what Fowle described in 1824 at an exhibition speech as "the mystery of Mutual Instruction" (Fowle Papers: May 1824). The group actively sought to establish itself as a little republic, jealous of its borders and the loyalty of its membership—as the limitations upon participating in the gang-like culture of b'hoy volunteer fire groups in Curtis's apprentices' constitution attests ("No member can attend a fire without the permission of the executive"). Observing that "we were obliged to make our own society," Curtis recalled that he permitted his apprentice-republic to amuse themselves with private theatricals:

²⁶ See Wiebe, Self-Rule 15.

They were all fair writers. . . and one. . . wrote well. Many of his pieces appeared in the Mirror and other periodicals. His taste, unhappily, was for writing plays, some of which our boys represented for their amusement before their friends on our premises. I found it expedient to tolerate amusements that I could have wished to dispense with; but we were obliged to make our own society, as no visiting, except on special occasions, was permitted, unless with their parents.

(qtd. in Sedgwick, Curtis 127-128)

While personally "unhappy" with the dramatic turn of his apprentices under self-government, Curtis nonetheless permitted them to flourish as a mode of sustaining the integrity of the little republic against the alternatives represented by other associations in b'hoy culture (fire clubs, fandom in public theaters). The theater productions apparently emerged directly from the apprentices' evening school practices ("dialogues, then a little play" [Letters 228]). Sedgwick leaves two records of these performances, the memoir and the 1833 letter, and both emphasize the collectivity of the effort: "The playwright wrote a play; the lads that had a taste for painting painted the scenes; those skilled in mechanics arranged them; they all were, for the nonce, players" (Curtis 129). Others provided music; all contributed to these productions. In both accounts, Sedgwick is markedly protheatrical (by contrast to Curtis) and the memoir includes a lengthy meditation on the social utility of drama in pedagogy. Sedgwick is particularly impressed with the way that these performances separated the boys' republic from the society at large, in both accounts featuring the story of how the apprentices turned the cholera epidemic of 1831 into a season of private theater: "and when all of the rest of the city were flying, or in consternation, they were

well and gay, did their day's work, and had their regular evening school, and their occasional theatre" (Letters 228). By contrast to the "general panic" (Curtis 128), the boys represent to Sedgwick a rational, healthy, model republic. She credits the moral solidarity and "bright spirit of health" produced by the collective theater productions with saving the lives of the apprentices: only one of the boys acquired the disease (and survived it), while the rest of the city sickened and died by the thousands.

Curtis's apprentice group mirrored the concern of the larger republic to reduce faction within its borders; Curtis permitted theater (despite his espousal of conventional Christian disapproval of the stage) among them because it served as a technology of collective self-determination ("to make our own society"). The goal of the Gardiner lyceum in this regard was explicit, observing in its second annual report that its organizational principle aimed to bring the formerly-opposed groups, pupils and instructors, into solidarity, "into such intimate intercourse with each other, and find themselves so constantly engaged in pursuit of the same objects, that the latter are not considered by the former a distinct and hostile party" (Laws of the Gardiner Lyceum, 1825). In February 1824, Fowle makes a similar claim for the solidarity produced in the collective self-education of his application of the monitorial system: "The attachment which exists between [student] monitors and their classes is one of the most gratifying fruits of the system" (Fowle Papers). But by reducing faction internal to itself, the group did not ipso facto reduce faction within the nation. Quite the opposite. Instead, the production of group solidarity led to the group imagining itself as a social agent—or faction—within the larger republic. By 1839, in fact, the theory of "democratic localism" (schools under community rather than state or federal control) was ascendant in progressive educational

practice and Orestes Brownson was eagerly promoting this model as a mode of social governance: the nation "should be a confederacy of distinct communities [in which] each vital interest should remain with the smallest possible unit" (qtd. in Katz, Education 33).

Tom Sawyer, Temperance Cadet

In some cases, schoolroom theater was not just training for associational republicanism—it was immediately and traceably a mode of social agency. As early as the mid-1830s, schoolroom theater offered associations of schoolchildren a means of collectively operating as agents of social change. This was the case in South Boston's Hawes School after 1835, when the reform-minded Joseph Harrington was appointed to replace a schoolmaster who the trustees felt was overly enthusiastic with the switch. Thomas Simonds, a historian of South Boston, remembered the public exhibitions of the Hawes School as "of the most interesting nature, and . . . productive of much good" (130) and circa 1856 wrote Harrington for details regarding the origins of the exhibitions. Harrington replied that, concerned about the profanity used by his students, he sponsored the formation of a student anti-profanity group: "We had meetings; a constitution was formed; a name was adopted; officers were chosen, and a Library was set on foot" (qtd Simonds 126). Beginning with fifteen or twenty members in March 1837, this moral faction ("The Hawes Juvenile Association") provides a model case of associational republicanism at work. Operating as a faction within the little republic, the association first radically altered the moral life of the school. In a few months, Harrington estimated, the association had attracted "half or two-thirds" of the student population (a more than quintupling of the

original group, representing a membership of between one hundred and one hundred and thirty) so that "a spirit hostile to the practice [of profanity] pervaded the school" (qtd. Simonds 126). The Juvenile Association accomplished this change in part by intervening factionally in the annual school exhibition of 1837, where it obtained a slot on the program for "An Original Address" by a student to its membership, morally if not physically excluding the non-member student body. By March 1838, the Juvenile Association had its own exhibition date in the school calendar ("The First Anniversary Celebration"), featuring, in addition to the original address, "original hymns written by Misses Irene S. Thatcher and Rebecca A. Goodridge" (Simonds 130). Evidently the association's factional celebration overshadowed the annual exhibition of the school proper, effectively dominating the moral and expressive life of the school, coming to represent the school's collective life to the public at large. "So intense was the interest felt by the citizens of South Boston," Simonds claims, "that the Second Anniversary Celebration, was held in the Baptist Church to accomodate the audience. The public was treated, in addition to the program of original poems, hymns, and addresses, "an original Moral Drama, illustrative of the evils of Profaneness" (Simonds 131). Eighteen students ("ten misses and eight lads") acted in the production. The performance was such a success, featuring "the attendance of delegations from kindred societies that had sprung up in the surrounding towns, and who came in a body, with appropriate banners and badges" (131) that the next year's celebration was moved to the Phillips Church, including a new drama penned by Harrington (subsequently published) and a "Grand Juvenile Concert," and an admission charge of twenty-five cents was collected. Through schoolroom theater, though often non-elite, both male and female students did not merely

prepare themselves for associational self-government, they occasionally and increasingly participated directly in the associational government of the young republic.

Of course, these theatrical practices can be scrutinized with a Foucauldian eye and described as recirculating social discipline with love and administrative tenderness rather than a switch. There would be demonstrable truth to such an observation. The ideological content of many of the schoolroom plays is overtly disciplinary, seeking to produce a docile subject rather than an active citizen. Several of Hannah More's plays of the late eighteenth century (her complete works still being reprinted by several American publishers in the 1830s), for example, are explicitly anti-republican (and were apparently circulated through Britain in pamphlet form as anti-Jacobin propaganda). Numerous school dialogues encourage young ladies to govern themselves along the lines suggested by the emergent domestic ideology. Fowle's schoolroom plays generally promote liberal values: the most elaborate of the boys' plays in Familiar Dialogues (a dozen characters, running time well over an hour) portrays a town meeting on the subject of abolition that roundly satirizes the pretensions to social agency of the abolitionist cadre. Rowson's exhibition pieces feature numerous expressions of gender discipline ("My duty is submission and content"). Sedgwick's story "Eighteen Hundred Thirty-Eight's Farewell" (in Stories For Young Persons, 1840: dedicated to the "girls of the ——— School") offers a kind of allegory of schoolroom theater's disciplinary address of the subject: at "a certain school between Georgia and Maine," the preceptress appears in costume as the ghost of the passing year (pursuing the tradition of Christmas theatricals also built upon by Dickens with the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future), interrupting the schoolgirls' preparations for a New-

Years' party. In a dreamy masque sequence, the ghost admonishes the schoolchildren for their "blindness" to their faults, and leaves behind a vial for them to drink, labelled "Extract of religion, for the conscience" (44, emphasis original). Most of the plays contain a moral "extract" (patriotism, domesticity, self-reliance, civility, respect for authority) which can be described as disciplinary.

But the ideological content of the pieces is not the only truth of the schoolroom plays. There is also a performative truth to this widespread practice which is republican—even Jacobin, as Sedgwick sensed in Curtis's self-governing apprentices—in its emphasis. Performing together, the participants in school plays were not "addressed as subjects" by the pedagogical theater; they were participant-observers, with tremendous latitude for subverting the textual content of the piece—in performance, in rehearsal, or in conversation with their schoolmates outside the performance space. While the sort of "structures of fascination" which Mulvey ascribes to the cinema were written into the texts of schoolroom performance, the performers were not subject to the fascination of the stage—they were, instead, learning how to exert that fascination as a mode of social agency. The social truth of schoolroom performance is recoverable in the practice of collective production, not the content of the plays: schoolroom theater gave antebellum youth the habit of association and a subjectivity which was—however else it might have been disciplined—receptive to the idea of acting out that association to reform the republic. Antebellum youth learned to be agents of theater, subjecting the republic to their performance.

The performative truth of schoolroom theater practices is not a tale told by the narrative of the piece performed. In the 1876 Tom Sawyer, Twain roundly satirizes schoolroom exhibitions, and most other rural

performances (while giving a sense of their pervasiveness, consistent with his own experience). Sawyer's performance of a thundering "single piece" (Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death") is in fact a humiliating failure. And Sawyer's subsequent enlistment in the Temperance Cadets has little to do with his convictions regarding tobacco: the lasting effect of his Cadet experience wasn't upon his tobacco use, but upon his performance imaginary.

This is even more evident in Rowson's collection of exhibition pieces, which—like many similar selections—repeatedly require schoolgirls to impersonate an explicitly counter-social role, such as a Napoleonic imperial arrogance, a man-hating opposition to marriage, card-playing lightmindedness or family-denying self-promotion. In Rowson's "The Sage," for example, which concludes with the above-quoted paean to "submission and content," Jove is asked to survey half a dozen specimens of earthly vanity. The first asks for wealth. The second asks for power:

Another push'd the sordid wretch aside
And pressing forward with ambitious stride,
Looking contempt on the surrounding crowd,
And even to Jove himself he scarcely bow'd.
"Give, mighty power," he cried, "that grov'ling reptile gold,
Be it my fate the staff of power to hold,
To have millions depend on my smile or my frown,
And legions to move at my nod;
I'll reign over the universe, grasp at a crown,
And be on earth a demigod. (A Present, 5-7)

The girl-performer of such a role experiences the performance, and the trace of that enactment survives in her subjectivity, shaping it: the

homilectic return to "submission and content" at the close of the piece does not erase the lived experience of the girl's counter-socializing representation of an "ambitious stride," of "looking contempt," and of imagining the community of friends and family to some of the legions ready to bow to her will. The performative aspect of subjectivity is something more tangible and traceable than untrammelled mutability: the residue of an enactment remains structurally significant to subjectivity. This is a notion of particular significance for Catharine Sedgwick, whose novels repeatedly chronicle the emergence of feminine subjects into feminine agents: the novels lead their heroines to perform counter-socially, often under cover of masquerade, but the trace of having once acted is a turning point in the character's development. For that matter, resistances to gender ideology survive explicit in Rowson's text: the epilogue immediately follows the claim that "My duty is submission and content" with the prayer that "If to my lot one blessing be assign'd,/ Grant me a free and independent mind,/ Ability to earn the bread I eat." While the enacted Napoleonism does not survive as an imperial subjectivity, it has clearly expanded the subject's field beyond the domestic to include such "masculine" values as independence, free opinion, and the right to work for pay.

The schoolroom performances, though imperfectly voluntary and transpiring in a highly disciplined textual field, were like the performances of voluntary associations in that they did not provide a zone "free" of social discipline so much as they created a space which was alternatively disciplinary. It altered the field of interlocution structuring the lives of the performers, multiplying the possibilities of identification and affiliation both face-to-face with other performers and—in imagination—with groups and persons present only as representations. Rowson's "The Bee: A Fable"

(performed 1807; A Present 8-11) suggests some of the possibilities for feminist alternative disciplinarity. One vector of the piece promotes the vision of women as domestic workers. But this ideological conformity is modified in two ways. First, Rowson satirizes the domestic ideology by giving the most aggressive formulation of it to a non-working male drone:

I vow you are a valuable neighbor,
To labor thus from morn to eve for others
For trust me little slave I and my brothers
When we have spent the summer sweetly here,
All winter will regale on your good cheer.

The drone's claim that the sorority of domestic workers are "formed for toil and care by nature" becomes the object of dramatic irony and renders void the value structuring his praise of the speaking Bee, that she is a "mighty good industrious creature."

This satire ironically accepts the lines of affiliation socially constructed by gender ideology, setting up Rowson's second strategy, which is to associate the sorority of feminine domestic workers, across the lines of gender, with class revolutionists. As winter approaches, the fraternity of drones approach the hive and "forc'd an entrance," but the sorority of workers revolt:

The lab'ers rose, the encroaching tribe drove forth,
To brave the horrors of the frigid north
Shrink in the rigors of a wintry sky,
Lament their idleness, to starve and die.

The piece does not directly contest the ideology of domestic work (rather appears to celebrate it), but accomplishes that contestation by radically transforming the lines of affiliation open to the female subject of domestic

work: the bee no longer does domestic work because she belongs to the sorority of women formed for such toil "by nature," but because she belongs to an ungendered and clearly Jacobin-republican voluntary association of labor.

The later selections of Rowson's volume (performed 1808-1811) similarly emphasize the social agency represented by redrawing lines of affiliation, in some cases ending with the resolution of the two or three "young ladies" in the dialogue resolving to work in the benevolent causes more conventionally available to women of their class than the jacobinism of "The Bee" (often acknowledging that the motivation for such labor was not strictly altruistic with humor: "The poor and the widow and orphan shall share," resolves one formerly light-minded young woman, adding hopefully, "We need not work much?"). In one dialogue (25-31), the young women constitute themselves as social agents by criticizing the card-playing of their mothers; in another (31-37), the young misses express by turns revolutionary patriotism, anglophilia, and emulation of Napoleonic heroism, this last setting up a sideswipe at marriage. After one character ("Lucy") describes Napoleon as a wife-beater, eschewing the empress's "chains, tho' of gold" in favor of poverty, another ("Mary") sardonically remarks of Lucy's pious will to poverty, "Oh, that's not a point, child, so hard to be carried, / You'll be poor while you live, and be free till you're married." Marriage was one of the affiliations "natural" to the dominant construction of female ontology, and denaturalizing that affective tie was frequently an ambition of antebellum woman writers. In many of her literary productions, Sedgwick addresses the centrality of marriage in the affective life of women, most directly in her didactic tale, "Old Maids" (Tales 97-116).

Like many of Sedgwick's moral tales, the story's form is essentially that of a dramatic dialogue, similar to those produced in schoolroom exhibitions. The dialogue form was commonly employed in ladies' magazines to pedagogical and ideological purpose (Welter 58-59). While Welter focusses on the dominant ideological import of these tales, recent studies of women's literary culture have recovered much of their counter-ideological import. In their "separatist, essentialist" promotion of a separate sphere, women writers sought to maintain through something like what has been described above as an "alternate discipline," a public space of action for women, both locating gender as an association and supporting gendered reformist voluntary associations (see esp. "From Intellectual Equality to Moral Difference: Hale's Conversion to Separate Spheres," Okker 38-58). Explicitly tutorial, the content of Sedgwick's dialogic tale is didactically counter-ideological, aiming to infuse its readership with the conviction that bad marriages are worse than spinsterhood. The young speaker in the drawing-room dialogue, Anne, invokes the elder interlocutor as a Socratic tutor, and the schoolroom conventions which they are enacting eventually become textually explicit:

"I confess, Mrs. Seton, I am in what is vulgarly called a 'blue maze.' My perceptions are as imperfect as a blind man's in scripture who is suddenly cured of blindness. Besides I was never particularly skilled at puzzling out a moral; will you have the goodness to extract it for me?"

"Certainly, Anne, as I am the lecturer, this is my duty. First, I would have young ladies believe that all beautiful and loveable young women do not of course get married. . ." (101)

The influence of schoolroom theatrical practice upon the formal property of this and many of Sedgwick's other moral tales is obvious, but not the most significant aspect of this influence. Sedgwick's emphasis upon an associational, rather than an individualist, ontology determines the suitability of this dialogic mode of theatricality.

The story emphasizes the importance of redrawing lines of affiliation. Acknowledging the socially-maintained "terrors" that inhere to the "name" of "old maid," Mrs. Seton observes that "women are daily scared by" these terrors "into unequal and wretched connexions. They

have not believed they could retain their identity after five and twenty. That unless their individual existence was merged in that of the superior animal, every gift and grace with which God has endowed them would exhale and leave a 'spectral appearance'—a sort of slough of woman. . . (*Tales* 98-99)

While this passage appears to posit "individual existence" as the alternative to affective marital ties, in fact—as the lengthy dialogue continues—Mrs. Seton repeatedly emphasizes that the alternative to marriage is not individualism but an extension of affective ties to the community. Remaining unmarried is not an invitation to self-culture, or the "idea of a faded. . . personage, whose mind has dwindled. . . outlived her natural affections—survived every love but love of self, and self-guarded by that Cerberus suspicion" (99), but instead to live "in others and for others," displaying an exemplary "forgetfulness of self" (106). Acknowledging that it was possible for spinsters to become a "slough of a woman" in self-absorption, Sedgwick carefully points out that marriage offered a mode of grossly possessive individualism, even an imperialism of self-display: "How

many married dames are there who repeat every fifteen minutes, my husband, my children, my house, and glorify themselves in all these little personalities [?]" (*Tales* 104, emphasis original; cf. Gillian Brown). In avoiding "unequal connexions" in marriage, Sedgwick urges that women "retain their identity" not by becoming "self-guarded" but by merging their individual existence into other fields of association. She highlights the ideological dimension of possessive individualism, producing the "glor[ious]" first-person possessive at the expense of creating others as "little personalities." Of course it can be observed that there was an ideological aspect to promoting a women's self-for-others (and by the latter half of the century, feminist movements would argue their case chiefly on individualist grounds), but Sedgwick's opposition to the emergent ideology and practices of self-interest was feminist. Her arguments against "self-guarding" provide a platform for extending female experience beyond the domestic (of marriage and spinsterhood both) into an extended field of association and, therefore, social agency.

Multiple Theatricalities

Sedgwick's use of a schoolroom theatricality to structure many of her short tales proceeds from her desire to intervene at the level of ideology in culture. She aimed to reproduce an associational republicanism which differed from her father's Federalism in promoting a more democratic and participatory sociality, but which differed, also, from the emerging liberal democracy in her distrust of self-interest as an organizing principle of social behavior. Like the countless dramatists of the schoolroom, she saw a healthy polity in small

groups of persons engaged in other-directed activity, and sought through her writing both to represent such a world and encourage her antebellum readership to create the republic in that image.

Her fiction relies upon many genres of theater, including melodrama, and these different genres produce different theatricalities--differently dramatistic visions of social reality. The strands of what might be identified as a "melodramatic" theatricality in Sedgwick's fiction, for example, generally represent individualist values, self-interested characters, and, occasionally, heroes who appear to achieve historical agency in their own right. Usually a melodramatic theatricality produces a spectacular relation between self and others, the dramatistic relation in which one only spectates and one only performs. This produces two kinds of relation: self-display, in which the self is offered as performer and the "little personalities" reduced to an observership, and voyeurism, in which the self is constituted as an unseen observer, or "peeper" (cf. Harriet V. Cheney's A Peep At the Pilgrims, 1829) and the "little personalities" reduced to a spectacle. Often the "other" of the voyeuristic relation was racially Other, producing an orientalist variant. Usually, the characters whose participation in the social reality of Sedgwick's mimesis is rendered melodramatically bear a morally negative (or sometimes pathetic) valence. On the other hand, the strands which are traceable to associational theater, including schoolroom production, generally represent characters committed to a self-for-others who achieve social agency in communal efforts. Their social reality is always conditioned by participant-observer relations, in which the self and the other both simultaneously perform and spectate. For Sedgwick, this associational theatricality nearly always bears a morally positive value.

The shift from theater to "theatricality," from drama to dramatistic, produces a number of complexities, especially with regard to genre. A work of fiction does not have to represent a dramatic performance to be dramatistic, as we say of Henry James's "tragic," "comic," or "melodramatic" vision. Similarly, a piece of fiction can represent one sort of drama--comedy--but do so "tragically." And fiction can support multiple theatricalities in a single scene. This is evident in Sedgwick's own first effort at a novel, A New-England Tale (1821), which contains a chapter-length description of a schoolroom exhibition. Despite the unusual length of the description, Sedgwick at no point describes the central spectacles of the exhibition--orations by the boys, and the enactment of one of Hannah More's dramas--focussing instead on the collective effort of the the production and the participant-observer relations in the village sparked by the event. (By contrast, Twain's satire of schoolroom exhibitions, fifty-five years later, provides mock texts of the various prizewinning compositions in order to ridicule them, and dwells on the amateurish failings of village performance, representing the events as spectacle, not ritual.) Sedgwick narrates only one of the three parts of the spectacle, the award of the composition prize. As it turns out, this prize is awarded twice, and Sedgwick creates this opportunity to contrast the very different theatricalities of the two recipients.

The orphaned heroine of A New-England Tale, Jane Elton, is introduced by way of her parents who, Sedgwick informs, us were victims of their own specular relations. Jane's mother's "habitual passiveness" inhibits her from checking her husband's speculations; the spectator of the speculator, she fails to see her way to involvement, and "acquiesced silently and patiently in her unhappy fate," brought upon largely by her husband's continued large expenditure in the "vain hope of concealing from his

neighbors a truth, that, in spite of his bustling, ostentatious ways, they had known for many months" (1: 18-19). Sedgwick editorializes the error: "We all know that from the habits of our people in a country town, it is utterly impossible for the most watchful and skillful manoeverer, to keep his pecuniary affairs secret from the keen and quick observation of his neighbors" (1:19). The repudiation of the villagers' ethos of participant observation and effort to substitute instead a spectacular relation of ostentatious display fails to produce the agency sought by Jane's father, induces passivity in his domestic partner, and destroys intimacy in all of his relations, especially his marriage: "their hands were indissolubly joined, but their hearts were not related" (1: 18). Upon the bankruptcy and death of her parents, Jane goes to one of her aunts, encountering "Crazy Bet," a sort of Shakespearean fool who exposes the hypocrisy of Jane's aunts, and who resides alone in a cave, but always returning to the village for its ritual and festive occasions: awakenings, camp meetings, and funeral processions. Jane's special bond with Crazy Bet signifies the communalist emphasis of her own theatricality. Elton's new domestic environment reproduces the theatricality of her parents' lives: her aunts and cousin Elvira are hypocrites addicted to self-display, and the aunt, Mrs. Wilson, that agrees to house her has undergone a false conversion at an awakening in order to underwrite her social ambitions. Although Mrs. Wilson obstructs her, Jane continues her schooling and is expected to win a number of the academic prizes at the end-of-term exhibition.

The exhibition is an elaborate production over two days, involving the entire immediate community in costuming and properties, and located in the village meeting-house, where a stage was erected "over the tops of the pews"

(1: 80). This location reflects the vast interest in the exhibition. It also necessitated some compromise:

In order not to invade the seriousness of the sanctuary, the pieces to be spoken were all to be of a moral or religious character. Instrumental music was strictly forbidden. . . . One of the boys remarked, that he wondered the deacon (three of the trustees were deacons), did not stop the birds from singing, and the sun from shining. (1: 80)

On the first day, the orations and biblical drama were performed. The second day's composition prize offered a chance for the young women to participate: their gender, Sedgwick remarks, had been with both "obvious" and "singular" propriety "excluded from any part in the exhibition except that on the first drawing aside (for they did not know enough of the scenic art to draw up the curtain,) the prize composition was to be read by the writer of it" (1: 79, emphasis original). While Elton has already collected a number of academic prizes, the prize for the best composition takes pride of place:

To add to the zest of curiosity and surprise to the exhibition, it had been determined that the writer of the successful pieces should not be known till the withdrawing of the curtain disclosed the secret. The long expected day arrived. One would have thought, from the wagons and chaises that poured in from the neighboring towns, that a cattle show or a hanging, or some such "merry-making matter," was going on in the village of ———. The church was filled at an early hour; and pews, aisles, and galleries crowded as we have seen a less holy place at the first appearance of a foriegn actor. (1:81)

The prizewinner will be revealed in the manner of melodrama's discovery scene, featuring the winner poised for display. After a prayer and a brief, charged silence, the curtain is pulled back, and Elton's cousin is unveiled in dramatic tableau:

Elvira was seated on the the throne, ambitiously arrayed, in a bright scarlet Canton crape frock, and a white sarcenet scarf fantastically thrown over her shoulders. Her hair, in imitation of some favorite heroine, flowed in ringlets over her neck, excepting a single braid with which, as she fancied, 'a la Grecque,' she had encompassed her brow, and, to add to this confusion of the classical and the pastoral orders, instead of the crescent Diana in the model, she had bound her hair with blue glass beads. (1: 81-82)

This revelation, representing Elvira Wilson's costume properties, and ambition to display herself before a large public, is pursued by further evidence of her stage-management. "Elvira rose and advanced," the narrator recounts. "She had requested that she might speak instead of reading her piece [i.e., perform it], and she spouted it with all the airs and graces of a self-elected heroine" (1: 82). After the performance, she passed through the audience, flushed with "the pride of success and the pleasure of display."

Wilson's red dress, properties, and performance aim at creating a sensation, and succeed: Sedgwick's goal is to associate this sensation scene with the public stage, and cast moral doubts regarding this theatricality of "self-elected heroin[ism]." Immediately upon the heels of Elvira Wilson's triumph, an older fellow stands up apologetically and allows that "he was kind o' loath to spoil a young body's pleasure, but he must and he did not

like to see so much flourish in borrowed plumes," and goes on to reveal that the prize composition has been copied from a 10-year old Boston newspaper (1: 83). Indictment answers spectacle, and a stong odor of fraud attaints the specular relation. This specular relation inflects Elvira's ontology and destiny, associating her later in the narrative with a fraudulent "Virginia gentleman," whose skills as an actor support his profession as a confidence man, and impelling her toward a fateful decision to elope with a French dancing master. Upon this second discovery, the schoolmaster hastily pulls the curtain and after an embarrassed delay, Jane Elton is revealed, presenting "a striking contrast to the deposed sovereign," Sedgwick writes, in her dress and demeanor (1: 84).

Elton's plain dress, modest ornaments, air of embarrassment, and soft delivery take hold of antitheatrical codes and wrestle them into the germ of an alternate theatricality. On the one hand, Elton's demure prizewinning bears some of Sedgwick's own doubts regarding practices of the theater in the first two years of the decade: while grappling with her own devotional status at the time of writing this first novel, she confessed to qualms about theatergoing (*Letters*, op. cit.). On the other hand, Elton's prizewinning is theater too, only of a different kind. If Elvira Wilson, the "deposed sovereign," emblemized theatrical practices of imperial selfhood, Jane Elton, "like the 'meek usurper,'" represents the practices of participant-observation: as she begins to read her essay, "she ventured once to raise her eyes; she saw but one face among all the multitude--the approving, encouraging smile of her kind patron met her timid glance, and emboldened her to proceed" (1: 84). In Wilson's carefully-managed self-presentation, Sedgwick offers only specularity, the performer only performing, the spectators only viewing--a relation which the exposure of Wilson's fraud

violently ruptures, introjecting the community and its values. In Elton's alternate performance, the community already lives: the contribution of the observers is a participation traceable in Sedgwick's narrative of the performance.

Zeroing in on what Erving Goffman calls "face-work," the mute gestural relation between interlocutors, Sedgwick passes over the content of Jane Elton's display to narrate the interaction for which it provides a field—in sharp contrast to her attention to the details of Wilson's display, which leaves no room for anything other than display. Elton converts the "multitude" to persons, both in the exchange of glances between herself and her patron and in the text of her composition, which while on the abstract topic of "gratitude," responds to her lived experience of the community. Sedgwick does not transcribe the text of Jane's composition. Instead, she personalizes the community's response: "Mr. Lloyd felt the delicate praise [delicate because Elton doesn't mention him by name]. Mrs Wilson affected to appropriate it to herself. . ." (1: 84). Observing this economy of response and response again by contrast to Wilson's display, one of the story's young sparks, Edward Erskine, begins a conversion experience, dating from this observed selfless economy his first admiration for Jane Elton. In thus personalizing the performance, so that it both transpires through, and transcribes, participant-observation, Sedgwick begins to articulate a theatricality completely other than specularly. Wilson's performance takes hold of persons as a faceless "multitude," and can only be sustained in that facelessness: the performance divides and (heroically) individuates persons; any authentic relation between performer and spectator explodes the performance. Elton's performance through face-work sustains relations between persons and represents personality itself as unfolding relationally.

The "sensation," in Wilson's performance is singular, produced by one and felt by many, static, stunning, and disabling. Ditto for the countryman's responding revelation of her plagiarism: both the fraud and the exposure cripple relations and divide the community. The sensations in Elton's performance are mutual, multiple and complex, processual and produced in the performer by the spectators as much as they are produced in the spectators by the performer.

This schoolroom exhibition scene in Sedgwick's first effort at fiction only points to the later elaboration of participant-observer theatricality in her later work. This later theatricality, especially in Hope Leslie (1827) and The Linwoods (1835), needs to be read in the complicated emerging protheatricalism of associational culture. By the 1820s, American theatricality was clearly multiple, supporting at least two categories of theater practice. Increasingly, working men and elites both indulged in practices of personal display associable with the public stage, melodrama, and rising individualism—leading to a Broadway-vs.-Bowery vein of New-York sketch, pioneered by Cornelius Mathews. In one of his later developments of the theme (1853), Mathews illustrates the spread of spectacular practice, so that difference is expressed within the spectacular and not in alternatives: "The Broadway dandy dresses snug and small, reducing his person by stays and pulleys, close-fitting coats, pants and vests. . . [t]he Bowery dandy , would impress you with his an idea of largeness" (Pen and Ink 111).

Nonetheless a broader group engaged in theatrical practices of group formation and agency, associable with private theater, benefit productions, schoolroom exhibitions, fraternal ritual, processions, and the literary culture of voluntary associations seeking moral reform, social change, and personal

improvement. In part, the cultural division between these theatricalities was produced by the social accommodation of antitheatrical tradition in an environment of rapidly accelerating theatricality: certain kinds of theater were understood as "different" from the "other," objectionable sort in order to permit persons to both engage in theater practice and adhere to (thus covertly relaxed) antitheatrical prohibitions. Similarly, ideologies of class and gender inflected attitudes toward various strands of theatricality: masculine individualism was slowly achieving respectability, for example, while working-class festive traditions were increasingly coming under civil regulation.

Sedgwick's reliance upon, and promotion of, a participant-observer theatricality by contrast to a specular theatricality is in large part determined by the social dynamics of emergent individualism contesting the apparent hegemony of associational life. The alternative theatricalities supported alternative ontologies. And yet these alternatives were not always completely distinct, often overlapping in the same scene, as in the contest between Jane Elton and Elvira Wilson. More to the point, they often overlapped in the same person. It was possible to feel the appeal of individualism, apprehend the pleasure of self-display and heroic individuation, and yet feel barred from indulging in those practices, either by social pressure or considered conviction. (Or both, conviction and pressure having a dynamic relationship.) Most women writers of the antebellum period felt the appeal of individualism and the specular theater practices supporting it: Alcott, Parton, Southworth, Child, Bacon—even the transcendentalists, Fuller and Peabody, and the genteel ladies' writers, such as Hale—all have some relation to individualism, heroism, and melodrama. This was true, also, of Sedgwick. Despite her excoriation of Elvira Wilson's

theatricality and practices of self-love in A New-England Tale, Sedgwick's later fiction features, alongside of her trademark other-directed heroines, a cast of characters—including the occasional heroine—espousing a melodramatic theatricality and individualist ethos. Magawisca, of Hope Leslie (1827), offers the most obvious example, and another chapter will briefly examine that character in relation to the melodrama, the 1820s discourse of the Native, and other heroic formations of the decade, especially Cooper's The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish (1829). By comparing a relatively pure adherence to a melodramatic theatricality and individualist ethos such as Cooper's, Sedgwick's own more complex relation to those formations in Hope Leslie becomes visible as a sort of "trying on," and ultimate rejection, of these emerging opportunities. Even her most melodramatic formations generally revert to a participant-observer theatricality, consistent with her career-long opposition to imperial notions of selfhood, a theatricality which does not deny self-love, but which elaborates that principle relationally:

He who hath wonderfully made us, hath, in wisdom implanted the principle of self-love in our bosoms; and let the enthusiast rave as he will, it is neither the work of grace nor discipline to eradicate it; but it may, and if we would be good, it must be modified, controlled, and made subservient to the benefit and happiness of others. (New-England Tale 2: 221)

Chapter Three

The Emergence of the Melodramatic As a Social Instrument

**"I can never forget Kemble's Coriolanus. . . the movements of his perfect self-possession displayed the great mind, daring to command, and disdaining to solicit admiration... At the fall of the curtain, there seemed to be but one mind that actuated the whole house: it was as if the audience had been tranced by the effects. " --John Howard Payne
to his sister, June 9, 1817**

**"The 'vaunting' of Rome, like that of the North American Indian, is her proper literature. A man rises; he tells who he is, and what he has done; he speaks of his country and her brave men; he knows that a conquering god is there, whose agent is his own right hand; and he should end like the Indian, 'I have no more to say.' . . . I did not then know that such men impoverish the treasury to build the palace."
--Margaret Fuller, The Autobiographical Romance (1840)**

In The Political Unconscious, Jameson observes in his discussion of literary genre that for Marxism,

only the emergence of a post-individualistic social world, only the reinvention of the collective and the associative, can concretely achieve the 'decentering' of the individual subject called for by [post-structural] diagnoses; only a new and original form of collective social life can overcome the isolation

and monadic autonomy of the older bourgeois subjects in such way that individual consciousness can be lived--and not merely theorized--as an 'effect of structure' (Lacan). (125)

The antebellum period might in these terms be called "pre-individualistic," in the sense that most persons experienced collective and associative de-centered subjectivities (even among those eager to adopt an individualism). Certainly, the "concrete utopia" of this complexly-associated way of life helped to shape the social utopias of Western marxisms. As Jameson indicates, that decentered subjectivity was also an "effect of structure," the associational life and cultural production characteristic of it. In this associational field, individualism somehow ceased to become an elite lifeway alone and became more widely (though not yet generally) distributed: after 1830, young white males, especially of the working, artisanal and entrepreneurial classes began to adhere to a "Jacksonian" individualism.

The present section seeks to describe the emergence of Jacksonian individualism as in part an effect of melodramatic structure. This is not to say that melodrama caused individualism--nor that melodrama merely "reflected" it. Instead, performances of melodrama provided one of the fields of cultural struggle which reconciled liberal individualism with associational life (including among this latter, republicanism, as McConachie demonstrates). The formal properties of American melodrama in the antebellum period shaped the subjectivity of Jacksonian individualists but those formal properties were themselves shaped by the Jacksonian subject--especially in the peculiarly American heroic variant of melodrama that rose to swift ascendance on the U.S. public stage between 1826 and 1836 (McConachie, Formations 66-68 and Shank, 600). McConachie links

this heroic drama and the star-system that supported it (including such details as the curtain call, the monodramatic presentation of a single absorbing character, and the cult of sincerity among stars who strove to appear before the public as little like actors as possible, but "simply and magnificently as their individually unique selves") to the reproduction of heroic individualism in the audience, tracing "the individuation of both star and star-gazer at work in this new relationship" (75-77). Jameson aligns the development of noble individualism with the romance and chansons de geste; Watt describes the relationship between the novel and the evolution of eighteenth-century bourgeois individualism; McConachie traces the spread of individualism by way of the melodrama to the artisanal and sub-artisanal classes subscribing to the artisanal ethos.

This latter form is particularly significant because previous individualisms were not hegemonic in the field of subjectivity: they did not seek to universally disable dissent to individualism. Democratic, liberal individualism spread with the era of revolution and the rise of the hegemonic practices of liberal-democratic statism: the debate surrounding democracy usually centers around who "gets to be an individual," and not the value of individualism per se. This new, "democratic" individualism disseminated a bellicose subjectivity—the "imperial self" predicated "on a world elsewhere," in which the field of self-determination was spatially realized in westward expansion, the destruction of other cultures and the incorporation of alternate life-ways into a theatricalized self-fashioning/self-presenting/self-actualizing subject.²⁷ This American romanticism invited

²⁷It is noteworthy that Quentin Anderson's Imperial Self locates the "post-social" triumph of American liberal individualism in the twentieth century, describing Emerson, Whitman and Henry James as "the original

persons to consider themselves social agents in their individual persons. Subjectivity and agency were held to overlap in a popular romanticism that is still current today in western democracy--in which the idea of full personhood and all-but-untrammelled agency are virtually inextricable: limits to agency are widely understood as limits to personhood itself.

This compelling identification of subject and agent makes sense of Emerson's description of Napoleon as "the pattern democrat" and the middle class that followed the working man out of associational life and into the theaters as "little Napoleons" ("Representative Men," 727-730). Naming particularly his "voice and dramatic power," his "theatrical eclat" and "passion for stage effect," Emerson quotes Bonaparte ("I must dazzle and astonish"; "A great reputation is a great noise") to represent him as the stage-hero of liberalism triumphant: "singularly destitute of generous sentiments," "unjust... egotistic, and monopolizing," Emerson writes, "I call Napoleon the agent or attorney of the middle class of modern society" (742-43). Stargazers fashioned identities based on the gold standard of stardom, valuing selfhood exactly in proportion to its production of an agency itself predicated on "monopolizing" or subordinating the agency of others. This produced an enduring social and political contradiction in democracy, resolvable only by recourse to the asocial--the "American Adam" in "virgin land" or by access to transcendental fictions returning this irrational desire to a rational principle, such as the market's invisible hand or the absolute of

proponents of the emotional logic we are now employing" (205). Anderson's view of imperial selfhood as a cultural emergent of the "American Renaissance" period differs radically from those who see it as a cultural dominant in the period, such as Wai-Chee Dimock, for whom the autotelic "self-propelled and self-governing, autonomous and free" individual "is the centerpiece of Jacksonian culture" (25) and Richard Poirier for whom what he describes as "the interesting American novelists" are defined by "an evident distaste" for "the necessity of social intercourse" (16, 33).

Nature, in which liberated self-interest contributes automatically to the general welfare. This continuing popular romanticism proceeds in the field of a contradiction already evident in the heroic melodrama: it is socially impossible for everyone on stage or in the audience to individuate heroically, and yet everyone in the scene of performance subscribes to heroic individualism.

The melodrama provided a third alternative to resolving this conflict. Instead of recourse to the asocial or the transcendental, it offered a theatricalized sincerity. It identified agency with expression: saying became understood as a mode of doing. The subject enacted his imperial selfhood by speaking it, or by showing it, in styles as loud as speech. With their checked pants and soaped locks of hair dangling over their faces, the Bowery b'hoys (prototypically butchers' apprentices) who gathered in the theaters before Edwin Forrest and other stars of the period imitated his vaunting delivery in a fashion that remains an identifiably American mode of self-fashioning, the expressive individualism chronicled and imitated by Whitman with his barbaric yawp. These were "little Napoleons" with emptier pockets than the middle classes described by Emerson. The impossibility of realizing a general heroism helped to shift individualism into the field of expression: persons could express, or represent, a heroic standpoint in excess of their material condition or social agency. The suitability of expressive over possessive individualism is obvious: it spread among persons who did not, and likely never would, own anything of consequence besides expressivity. This theatrically confrontational mode of relations was not all false consciousness, smoke and mirrors: it helped working men overcome the "habits of deference" that political historians describe as a greater obstacle than poll restrictions to widespread electoral participation in the early

national period (Goodman 59). Critics of Jacksonian melodrama do not split on the question of melodrama's association with the distribution of individualism—they split on the question of whether that individualism enhanced (Meserve, Gerould, Grimsted) or to an extent retarded (Mason, McConachie) the social agency of its adherents.²⁸

To argue successfully, as in their own way all of these critics do, that the melodramatic provided a social instrument in the Jacksonian era, implies that the melodramatic did not inhere "naturally" to the melodrama—the plays and performances in actual theaters—but overspread those boundaries, into other modes of cultural production and daily life. Michael Booth's 1964 observation that it "is impossible to separate melodrama from the 'drama': almost all serious nineteenth-century plays are to a greater or lesser extent melodramatic" (Booth 1964: 31) applies to cultural production well beyond the melodrama. There are numerous studies of the "melodramatic," for example, in authors as diverse as Twain, James, and Mercy Otis Warren. Indeed, the melodramatic, broadly understood, remains the predominant mode of drama in the United States, having shifted technologies but not values in moving to film from the stage: think of "Make my day," "Hasta la vista, baby," and "Honey, I'm home" as versions of the defiant or suicidal-apocalyptic posture of a Forrest hero, and "Billy Jack" as a version of "Metamora."²⁹ Any Hollywood film not identifiably comedy, farce, or

²⁸ The recent tart exchange in TDR sparked by Gerould's review of McConachie's book is a case in point: Gerould's insistence that melodrama proved a force for liberal-democratic revolution and progress is not inconsistent with McConachie's insistence that liberal ideologies of individualism distributed by the melodrama proved in many respects dominative.

²⁹ Cf. Booth 39ff ("It was the cinema that dealt the real death blow to stage melodrama. . ."). Melodrama did not vanish from cultural production

tragedy is likely melodrama--shaped by a sharp polarization of good and evil in static character, the prominence of spectacle, and plots in which the hero survives, usually by a clarification of his relationship to administrative authority.

This melodramatic structure supports most of the "genres" of Hollywood film--science fiction, spy thrillers, action adventure, suspense, mystery-detective, westerns, horror--many of which, unsurprisingly, have antecedents in the genres of nineteenth-century melodrama. Perhaps the most compelling argument for the generalization of the melodramatic in Hollywood film production is its disappearance as a category: the films identified in film criticism as "melodramas" are sentimental weepers, the "women's pictures" of the forties which have little to do with the historical emergence of melodrama. The melodramatic is in fact general to mass cultural production. The television hour drama, for example, and the television evening news equally support a dramatistic vision of social reality identifiably melodramatic in its ethics, ontology, and epistemology--featuring character-centered ethical binarism, a logic of being centered upon adjusting the individual's relationship to administrative authority, and a mode of knowing designed to dispel ambiguity in brief, universally accessible realizations. The same is true of comic books, mass-market novels, Christian inspirational matter, nearly all political speech and most journalism.

The endurance and near-universality of the melodramatic ethos in a multiplicity of forms detached from the genre which first expressed it (and the absence of any substantial historical memory of that genre) suggests a

when the Western stage mutated into a highbrow medium; it simply pervaded mass forms of communication.

relationship between the melodramatic and liberal-democratic practices of hegemony. This proposition has the support of history: both the melodrama and the politics of hegemony were initiated in the French revolution (Gerould, Brooks, Laclau and Mouffe). Inextricable from democratic revolution in the first half of the nineteenth century, melodrama helped to raise revolutionary consciousness in Europe (and reformist consciousness in the United States, as the most popular antebellum melodramas—"Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room"—indicate), organizing the life and sustaining the social agency of communes and associations. Indeed, numerous successful antebellum melodramas engaged and celebrated associational life. Yet later forms of revolutionary theater (early twentieth-century workers' theater, agit-prop, little theater, Brechtian drama) sought to extend the revolutionary life of melodrama with only modest success. This partial failure reflects the invisible pervasion of the melodramatic through other forms of cultural production, especially those susceptible to mechanical reproduction, such as the dime novel and the nickelodeon—so that, while melodrama had achieved the status of a "natural" worldview (constituting the "realism" of mass forms of communication), melodrama in live stage performance by 1900 appeared "unnatural" by contrast to the bourgeois realism "natural" to the consumers of "high culture" supporting the residual institution of live performance. More importantly, the melodramatic was after midcentury increasingly historically inextricable from expressive individualism and anti-associational values, consistent with the needs of the liberal-democratic state, which required the substitution of an individual sense of agency for the actual social agency of associational life.

Melodrama, in short, popularized romantic heroism as expressive individualism, an expressionism at first young, white, male, and bellicose but later moderated into the less rambunctious but far more general form described by Charles Taylor. It legitimated some freedoms, especially of individual expression, and discouraged others, particularly organized action against social authority. This is how we can make sense of Peter Brooks' observations regarding the relationship of melodramatic epistemology to the French revolution, that "While its social implications may be variously revolutionary or conservative, it is in all cases radically democratic" both in striving to dispel social mystery--"striving to make its representations clear and legible to everyone"--and in relocating mystery in the personal (15-16). This "radically democratic" epistemology, simultaneously making meaning democratically available and locating value in the unique mysteries of individuality, offers the key to melodrama's utility for liberal-democratic hegemony. The "mysteries" of group life are dispelled, exploded, made clear: in the melodramatic episteme, all social truth is universally accessible, and all mystery is the valuable-yet-socially-useless property of the individual. The pressure for moral clarity in melodrama is extreme and strives to realize the democratic promise of enlightenment: "One knows where one is in the world of melodrama," Booth remarks, "there is no doubt about moral principles or proper conduct" (9). This radical union of enlightenment and Romantic epistemology is consistent with democratic hegemony, simultaneously investing "common sense" with supreme authority and valuing the individual as the supreme agent of expression. On both trajectories melodrama actively depressed the non-universal, intersubjective episteme of associational life, the "mysteries" that denoted the (republican) recovery of craft ritual in the first three decades of the

century--and which denoted the (criminal) lifeways of urban subcultures thereafter (see chapter five).

Melodrama's democratic epistemology actively criminalized the subcultural knowledge that provided standpoints for counter-hegemonic action.³⁰ In melodrama, an individual always has knowledge to which social authority is not privy (usually of his own or another's virtue): the action of the drama is the reconciliation of that personal knowledge with social authority. Only when the mystery is cleared up do the protagonists assume their rightful place in society. As Brooks explains, "the reward of virtue... is only a secondary manifestation of the recognition of virtue" (27). In this structure, the individual is always right, and social authority (the judge, the father, the captain) always mistaken (or deceived), but the individual has no social agency, nor any expectation of it. Characters don't change; they only change their minds. In classical and Shakespearean tragedy, the destruction of the hero inaugurates a new social order; in melodrama, the restoration of the hero sustains the social order, purging that order of mystery which challenges its legitimacy. The order itself is

³⁰ There are of course numerous earlier examples of detectives in literature and sensation fiction on both sides of the Atlantic, but no still widely-familiar nineteenth-century example of the genre more clearly pits the investigator's (liberal-melodramatic) epistemology of revelation and exposure against criminalized subculture than the first Sherlock Holmes story, "A Study in Scarlet" (1891) which features a long central narrative in the American southwest, elaborating the (explicitly illiberal) evils of Mormonism. Most of the forms of nineteenth-century association (social fraternity in "The Red-Headed League," political societies, trade unions and fraternal lodges in "The Valley of Fear") serve, at one time or another, as the criminal opposites of Holmes, Watson, Mycroft Holmes, Pinkerton's, the government and police. Holmes's association with the epistemology of melodrama is evident in his insistence, when in partnership with the police, that he be permitted to exhibit his detective work when completed and not in "stages."

rarely challenged, only its rightfulness vis-a-vis the subject: the ritual purgation of mystery in melodrama is therefore a ritual authentication of the liberal-democratic social order. The universally-misunderstood individual, it promises, will be recognized in the end: hence the single most excruciatingly pathetic (and typical) figure of the melodrama is the mute. Inability to express oneself constitutes a total loss of agency, since melodrama constitutes agency exclusively as expression. Unable to dispel the mystery, the mute cannot transcend the webs of conspiring interlocutors into right relation with social authority.

The complicated relationship between social agency, democratic heroism, and expression in American melodrama unfolds in Louisa Medina's 1838 adaptation of R.M. Bird's Nick of the Woods. Bird's novel (Bird himself had between 1831 and 1834 written three of Edwin Forrest's prize plays), as the prefaces to the first and the revised edition both insist, investigates the possibilities and characteristics of heroism in the New World: "the true fathers of the State among the early settlers" of the Kentucky frontier, the first edition's preface argues, belongs to the "ignorant but ardent" class and not men of "education and refinement."³¹ A close

³¹ The preface to the first edition addresses itself to "the consideration of the character" of

men drawn from what, in our vanity, we call the humbler spheres of life, —farmers and hunters, the mountaineers of Virginia. . . . [indigent, ignorant,] but who, under all these disadvantages, without the influence of any great and experienced mind to impel, direct, or counsel, succeeded in their vast enterprise, wrested from the savage the garden-land of his domain, and secured to their conquest all the benefits of civil government and its laws. [T]he philosophic examiner will perhaps find in it an illustration of the efficacy of the republican principle in enlarging the mind and awakening the energies, of men whom the influence of another code of

adaptation of the novel, Medina's text illustrates three variants of melodramatic heroism. First, the play offers a hero and heroine of the Virginia aristocracy, Roland and Edith Forrester, thrust out into the Kentucky frontier because "the treachery of a villain induced our uncle to disinherit us" (4). Their problem is to be recognized by authority as the rightful heirs to property and be once more knowable as their true (propertied) selves and not by the identity imposed upon them ("plain adventurers seeking our fortunes by the sweat of our brows") by the misdirected administrative instrument of their uncle's will. Second, the play introduces one of the most enduring characters of the Bowery stage, Captain Ralph Stackpole, a boisterous, self-aggrandizing frontier hero on the order of Mike Fink the river-boat man and Mose the fireman.³² A horse thief and Indian fighter, Stackpole's title, "Captain," is a self-appointment and not a true militia rank. Stackpole's problem is for his rough virtue (based in large part on his boisterous self-description) to be recognized, that recognition, significantly, ultimately provided in large part by the aristocratic Roland and Edith. Third, the mysterious title character, "Nick of the Woods" or, as he is known by the Natives whom he slaughters and mutilates, "the

political faith would have kept in the darkness and insignificance to which they were born.

Both prefaces dilate on the unsuitability of the Native American character for heroism, the first concluding dismissively of a culture that wages war on women and children, "Heroical? Hoc verbum quid valeat, non vident," the second protesting the "poetical allusion [thrown by Cooper and Chateaubriand] over the Indian character. . . The Indian is doubtless a gentleman; but he is a gentleman that wears a very dirty shirt" (both prefaces reprinted in the 1864 edition).

³² The long currency of the character and its cultural pervasion is indicated not only by its long production history and numerous imitators, but by Henry James's application of the "ring-tailed squealer's" surname--and, most interesting, the feminine version of his own personal name--to his outspoken American working-woman, the journalist Henrietta Stackpole (*Portrait of a Lady*, 1891).

Jibbenainosay" ("the spirit that walks"), serves as an heroic, mad, avenger of the atrocities visited by Natives upon the women and children of the white race. This last hero is appropriately divided against himself. His identity unknown to the community, the Jibbenainosay also turns out not to know himself, being by day the Quaker Nathan, known and despised throughout the valley as "the only man in the county who won't fight" (10).

The pressure of the melodrama to adjust administrative authority toward underwriting the heroic individual's self-expression—in this case, the Forresters' aristocracy (against their temporary poverty) and Stackpole's frontier nobility (despite his criminal behavior and immodesty)—serves as the linking thread in Roland's first encounter of Ralph. The scene is the stockade fort, and Ralph Stackpole and his companions are discovered:

RALPH. Silence, you tarnal critturs! my name's Tom

Doodle, the rag man! and I'm for any man that insults
me! long leg or leather breeches, green shirt, or blanket
coat, land trotter or river roller. I'm the man for a
massacre!

All laugh and shout as Col. B and Roland enter.

Kurnel, I am glad to see you! same to you, stranger.

My name's Ralph Stackpole, and I'm a ring-tailed
squealer.

Offers his hand.

ROLAND. Then, Mr. Ralph Stackpole, I'll trouble you to
pursue your business without taking any notice of me,
as I'm not in the habit of joining hands with savages
and horse thieves.

RALPH. Tarnal death to me! I'm a gentleman, and my name's fight! foot and hand, tooth and nail, claw and mud-scraper, knife, gun, and tomahawk, or any way you choose to take me. I'm your man! Cock-a-doodle-doo-o-o.

Strikes attitude; all laugh.

COL. B. Stop there, Ralph; no insults to strangers. Where did you steal that brown mare from?

RALPH. Steal! I steal any horse but an Injun's! Where's the man dare insinuate that? Blood and massacreation, where's the man?

COL. B. Come, come, Ralph, you know that old mare belongs to Peter Harper on the north side of the clearings.

RALPH. Kurnel, you're a man in authority and my superior officer, therefore there can be no scalping between us; but you're right, by hokey! There's the beast, and just tell me where's the one you're going to lend me. I must be off afore sunset. (9)

This colloquy points up the conflict between the demure chivalric expression of Roland's traditional melodramatic heroism and the self-aggrandizing expression of Ralph's democratic heroism; Roland's refusal to shake hands with a "savage and horse thief" is accompanied by a clear expression of Roland's orientation toward authority; he asks Ralph not to "take notice" of him because his problem can only be resolved by administration. The play wishes to heal this conflict, however, and does in two ways: first, by promptly initiating a reconciliation. When an Indian

attack interrupts the encounter, Roland witnesses Ralph save an infant, repents of his harsh judgement, and offers his hand to the "ring-tailed squealer," commenting afterward, "What a strange medley of the bully and the hero is that man!" Secondly, and more complexly, the play resolves the conflict between the new boisterous heroism and its traditional variant by righting Ralph's criminality (he does, in fact, steal horses from white men) with administrative authority: the colonel both elicits a confession from Ralph ("you're right, by hokey!") and paternally indulges his crime, and finally receives Ralph's acknowledgement of the social order: "Kurnel, you're a man in authority, and my superior officer, therefore there can be no scalping between us." Ralph, and his horse-stealing, the play swiftly suggests, has a proper relation to the community of the frontier. Within lines of the audience's first encounter with the character, the Colonel steps in to dispel any mystery surrounding his social relation and underwrite his highly expressive individualism.

Stackpole in fact yearns for his self-description to be authenticated. While that self-description deploys the rhetoric of self-legitimation (in this case, through a willingness to fight "any way you choose to take me"), that language is, however forcefully, inescapably other-directed ("I'm your man;" "any way you choose to take me"): his self-description, after all, depends on an economy of insult, provoking others to recognize him and expecting to recognize others in the same fashion ("I'm for any man that insults me!") This economy of fight and brag, though expressively different from Roland's aristocratic heroism, yearns inevitably and similarly toward recognition by and in company with that genteel mode: "I'm a gentleman, and my name's fight!" The play underwrites Ralph's frontier nobility, providing him with recognition and supporting his exaggerated claims to

democratic agency--while firmly locating actual authority in traditional figures, Roland and the militia colonel. What Ralph accomplishes is the recognition by genteel authority of his rough-noble self-description: powerfully expressive, expression offers his only agency. If the "heroic innocence" of R.W.B. Lewis's "American Adam" rests in the synthesis (or detente) between Ralph and Roland, that heroism and equally that innocence (as Ralph's paternalistically-indulged criminality instantiates) rests upon an exterior, and always clearly administrative, agency. With democratic braggarts, melodrama's ritual proof of personal identity (e.g., "You shall some day know who I am and be sorry for this injustice" [The People's Lawyer 398, emphasis original]), becomes also a ritual authentication of a new sort of identity, based on self-description.

The relationship between the acknowledgement of a democratic nobility and the continuing supremacy of administrative culture in most American plays of the 1830s extends the expressive freedoms of the democratic heroes in the largely English genre of nautical melodrama, which matured in the late 1820s with the productions of John Buckstone and Douglas Jerrold (The Mutiny at the Nore, 1828, and Black-Ey'd Susan, 1830). Both of the latter dramas feature Jack Tar raising his arm against naval authority, the first with intention and the second by accident, resulting in naval court-martial: in the first, the hero is executed at the yardarm; in the second, the noose is removed from the hero's neck at the final instance. Despite the differing results for the heroes, the resolution of both dramas acknowledges the supremacy of administrative necessity, firmly underwritten by the newly-legitimated expression of the forecastle heroes. The hero of Mutiny at the Nore, Richard Parker, is chosen leader by his companions "for having a good address and fluency of speech": his role is to

speak the simple grievances of the fleet: "We want more pay, better provisions, and less flogging, captain" (16). The sailors' patriotic and liberal-democratic demand of the admiralty for recognition "that we have fought and bled for old England, that we are men, and men determined to have our rights" (16) is balanced by Parker's acknowledgement at the yardarm of the justice of his sentence, having killed an officer while mad for revenge: "They might have saved the mutineer," he paternally instructs his wife, but "they must not, cannot save the murderer!" (47). He acknowledges his own "infamy," hopes that his son will enlist ("From this moment, he is England's") and become a "hero" and "live in honour" in contrast to himself, and offers "the last toast of Richard Parker... health to my king, and God bless him! confusion to his enemies" as the curtain speech in the instant before his execution.³³

³³It would seem that these speeches and this fate would suffice to represent the primacy of the administrative prerogative, but the preface to the play by the compiler of the Cumberland edition scathingly takes Jerrold to task for "elevat[ing] Parker to a hero" (7). While grudgingly acknowledging that "all this is allowable as fiction," the redactor argues that "unless the audience (which we doubt) can detect" Jerrold's revisions of the historical record, the play will encourage others to treason:

To resist lawful authority is the peculiar privilege of the vulgar, who forget that their station, however humble, in society, is upheld by its due maintenance; for gradations in fortune are as natural to man, as in stature or intellect." Observing that the sailors deserve an administrative hearing for their grievances, the redactor insists that they belong to the role of petitioner alone: "Your jack tar is not the most efficient legislator. We can trust his honesty. . . he would not complain without just cause. . . But Jack is no legislator. To hold councils, and appoint delegates, is as much out of his province, as to turn his guns against his liege lord exceeds the bounds of his duty.

For D——G, the hero of the story is a figure ignored by Jerrold, the leader of the parliamentary opposition Sheridan, who unlike other members of his

The supremacy of administrative culture is underlined even more vigorously by Jerrold's 1830 Black Eyed Susan, in which the hero strikes down a man molesting his fiancée, unaware that the man is his captain. Even though the sailor is saved at the yardarm--importantly, by the discovery of an administrative technicality, the repentant captain remembering that he had signed discharge papers for the sailor before the incident ("when he struck me he was free, I was not his officer" [30])-- the sailor's submission to the naval court is complete, insisting against the paternal advice that he retain counsel that he leaves his fate to "your own hearts, your honors. . . why its [sic] below the honesty of a sailor to go upon the half tack of a lawyer" (23). The accused sailor concurs with the court's reluctant judgement of death "so as not to set a dangerous precedent." The increased boisterousness of Ralph Stackpole's expression and greater latitude in behavior is similarly accompanied by an ultimate adherence to authority.

Quite soon, melodrama's democratic heroes would themselves sometimes belong to the administrative classes (doubtless responding to the increasing presence of clerks and small functionaries in the theater alongside mechanics after the late 1830s)--presaging the eventual prevalence of the police detective and secret agent, agents wholly and inescapably of administration, at the center of the later melodramatic imagination.³⁴ The

party that "inwardly exulted" at the embarrassment the mutiny caused the administration, "singly and alone, forgetting the distinction of party, nobly grappled with the difficulty" and joined with the administration to crush the rebellion ("Remarks" 5-6).

³⁴ Think again of Holmes, whose brother Mycroft deploys all of Sherlock's faculties of deduction from an arm-chair in the position of Whitehall functionary: as every Doyle story featuring Mycroft makes clear, the daylight doppelganger of the secret agent is the petit fonctionnaire, the

title character of Dr. J.S. Jones's The People's Lawyer (1839) embodies both strains of heroism represented by Roland Forrester and Ralph Stackpole, a mechanic (much later revealed to be a gentleman raised by a parent who believed his son should learn a menial trade) who has also secretly studied the law and occasionally appears incognito as an advocate for the oppressed. Both genteel in his manner and democratic in his (apparent) mechanical profession, he endures the humiliations of the mistaken identity in a way that patently directs itself at sympathetically exposing the democratic pressure exerted by the mechanic classes to speak themselves to the dominant bourgeoisie. Dismissed by a rich merchant in attempting to right a plot against an honest clerk accused of embezzlement, the incognito "People's Lawyer" leaves the stage declaiming "You shall some day know who I am" (398). The merchant smirks at his back: "So much for the education of the poor. Here is a common mechanic bullying a gentleman in college style." Both the victim-hero (a hapless traditional melodramatic hero like Roland Forrester) and the agent-hero (in this case a disguised avenger-as-advocate) belong to the administrative classes, and administrative authority is never at risk. Despite enjoying the democratic hero's new expressive privilege of "bullying a gentleman," the People's Lawyer reassures the sister of the victim-hero, "Fear not. Our laws are just, our judges honest men, our jurors are our equals. The right will prevail" (413).

Despite the healing of the rift between the heroism of Roland and Ralph so that each attains identity and agency through proper relation to administration, a third heroism in excess of administrative agency survives throughout much of "Nick of the Woods," and in plays like it up until about

man in the grey flannel suit dedicating his being to the propagation of administrative necessity.

1850. The only non-administrative agency in the play rests, for some time, in the mystery of the individual represented by the bifurcated Nathan the Quaker/Nick of the Woods. Nathan/Nick can know himself in battle, but not in society: during the combat sequence of Act 2, he explains himself to Roland, telling how he, Nick-remembering-Nathan, a peace-preaching Quaker, saw his bride and family brutally murdered. The psychological truth of his individual mystery fuels his asocial agency, his preternatural capacity to act outside of the law, but after the battle, he cannot remember himself as an agent and knows himself only as Nathan.

Traces of that extrasocial agency remain: when Ralph Stackpole provokes him and demands recognition ("Look at me! Who and what am I?"), Nathan bests him verbally, (replying, "They said you were made for a man, but the work was botched in the doing") and also physically, surprising Stackpole by knocking the frontier fighter to the ground after this exchange of insults. But this mystery, and the agency it supports, is progressively eradicated from the world of the play. Act 1 ends with Nathan/Nick's identity revealed, hacking his sign into the chest of a Native in full view of the audience. The mystery is instantly dispelled within the world of the play as well, when Roland stumbles upon the corpse:

ROLAND. In the name of heaven, who has done this
deed?

NATHAN. *Appearing suddenly on bridge.* Twas I, the
Jibbenainosay.

(Music. Picture of horror--lightning, thunder, &c).

TABLEAU.

The Act Drop Falls.

The melodrama's inexorable pressure toward revelation and exposure, the dispersal of all ambiguity, progressively erodes the possibility of Nick's continuing existence within the play because that existence is predicated on the agency of mystery. Nathan the social man and Nick the extra-social agent cannot coexist in the same person, nor in society: with "his work of vengeance completed" at the end of the play, Nathan dies.

As the case of Nick of the Woods illustrates, sometimes the right relation of the hero to social authority is extinction. This is the case with heroes of the margins—especially Native Americans (Metamora) and revolutionists, like Jack Cade, ("Captain of the Commons") and Spartacus (The Gladiator). These early Forrest roles (1829-1837), as well as the "avengers" in the class-war melodramas (1835-1850) studied extensively by McConachie, all share a powerful expressivity and a similar doom: extinction in the pursuit of radical social agency. Significantly, the representation of social agency in these plays (and in nearly all like them, almost without exception) is constrained to an historical setting prior to the dawn of the liberal-democratic state. Influenced strongly by the Romantic drama battling for supremacy in the "legitimate theaters" of Europe, these American melodramas differ importantly from other instances of the genre, particularly in their representations of active heroes attaining a partial revision of the social order in self-immolation. They nonetheless belong to the general trend of melodrama. Each of the revolutionary heroes dispels the mystery surrounding his character (the "Avenger" usually is the mystery that has to be dispelled) and receives sympathy from the audience predicated in large part on his own self-understanding that his right relation to social authority--implacable resistance--necessitates his own death, disappearance, or exile. Upon achieving the King's grant of a popular

charter in peace negotiations, Jack Cade, typically, exclaims "Now I can die in peace" (513). They are allowed to escape the melodramatic prohibition against social agency precisely because they can have no place in society. (Often, these heroes begin as moderate revolutionaries, personally motivated--by the aristocratic murder of a loved one, usually a parent or brother--but are impelled, as the plot moves toward crisis, by a greater personal tragedy--usually the rape or murder of wife or child--to become mad for vengeance, a turn which underlines the necessity of their destruction: in this way Cade, Spartacus, and Virginius begin by signifying restraint, but end destroyed by their "own" madness.)

Significantly, like heroes as different as the aggressive-but-loyal People's Lawyer and the deferential-but-mutinous Richard Parker of "Mutiny at the Nore," these heroes of the racial or social margins are always loyal to some version of a liberal-democratic social order--their social agency is always represented as effective against other kinds of social organization, but not against the democratic state (tellingly, Emerson's essay on great men details their "uses"). In R.M. Bird's The Gladiator, for example, the (Thracian) slave Spartacus, despite early self-restraint, turns into a vengeance-mad suicidal hero toward the play's end ("Mark, no prisoners; Kill, kill, kill all!" [197])--but his willingness to slaughter Romans never overcomes the transcendental significance that Rome itself has for him (his brother Phasarius, himself already filling the mad avenger's role, urges "Tear it down, and you enfranchise Thrace, and half the world," but fails to convince Spartacus to sack the city). The agency of these heroes is non-reproducible and non-sustainable in the social order which they help to bring about: they are always, inevitably, the last of their kind.

This is an important point, because it sustains the paradox of the melodrama as a social instrument: the claim that subjectivity and agency completely, heroically overlap remains inconsistent with the complete investment of authority in administrative figures—unless individual agency is understood narrowly as the power to attract the attention of authority through (sometimes quite extravagant) personal expression. All other modes of agency, especially conspiracy, and including all challenges to the social order from villains and heroes alike, are inconsistent with survival—and proceed from persons whose otherness to the social order is irreversible (usually by way of race or irrationality, since class is usually understood as a remediable condition). This ideological resolution is consistent with the radical democratization achieved in the revolutions 1776-1917. The investment of authority in an administrative elite is a democratic invention: historically, most reforms of liberal democracy involve broadened access to administrative culture. The fact that, as Foucault suggests, the real administrative power (in judges, executives, legislators, physicians, and teachers) denies its personality, its embodiment in individual persons and its elaboration through them, is relevant. Melodrama supports the fiction of the impersonality of administrative power ("I am powerless in my person" says the judge who is "just doing his job") in order to invest value in the—merely—expressive "person" divorced from institutional realities. Melodrama's hero is always the object and not the subject of administrative power: it is his task, and his agents', to arrange for his intrinsic, unique worth to be recognized by an administrator. Within this structure, it matters very little whether the individual's expression is demure or boisterous: the task of the melodramatic hero remains chiefly to arrange for the underwriting of personal expression by impersonal power.

Precursor Formations of Melodramatic Heroism

While the discourse investigating the possibilities of a more democratic heroism blossomed out in the heroic melodrama of the 1830s, that discourse and the melodramatic ontology supporting it was already emerging in other cultural formations of the preceding decade, including both novels and stage production. Ideas of democratic heroism and a melodramatically dramatistic understanding of social reality are intertwined in cultural productions of the 1820s, especially in formations drawing upon the symbolic economy provided by white American ideas of Rome and the Native American. Prior to the emergence of an heroic melodrama written and produced specifically for the American stage, romantic dramas and Shakespearean tragedy--particularly the Roman plays--were produced and received melodramatically. The romantic recovery of the classical, in producing--or resisting--a liberal-democratic statist revision of revolutionary republicanism, relied in large part upon the stage practices of the melodrama.

One of the most telling pieces of evidence for the emergence of the melodramatic as an instrument of liberal-democratic hegemony is the remarkable antebellum production history of a play that is neither melodramatic nor (by most accounts) liberal-democratic in its worldview, Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Today, the play is widely regarded as difficult and unpopular. Among contemporary critics its unsympathetic hero is regarded as inhuman--something like a god or a machine, in either case not a fit subject for tragedy (Bloom). But in the era of Napoleon and Andy

Jackson, the implacable warrior-who-would-be-first-consul was takable as a human and historical figure—his martial virtue both necessary and intolerable to the political life of the republic that would be an empire. The play itself was frequently produced in American theaters after 1819, when then Major-General Jackson's attendance at a New-York performance was publicized on a handbill (NYPL). During the 1820s, six major stars attempted the role in New York alone (12 performances by six stars in two theaters 1823-1827), and the play was in performance nearly as often as "Julius Caesar" and "King Lear," or about as frequently as "The Tempest" (Odell passim). It was also regularly performed in Philadelphia and Boston, and had been a staple between 1805 and 1820 in the repertoire of the foremost American tragedian of the neoclassical "Philadelphia school," Thomas A. Cooper, an English actor who acquired American citizenship, married the daughter of President Tyler and retired, like Melville, into the New York custom-house (Wingate 162).

After seeing John Philip Kemble's famous rendition in London during the 1816-1817 season, the American stage prodigy John Howard Payne became obsessed with the play, producing a wildly successful original drama on the Roman theme (Brutus, 1819) reprising the concerns of Coriolanus: the relation between treason and individual liberty, the role of an elite in a democratic republic, and banishment (this last a question of particular relevance in an accelerating policy of Native removal). Britain's most famous acting team of the era, John Philip Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons, repeatedly produced the play to widespread acclaim during the Napoleonic wars—and Kemble made the play his signature role, choosing to retire from the stage in the character, influencing the neoclassical plays not only of Payne (residing in England through the period, managing a theater

and sometimes collaborating with Washington Irving), but also of James Sheridan Knowles, whose Virginius (1820), one of Forrest's favorite roles and widely played on both sides of the Atlantic, reproduces the most recognizable scenes of Shakespeare's play.³⁵

More surprisingly, the play strongly influenced original playwriting on American soil throughout the early national period, especially closet drama and the neoclassical productions of the "Philadelphia school" (Richard Penn Smith, Robert Montgomery Bird, David Paul Brown, John Augustus Stone, and Robert T. Conrad).³⁶ This group produced most of Forrest's prize plays (including the heroic melodramas—Stone's Metamora, Bird's The Gladiator and equally popular Broker of Bogota, Conrad's Jack Cade) as well as many of the most successful prize plays sponsored by other

³⁵ The Coriolan figure in Knowles' splay is the veteran Dentatus, a man who "lov'd to vent" and offers his scars as a substitute for (populist) rhetoric: "These are the vouchers of honest deeds--such is the speech with which my gray hairs keep company" (29). The play speaks to fears of demagoguery and aims itself directly at the artisanal classes. "What you build, you build," Dentatus mockingly addresses the people, "You made these decemvirs!--you are strangely discontented with your own work! and you are over-cunning workmen too. You put your materials so firmly together, there's no such thing as taking them asunder!" (27) Like Coriolanus, Dentatus receives the people's complaint of his contempt for them ("Down with him, he does nothing but insult the people," with the argument that his virtue is proved by their hate: "As to these curs, I question which I value more, their fawings, or their snarlings" (11-13). Like Shakespeare's character, he has a more politic aide who tells the crowd a version of the belly fable, pleading for civic unity.

³⁶ Montrose Moses somewhat dismissively describes the Philadelphia school's neoclassical, declamatory style as closet drama that found its way to the stage (both of them "the literary product of the educated American gentleman who knew his Shakespeare"). Surveying the strong connection between Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" and "Sertorius" (revived several times and "an unqualified success"), Moses comments that Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" and "Coriolanus" inspired "a great number of American closet dramas" (179).

actors: awarded exclusively to American playwrights, Forrest's prizes were also meant to encourage writing on native American themes, but all of them after Metamora (1829), utilized offshore historical and classical settings. Brown's Sertorius (1830), the winner of Booth's first prize competition, for example, is a close adaptation of Coriolanus in which a Roman aristocrat similarly faces a democratic mob, and Smith's Caius Marius, the second Forrest prize play (1830, first performed January 1831), draws heavily upon Shakespeare's portrait of the martial Roman.³⁷

The hero, motivated—as the review of Macready's 1825 performance in New York had it, by "rage and ungovernable passion"—was particularly suitable to a romantic recovery of the classical (hence the fascination of Byron, Hazlitt, and Beethoven with the play). It anticipates the problems of general individualism under a republican social organization. Emerson's "Uses of Great Men" lecture is saturated with the alimentary language of this Roman drama, revising and appropriating its sentiments: "The knowledge, that in the city is a man who invented the railroad, raises the credit of all the citizens. But enormous populations, if they be beggars, are disgusting, like moving cheese, like hills of ants, or of fleas—the more, the worse" (615). Like Coriolanus, Emerson's great man is to refuse corn but seek to unify the

³⁷Sertorius, among numerous other echoes, utters a version of Coriolanus's famous banishment speech: shortly after being charged to "answer to the people," Sertorius petulantly refuses to save the city from invasion by Pompey, "Ye who would banish me, now banish Pompey!" (41, emphasis original). Caius Marius, though of humbler origins than the other iterations of Coriolanus—and who, ironically, owes his position to democratic reform—repeatedly rails against popular rule, even sheltering his aristocratic enemy within his home and scorning the mob gathered outside, remarking that within his home at least his "rule is absolute; beyond that door our lordly tyrants stalk, who deal out laws to sap the springs of life. . . . I've studied hard to keep their cursed rule from passing o'er that threshold" (72).

sympathy of the crowd in his person ("Men are helpful through the intellect and the affections. Other help [such as when "you affect to give me bread and fire"], I find a false appearance."). "We must not be sacks and stomachs," Emerson urges, referring to Menenius's belly fable, in promoting hero-worship as form of sublime friendship: "that homage, very pure, as I think, which all ranks pay to the hero of the day, from Coriolanus and Gracchus, down to Pitt, Lafayette, Wellington, Webster, Lamartine." This was a transcendental refusal of rhetoric peculiarly suitable to Coriolanus: the hero creates collective agency not through persuasion but through "contagion" (626). Writing at about the same time, Melville and Parkman both saw Coriolanus as the model of the savage aristocrat, comparing John Paul Jones (in Israel Potter) and La Salle to the charismatic, genocidal hero.

Margaret Fuller, for whom the Roman ethos represented the American imperial self ("Every Roman was an emperor") held up Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Coriolanus as most representative of the type of expressive individualism in which the hero collects the general will in a transcendent individuality: "The universal heaven takes in the Roman only to make us feel his individuality the more. The Will, the Resolve of Man!--it has been expressed, --fully expressed!" (Autobiographical Romance 29-30). Emerson writes similarly, continuing to adapt the alimentary language of Shakespeare's play: heroes provide the population "the pleasure of full expression. . . which, in their private experience is usually cramped and obstructed" (620-21). To American romantics, the hero simultaneously represents the expressive individual and resolves the problems that attend a general system of expressive individualism. Emerson's hero is a force of Nature, answering alienation and self-interest: "Great men are thus a

collyrium to clear our eyes from egotism, and enable us to see other people and their works" (626).

The relative popularity of Coriolanus might be read, at first glance, in exclusively elite-republican terms, as either an instance of charismatic heroism, as a caution against radical democracy, or an object-lesson in how to avoid aggravating the mob. To an extent, for example, the spate of productions in the mid 1820s must inevitably have spoken to fears of Jackson's potential military treason, reflecting the unflattering portraits by Adams supporters of Jackson as a genocidal chieftain with aims to topple the republic. On the other hand, many Whigs apparently identified with Coriolanus and his concerns regarding the radical democratization of the republic, continuing the concern of the Federalists to preserve the governing role of "the aristocratic element." Lawrence Tennenhouse argues that parlor readings of the play such as the one depicted in Charlotte Brontë's Shirley provided the Victorian middle class with a mandate for replacing an imperious form of patriarchy with a "benevolent form of paternalism," noting that the novel's heroine instructs the industrialist that "you must not be proud to your workpeople; you must not neglect chances of soothing them, and you must not be of an inflexible nature, uttering a request as austere as if it were a command" (8-12).

Throughout the 1820s, in fact, Daniel Webster and the Whig party fought a losing battle to reassert paternal hegemony against factional politics, recirculating versions of the belly fable in support of a corporatist vision of the body politic. Emerson's inclusion of Webster in historical series with Coriolanus was apt: the Whig orator, like the Roman general, was throughout the 1820s accused by members of his own party of actively courting the hate of the plebs. Nor was Jackson, as his well-publicized

attendance at the play suggests, unwilling to court some comparison to the Roman. He cultivated the posture of the man of action, disdaining diplomacy and affecting a distaste for electioneering. Like Coriolanus ("I play the man I am"), Jackson offered the theatricalized sincerity of the heroic melodrama, affecting to accept the Presidency on his personal worth, by way of "natural" charismatic relations and not by way of rhetoric. There was in Jackson's effort to wrest the Roman ethos from the Whigs an abstract of the decade's political crisis, a legitimation contest staged in the neoclassical mood—Webster exhibiting the class-consciousness of the patriciate but only rhetorically heroic, Jackson displaying the martial virtue, but stooping unlike the Roman to show his wounds in the market-place.

But—like many elite-republican texts—the play was also pressed into service by forces seeking the radical democratization of the heroic subjectivity. As Levine, Bristol, Brodhead, and Reynolds observe, Shakespeare was common cultural property before 1840, and prior to the emergence of "high" cultural venues, different classes enjoyed different spaces in the same theater: the "Pittites" in the cheap orchestra seats did not abandon New York's Park theater when *Coriolanus* was produced there, but filled the house to overflowing, at least during Macready's 1825 engagement. The play found its largest audience in the Bowery theater, which became identified with heroic melodrama and a working-class audience after 1830—despite being produced in a version which cuts the most sympathetic portraits of the citizens (Hamblin promptbook, NYPL). In fact, the actors who were most identified with the role after 1830 and through midcentury were Thomas Hamblin, the actor-manager of the Bowery, and the darling of working-class theater patrons Edwin Forrest,

who otherwise specialized in heroes at the margins (*Metamora*, *Spartacus* and *Jack Cade*).

The appeal of the play to the Bowery audience was not the destruction of an aristocrat, nor the eventual victory of the sordid tribunes and the plebiscite, nor even the association of the Roman general with the hero of New Orleans. It was a function of their self-fashioning: they identified not with the mutinous plebs, but with the hero. Cade, the working-class revolutionary and Coriolanus, the implacable enemy of "apron-men," suggested each other, at least to the radical-democrat journalist William Leggett. The arbiter of Forrest's prize-play competitions, Leggett responded to Forrest's request that he adapt Cade for him with the suggestion that Forrest play the patrician instead for the same democratic purposes. Forrest followed Leggett's advice, first playing Cade in 1835 and debuting as Coriolanus during the bank crisis of 1837 (having in any event already starred in several contemporary dramas drawing upon Shakespeare's play). The suitability of the character for American working-class production was extrinsic to Forrest. Grimsted tells the story of a Baltimore man obviously sympathetic to the hero objecting to the assassination at the close of the play because "three on one wasn't a fair fight" (Unveiled 60): like the heroic melodrama which the popularity of "Coriolanus" preceded and informed, the indomitable bellicosity of Shakespeare's Roman hero appealed to the code of "Bowery honor" which supported the increasingly liberal democratic republicanism of the American working class—that is, if this liberalism of the streets is understood historically, as consistent with the wearing of eye-gougers on the thumbs and shin-breakers on the boots.

Working Jacksonians simultaneously identified with working-class revolutionists and with Coriolanus, the implacable enemy of their class, without tremendous contradiction. This apparent puzzle resolves itself when it is understood that the Bowery audience adopted the Roman in the field of subjectivity. They did not identify with his politics or his social standing. They identified with his refusal of limits on the self—even to the point of treason. Forrest often chose the play for benefit performances before his personality cult—the "Forrest Life Guards," who trooped to the theater in full-dress uniform. On at least one occasion, he took the opportunity of the curtain call after the play to harangue his adherents for twenty minutes on the virtues of self-reliance (McConachie 84). It was one of Forrest's own favorite characters: a larger-than-life marble statue of himself in the character dominates the hall of his mansion (now the Forrest Museum). Late in the century, the character was still identified by touring stars as one of "the Forrest roles," and his biographers concur that it was one of his best, the monodramatic focus on the hero consistent with his "elocutionary fulness" (Moses 333, 342). (Less kind critics such as Henry James described the style as a "barbarian rant.") The play appealed to Forrest because it offered a character study of the problems of the star-system under a republic: Alger wrote that in *Metamora* and *Coriolanus*, Forrest played characters closest to his own. In the latter, Alger continued, Forrest displayed an "electric affinity" between "his personal quality" and the "ideal picture" of Coriolanus: "stern virtue, ambition, deep tenderness, magnanimity, transcendent daring and pride and scorn, --the man as soldier and hero in uncorrupt sincerity and haughty defiance of everything wrong or mean" (761-762).

As "little Napoleons," the audience understood exactly the crisis of Coriolanus—who knows his worth, but does not know how to express it, except in savage contempt for the democratic republic who flatters him but who fatally asks him to flatter it in return. Coriolanus and the captains of the commons that Forrest otherwise played both achieve individuation by treason to the state and exist in a precarious, even paranoid subjectivity where to risk fellowship is to suffer betrayal. When the rhetoric of the Jacksonian frontier affirms "a world elsewhere," as Richard Poirier reminds us, these are the words of Coriolanus, drawn from his speech following his banishment by the plebiscite. Coriolanus enacted for young, male, working Jacksonian subject his sense of existing at the margins of his own democratic republic. It encouraged him to believe the accompanying promise that the seemingly endless Western frontier made it possible for him to answer the republic's removal of him to the margin with Coriolanus (and with the Native also, always removed one step ahead), banish me? No, "I banish you." The character that Melville called "the savage noble" fit seamlessly into Forrest's repertory of heroes at the margins because he exemplified for contemporaries an "aristocracy of the true democratic type" (Alger 762).

In a field of subjectivity dominated by associational life c. 1820, hegemonic forces sought through a broad field of the social (law, culture, work, domesticity, school, politics) to win consent to the emerging alternative subjectivity represented by expressive individualism. By 1830, the theater's participation in this hegemony became evident in the sudden efflorescence of heroic melodrama detailed above. But this genre did not spring wholly-formed out of the moment of Jackson's inauguration. Before 1830, working Jacksonians already saw in Coriolanus a model for extreme self-fashioning: the unprecedented (and rarely repeated) high number of

productions 1823-1827 reflected the absence of other genres in which to work out this struggle. Like the other Roman plays in vogue during the period, Coriolanus directly addressed the problems of the subject under republicanism. It offered a kind of precursor to the emergence of heroic melodrama. In fact, in the versions most widely produced 1805-1855 in America, the play was in fact very much like a heroic melodrama. Thomas A. Cooper's Coriolanus promptbook, which he used from 1805 forward and passed on to the Bowery manager Thomas Hamblin, followed in most instances the "Kemble book" which cuts the most sympathetic portraits of the citizens in order to focus more on the central character (reflecting the influence of Romantic melodrama). The Kemble version (which Forrest also followed) further includes numerous interpolations from Thompson's 18th-century adaptation of the play, adding spectacle and military pomp and enlarging the role of Volumnia into a dagger-wielding tragedy queen--which suited Sarah Siddons and Charlotte Cushman, who played the role in Forrest's first production (Shattuck, Odell). Generally speaking, the "heroic" school of acting represented by Kemble and Thomas Cooper, continued by the Bowery's Hamblin and Forrest, and for whom Coriolanus was a signature role, appealed to democratic republicans.

Featuring a defiantly expressive, oratorical delivery and melodramatic focus on a heroically-posturing character, the heroic school of acting provided a modality of individuation easily imitated by, and widely disseminated among, working Jacksonians. Coriolanus fit into Edwin Forrest's repertory after 1837 because of the cultural work already accomplished in the 1820s. In his essays and poems alike, T.S. Eliot repeatedly reached for this particular Roman as an exemplar of implacable individuality against mass culture; ironically, he could do so in large part

because the Jacksonian individualist had already struggled for the Roman ethos and won, taking Coriolanus away from the class-consciousness of elite republicans and setting him up as the exemplar of a democratic imperial self perpetually transcending associational life.

The unprecedented visibility of Coriolanus during the Jacksonian period reflects (and helps stage) the crisis in republicanism represented by ascendant liberalism. Michael Bristol, among others, has already demonstrated the vital connection between American individualism and the institutionalization of Shakespeare; as Fuller's remarks on the martial Roman indicate, Coriolanus was in antebellum America a particularly suitable topos for this crisis: when Coriolanus steels himself to face the appeals to spare Rome from his mother, sister, and child he says, "I will stand as if man were author to himself and had no other kin," articulating, of course, Emerson's later refusal ("I hate father & mother & wife & brother"). Eagleton outright labels Coriolanus a "bourgeois individualist." Indeed most contemporary critics (Fish, Adelman, Cantor) see Shakespeare's hero as a negative exemplar of extreme individualism—someone who makes, as Lars Engle observes, "extreme autonomy claims" which are not supported by the communities to which he belongs—someone who must be sacrificed, as Burke's famous essay on the play has it, because of "his overstating of our case" (89, emphasis added).

If we follow Burke's reading, the spate of Coriolanus productions 1823-1827 were symptomatic of the Jacksonian turn away from republicanism: the Roman's extreme individualism made him a scapegoat enabling Jacksonians to ritually cleanse themselves of their own treason toward communitarian practice. All of these readings underline the negotiations necessitated by individualism-in-community. Fish points out

the structural irony of Coriolanus's "independence:" his liberation from one community--Rome--is dependent on his affiliation with the Volscian community, and produces greater unfreedom; in asserting that he is independent from interlocutors, Coriolanus in fact simply wavers from one community of interlocutors to another ("My birthplace hate I," he says, "and my love's upon this enemy town," eschewing not loyalty per se, but understanding loyalty as a radically transferable affection). Many readers see the play as a struggle not just between republican and liberal values but between republicanism and liberalism per se. Cavell sees Coriolanus as an exemplar of civil privatism, a hero of emerging liberalism. Engle, more persuasively, sees him as a hero of classical republicanism who declines to accept a market-like ontology in which "both his city and his own identity" appear "as economies rather than fixed systems." Engle's reading of Coriolanus as a hard-line republican faced with ascendant market democracy speaks strongly to the historical conditions of antebellum artisans during the New York productions 1823-1827 and the play's tenure in Forrest's repertoire after the bank crisis of 1837. For journeymen and laborers with fading expectations for republican independence, Coriolanus was--like themselves--the last of his kind. As the apprentice structure gave way to the wage system, the possibilities of republican political activity shrank while the cultural technologies of liberalism-- especially melodrama--dispelled and criminalized the mysteries supporting their group life and factional agency (just as the agents of the law broke up and dispersed the craft unions supporting artisanal-republican opposition politics).

Engle's focus on the problems of a republican faced with ascendant liberalism has particular resonance with original American dramas on the Roman theme, such as Payne's Brutus (1818), Brown's Sertorius (1830), and

Bird's Caius Marius (1830) and The Gladiator (1831)—as well as Roman dramas penned across the Atlantic, but widely played in American theaters, such as Knowles's Virginius (1820). While generally described as romantic dramas, these plays—as their long currency in melodrama houses and in the repertoires of the stars of Bowery melodrama attest—served as precursor formations of the heroic melodrama, sharing much in common with the later plays. (The published version of Payne's play includes a long preface articulating a militantly anti-spectacular aesthetic, acknowledging through a tell-tale anxiety the potential convergence of romantic heroism with melodrama: "Here, yet, no chargers wheel, no foriegn slaves on ropes or scaffolds reel, no gallic amazons, half naked climb from pit to gallery—the low sublime!" [emphasis original]) In fact, these plays all attest to the struggle between liberal individualism and democratic republicanism: in most of them, the Roman citizenry is rendered as members of the mechanic or artisanal classes, many of whom, as Payne's play, has it, are "Too base, too sordid, to be bravely free" (40). In all of these plays, revolutionary republicanism—represented chiefly by mob action—bears the value of "faction," "tyranny," and "treason"—and playgoers are urged to identify with heroes both individualist and republican, producing a kind of intermediate romantic republicanism, in which loyalty to an orderly liberal-democratic state overrides the possibility of revolutionary republican activity. To the extent these plays are recognizable as tragedy (as they all are, excepting The Gladiator) they dramatize the impossibility for republican heroes of reconciling multiple loyalties under an administrative imperative—the same multiple loyalties associated with a localist, guild- and group- based ontology of mystery.

Liberty and Death!

The tragic engine of neoclassical romantic drama is the elimination of the possibility of revolutionary republicanism by a melodramatic, liberal-democratic ontology. Despite Payne's effort to write for "Shakespeare's halls" and not for the equestrian circus and French melodrama of "gallic amazons," his hero, Brutus,³⁸ begins in the misunderstood posture of the melodrama, feigning madness to survive under an unjust administration. His first soliloquy reveals his sane "self" to the audience, the longing he feels to declare himself, and the pressure that romantic nationalism applies to his performance, shaping the mode of his heroism :

... son of Marcus Junius!

When will the tedious gods permit thy soul

To walk abroad in her own majesty

And throw this vizard of thy madness from thee?

To avenge my father's and my brother's murder!

But still--There's something nobler to be done. . .

To free a groaning country--" (18)

While he willingly accepts the romantic-nationalist imperative (and the role of feigned madness that it necessitates) in his second soliloquy--"For Rome I would resign all other bonds,/ And tear each private tie from my fix'd heart" (20)--the conflict between "private ties" and the demands of state loyalty is not resolvable in this play (as it would be in melodrama). Yet, as in melodrama, the pressure to declare himself becomes overwhelming for

³⁸ Lucius Junius Brutus, who helped to defeat the Tarquins at the beginning of Rome's republic, not the Brutus who betrayed Caesar five centuries later at the inception of the imperial system of government.

Brutus, and he finally reveals his "sane" identity to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning (not dissimilarly to Nick of the Woods' declaration, "Twas I, the Jibbenainosay!") at the end of the first scene of the third act. The essence of Brutus's tragedy is that he keeps his vow to "resign all other bonds," ordering his son to repudiate his marriage to the daughter of Tarquin (or "Thou art no son of mine, thou art no Roman"), eventually ordering the trial and execution of that son as a traitor to the state.

Romantic nationalism elides uneasily in this play into administrative culture. This unease distinguishes the play from melodrama and nudges it toward tragedy. Brutus, now the himself the head of the state, replies to his daughter-in-law's plea for mercy with a bare articulation of the administrative imperative: "We try the crime --the motive, heaven will judge./ My honour he hath stabb'd--I pardon that. He hath done more--he hath betray'd his country.... And the full stream of justice must have sway" (47, emphasis original). This claim of the impersonality of judge and justice, utterly sustainable in melodrama, cannot be sustained in Brutus's romantic drama. After sending his son to execution, Brutus's curtain line, "Justice is satisfy'd and Rome is free!" is delivered, by direction of the playtext "with an hysterical burst," precipitating the character's collapse. Nonetheless, only an administrative intervention, such as that saving the naval hero from the yardarm at the close of Black-Eyed Susan, could have permitted Brutus to save the life of his son. In nautical melodrama and neoclassical romantic drama alike, the administrative imperative takes precedence: as Brutus tells his son before accepting the boy's embrace: "The violated genius of thy country / Rears its head and passes sentence on thee... tis not in the power of mortal man to save thee from the axe"(52).

Like Payne's "Brutus," most of the plays inspired by "Coriolanus" develop the problem of "private ties" under the liberal-democratic state. "Privacy" is not the problem; "ties," or affective bonds, are the problem: liberal democracy favors privacy so long as it does not involve "ties." Heroes increasingly abandon domestic, group, and community relations in favor of exaggerated claims of self-fashioning, retaining primary affective relations only to the representatives or principles of the state. The general ontology of an "aristocracy of the true democratic type," supported in the symbolic economy by a savagely expressive individualism, is elaborated socially in the sharp ascendance of increasingly meritocratic administrative culture. Legitimated by Shakespeare's character and others, immodest self-expression becomes a recognizable mode of meritocratic (democratic yet unrepublican) individuation: the character of Caius Marius, first played by Forrest in January 1831, for example, rises from (relatively) humble origins to bid for the rule of Rome upon personal merit, but retains an immodesty less extreme but similar to Ralph Stackpole's, insulting the Senate by appearing before it in his triumphal robes, and answering references to his low birth with the answer that "the greater praise is mine" because he has risen from such low beginnings and "unfoster'd," now "tower[s] toward the heavens" (58).

The claim of loyalty only to the self covers a foundational loyalty to the state, which permits liberal-democratic individual freedoms, especially those of expression, at the expense of those republican-revolutionary collective ties which alone challenge state supremacy. The accelerating conflict during the 1820s between republican virtue and liberal democracy flowers out in the prize plays of 1830, Caius Marius for Edwin Forrest and Sertorius for Booth, both of which are set at the end of the Roman republic,

when republican virtue was seen as eroded by democratic reforms enabling demagoguery, the raising of private armies, faction and--eventually--the hereditary rule of military autocrats. Historically, the democratic dissemination of heroic individualism in the U.S. is accompanied by a proportionate social investment in patriotism: romantic nationalism seeks to answer the challenge to the body politic represented by romantic individualism.

The result is a shift from a discourse of rebellion to a discourse of treason. Brown's Sertorius, subtitled "The Roman Patriot," is a case in point. The subtitle announces the problem of the play, which portrays a Sertorius substantially more loyal to Rome than the historical record suggests: a veteran of the civil wars against Sulla, the historical Sertorius voluntarily joined the Pontine league against Rome while in exile ruling Spain; in Brown's play, it is the Senate, bribed by conspirators, and people of Spain, misled by demagogues, who wish to join the Pontine league. Brown's Sertorius violently opposes this alliance as treason against Rome. But--in a complication untenable in melodrama but sustainable in romantic tragedy--his charges are answered with counter-charges, in a series of sharp confrontations with the people, that in his loyalty to Rome he is committing treason against Spain. Just as Brutus is unable to sustain private ties and patriotism, Brown's Sertorius is unable to sustain the multiple loyalties to the Spanish nation and the Roman republic--at the play's inception, the Pontine conspirators outline his dilemma: "We'll see his boasted faith [to Rome and to Spain] severely tested:/ This is a question, view it as he may,/ Between himself and country--accept or not the proffer'd league, in either he's undone...." (6-7).

The hero's actions are all undertaken to heal the multiple loyalties indicated by his evasive self-description uttered shortly before his murder by defeated Pontine sympathizers, "I am the friend of Spain, not foe of Rome" (78), a position whose unsustainability necessitates his death. While the action of the play later forces the patriotic Spanish citizens (led by a schoolmaster, a cobbler, and a gallowsmaker) to completely recant, the initial encounter between Sertorius and the people allows a large sympathy for their nationalist ambition to escape Roman colonial domination. The schoolmaster Mucius occupies the position of the Richard Parkers of nautical melodrama, reminding the citizens in crisis that he's liable to hang for his speech regardless of the war's outcome, "and all because I said for you, what you were not able to say for yourselves" (40). Like Parker, he states the citizens' hopes simply and with earnest patriotism, "We would unite with Pontus--join this league/'Gainst haughty Rome, our deadly enemy,/ And drive her armies from our blood-stain'd shores!" (34). Sertorius's sneering response to this "inglorious faction" of tradespeople and artisans who, he--evidently incorrectly and unjustly--asserts, "no tie can bind but that of Mammon," is effectively and with dignity answered by the schoolmaster, in clearly Jacksonian terms: "We are the freemen of the soil, Sertorius." Sertorius, enraged, replies, "Peace, magpie! Say rather that ye are the soil of freemen--/The rank, foul compost whence sedition springs." This alimentary insult, that the people are the excretion of freemen, and the manure nourishing faction and treason, points at the people, but also back to Sertorius himself, who freely acknowledges that he was raised "to power and station" upon "the people's love" (14).

The play exploits, rather than resolves, the deep paradoxes in Sertorius's posture: owing his place to popular support, he goes on to

excoriate the "tyranny of slaves" who "lord it o'er the aristocracy / which nature form'd [to] govern" (35). Despite these provocations, Mucius continues to speak moderately:

We claim the privilege to speak our griefs.
Thou hast, by over-wrought authority,
Bow'd down the senate to thy sovereign will,
And sacrificed our rights to love of Rome. (35-36)

Only after Sertorius further elevates his anti-democratic abusiveness, does Mucius at last conclude, "Thou wilt not hear us: / Then in the face of Spain I call thee traitor! And summon thee to answer to the people" (36). Upon this dilemma the drama turns--Sertorius, choleric, explodes, "Dost hear, Marcellus, they proclaim me traitor!" (37, emphasis original)--a multiple loyalty is equally impossible on either side. It is one of the play's many virtues that this complexity remains unresolvable. From the point of view of the patriotic Spanish citizen, Sertorius's loyalty to Rome is a "private tie;" from the point of view of the Roman administrator, the Spaniard's nationalism is equally a "private" bond. In the absence of an (associational) ontology enabling the negotiation of multiple loyalties, all parties become liable to a charge of treason.

With Sertorius, the subject emerges as a subject-in-public under the sign of treason. Under the administrative imperative of the ascendant liberal-democratic ontology, subjects enjoy expanded democratic liberties, regardless of their station--but are equally, always and already, potentially treasonous in the enjoyment of those expanded liberties. Yet while the grounds of treason expand with democratic liberties, the fact of treason becomes markedly less offensive. Brown's Jacksonian Sertorius--unlike Payne's early-republican Brutus, but like Shakespeare's Coriolanus, who he

closely resembles--is, in fact, soft on treason. As when Coriolanus, banished, promptly led an enemy army on Rome, Sertorius, on the brink of banishment, remarks: "By Hercules! 'twere worth a little treason/ To purge the country" (37), a position foreshadowed by his response to his daughter's support of the Pontine league: "We almost love the treason--for the traitor" (27), a remark strongly differentiating him from stern Brutus. In Brown's play, the charge of treason becomes tactical and not absolute, a marker for shifting ascendancies of power and administrative control. The charge of treason floats freely, and anyone can be discovered a traitor at any time. Both Sertorius and the popular faction occupy positions that legitimate their charges of treason against the other, and both are forced by the action of the play to abandon those postures. The schoolmaster recants his criticism of Sertorius, even abjuring all political action ("if hereafter you find me, thrusting my head and ears into the political concerns of the realm, may I ... be whipped to death by my own pupils" [59]); for his part, exactly as he has sworn not to do, Sertorius joins the Pontine league, leading the Spanish troops into battle against Roman armies ("To fall, or flourish, in the cause of Spain!"[47])--as a result, facing new charges of treason by the Roman generals Pompey and Metullus (52).

Nor does Sertorius's victory clarify administrative relations. In triumph, Sertorius repudiates political life himself, celebrating love and domesticity in a paean to his wife: "How worthless is the pomp of the world's flattery, when compar'd with thee... by thee I steer, And shun the rocks and shoals of treachery"(63). The play's unresolvable ideological murkiness, which it shares with the other neoclassical dramas penned during the decade (along with the centrality of the discourse of treason), is clear on only one point: political life necessitates treason. It anticipates the

penalty that melodrama places on political action and drives the political actor from a republican external honor reinforced by group life that Sertorius mourns ("To-day--I am degraded by the state,/ Despoil'd of outward honour, and despis'd" [32]) toward the interior ethos articulated by his wife, in which "uncertainty,/ Through whose vast maze and labyrinths of doubt/ The anxious soul, in never-ending grief, explores its fate" (66). All of the play's political actors discover themselves traitors, compromised in their group loyalties, and all of them abjure political action. Like melodrama, the play drives the ambiguity and complexity of social relations inward, locating mystery in the individual-- a "privacy" uninflected by the "ties" associable with conspiracy toward political agency.

In fact, the play actively addresses the social problems (for ascendant liberal democracy) of the republican recovery of guild mystery, and the associational life supported by it. It tries to wrestle guild mysteries and the factions they support in a right relation to administrative culture--and fails. The group of citizens favoring the Pontine league is characterized in much greater detail than the precursor citizens of Shakespeare's Coriolanus, featuring a representative schoolmaster, a cobbler, or (trade-organized) high artisan, and gallows-maker, or low (independent) artisan. In a bit of Shakespearean low comedy introducing the characters early in the play, Flavius the gallows-maker poses a riddle on the likeness of the others' professions to each other, featuring an extended byplay on the contemporary (i.e, circa 1800-1833) recovery of the term "mysteries" to denote the trades, stumping the schoolmaster and finally explaining, "Why thy mystery is supply furniture for the head, being a schoolmaster, or pedagogue; and his, is to furnish the feet, being a shoemaker, or cobbler" (10). The "brave confederation" of these mysteries represent the factions

which Sertorius so violently excoriates, but also retains the positive valence of the schoolmaster's Jacksonian reply ("We are the freemen of the soil").

The partial dignity which this alliance of the artisanal and clerical classes enjoys suggests that the play wishes to find a way to sustain the mysteries of associational life in a non-factional relationship to the body politic. The failure of this initiative (and the dignity supporting it) is indicated at the crisis caused by the invasion of Pompey's legions, in which the crowd of guild members abruptly repudiates faction. In the same instant, they experience "mystery" as confusion, not agency, and articulate the melodramatic demand for clarification: "ALL. To the Forum!--the explanation!--to the Forum!" (40). Consciousness is increasingly shaped by melodrama and oriented, even in the interior experience of mystery, toward administrative values of clarity, loyalty, and consistency of individual expression with bureaucratic communication: "Our doubts," the play insists with an eerie, premonitory, Orwellian eloquence, "are traitors" (57).

In these native-authored neoclassical romantic dramas, the most influential precursors of American heroic melodrama, the cultural pressure toward melodramatic modalities of being and knowing leaves a deep and traceable imprint. Smith's Caius Marius (1830) shares a broad intertextuality with Sertorius, composed in the same year for rival prize competitions by fellow playwrights of the Philadelphia school, set in the same historical moment (the historical Sertorius supported Caius Marius against Sulla in the civil wars), both drawing heavily on Coriolanus; and the first production of Smith's play bearing a prologue by his close colleague Brown. Smith's play even more precipitously delivers a republican hero into tragedy by way of ascendant liberal democracy.

The play's vexed relation to democratic rule is evident in its composition history, partially visible in the Westlake edition (1968): in the first scene, Brown's manuscript shows repeated alterations in a speech by the sympathetic aristocratic Metellus that laments the decline of republican virtue under liberalism ("voices [votes] are now sold like merchandise/ And yet we boast of liberty"): in Smith's hand, the aristocrat's sneer at the people is first rendered "foul-breath'd citizens," then changed to "foul-breath'd artizans"; finally another hand in pencil alters the passage to "foul-mouth'd demagogues," altering the sense and softening the anti-democratic tone (45, n.12). Caius Marius features in the play as a self-made man. Historically, Marius rose from the equestrian class; the play exaggerates the trajectory of his ascendance, emphasizing his Jacksonian rusticity (and underlining his rise to the consulship through military achievement in order to suggest the occupant of the White House in the year the drama was authored): the play's first scene makes reference to the originally local Philadelphia phenomenon of burlesque militia parades (cf. Davis), allowing an aristocratic commentator to compare Marius's triumphal procession to a "mock parade" of a "would-be hero" (44-46). Unlike Brown's play, Smith's production reserves the grossest abuse of the citizenry to aristocratic characters, and allots to Marius occasional populist tours de force, as when, charged with "Treason to the senate" by Metellus, Marius answers resoundingly, "Justice to the people!" (63).

While the play's initial democratic pietisms are frequent (Marius observes of the people that, "as from them all power originates/ Into their hands all power must be return'd"), they are rapidly complicated. While sheltering an aristocratic rival in his house, Marius excoriates the "cursed rule" of the people, sardonically describing the mob outside his door as "our

lordly tyrants" (72). In fact, Marius's judgement of the people varies according to their support of him. When the war with Sulla goes badly and the sovereign people seek to restore "liberty" by executing him as a traitor, Marius scorns them ("unhand me, cowards, slaves and dogs" [85]; "the first who dares pollute my body with his slavish hands, dies" [95]), and offers counter-charges of treason: "The soldiers and the people both turn'd traitors!/ Is there no act can touch the heart of man with gratitude!" [89]. Yet when Marius escapes from prison and himself leads a popular uprising, he offers this democratic encomium: "There's virtue in the people, still, by Mars!/ I've said it oft; their rulers are to blame,/ And not the people—they are honest still" (102).³⁹

Marius assigns quasi-administrative status to the people and as a result closely occupies the misunderstood posture of the melodramatic hero, whose chief task is to rectify his personal relationship with that inconstant, democratic administrative authority. The measure of administrative virtue, as in melodrama, is its ability to place the individual in right relation to authority, and Marius's complaints are never of the citizens' mistreatment of Rome, but only of himself: "Deserted!" he cries, "I've treated them as brothers. The meanest in the ranks has shared my crust" (85). Despite his very occasional republican pietisms ("All private griefs/ Be merged in public good"), Marius is less concerned with the body politic than his own carcass ("the first who dares pollute my body with his slavish hands, Dies"). The tragic dimension of this play is a republican hero's descent into the politics of liberalism signalled by the shift in focus from the health of the body politic to the individual person of the hero—when he accuses the soldiers

³⁹ These lines, originally assigned to Marius, are in the manuscript cut from him and later assigned to Sulpitius altering the sentiment (107).

and people of "treason," he means treason to himself and not the state. For Marius, it is never a question of whether he has betrayed his country, but how to right the wrong of his country's betrayal of him. Brown's Sertorius is deeply vexed by the necessity of treason to his political life; Smith's Caius Marius has no qualms about his treason whatever. The tragic action of the play is the extinction of republican virtue precipitated by Marius's inevitable decline into the posture of the liberal-democratic "imperial self," a subjectivity predicated on the destruction of "private ties" indicated by self-authorship and the escape to the "world elsewhere."

Marius begins as an exemplar of revolutionary, republican fraternity, achieving his position by fraternizing with "the meanest of the ranks" and the assistance of his cohort Sulpitius, who leads a private army dubbed the "anti-Senate." Early on, he offers paeans to "the goddess, Liberty," and articulates a wish to make the lords of the realm regret their disdain for "honest artisans." He is willing to offer himself as a sacrificial hero against the administrative status quo: "I shall not change my ways altho' they prove/ Offensive to the laws and the law makers" (58), even if it means his death, asserting that if he could once "hear man assert before th'assembl'd world/ That freedom is his birthright--then great Jove/ Thy shaft may strike--I ask no more" (68). But this beginning, in the rhetoric and armed association of revolutionary republicanism, goes sadly awry.

He ends in a paranoid state of individuation in which fraternity appears as an impossible risk to selfhood. He ends completely unable to imagine affective relations as anything other than hostile: "The world conspires my fall," he trumpets, "the elements/ Take part against me; the ocean in affright/ Repels me from her bosom, and the earth/ Trembling beneath my tread denies a refuge" (95). In this paranoid state, Marius

tumbles toward the play's crisis in the full-blown misanthropy of Shakespeare's Richard III, shouting, "O, that the human race had but one neck/My foot should soon be on it" (114). Like Coriolanus he marches on the city in a rage against the citizens' ingratitude: vowing "to tear down every tower and temple, to kill all," even "the husband in wife's embrace; the trembling daughter clinging to her sire. And e'en the infant at the mother's breast" (89). Unlike Coriolanus, he is not softened by the appeal of those to whom he has "private ties," and captures the city, distributing an arbitrary vengeance, even stabbing a defenceless prisoner. Directing his vengeance at the institutions and relations of affective bonds, temple and home, parent and child, Marius appears no longer as a hero of republican virtue but as the mad avenger of the coming liberal-democratic state, both instantiating the paranoid subject of modern heroic individualism, and acting as the agent for the general distribution of that (a)political subjectivity, destroying the possibility for others of the ties he has himself repudiated.

The ideological complexities of these plays cannot be resolved: mourning the decline of republican virtue in the 1820s, they also argue that the turn away from revolution into the problems of administration leaves political actors little choice. Caius Marius does not choose liberalism; it is thrust upon him by the failure of republican values to sustain relations in a democratically-organized community. His turn into paranoid individualism is initiated when his republican companions betray him: his rage at their ingratitude conceals his pain at the loss of the affective relation. His gathering madness is finally fixed in one of the most affecting scenes in the play, when the rage has dissolved and he expresses his individuation in terms of naked pain. Denied shelter in North Africa by his former army companions (by the same logic of republican virtue that Marius himself

employed in abandoning Metellus to his fate): refused sanctuary, pursued by the troops of his rival, Marius goes mad, fails to recognize his wife, and says to her, "If thou art kindred to the human race, begone. Such creatures I abjure. They are not honest. Hence, you but disturb my mind" (114). Marius does not choose the world elsewhere; he simply has nowhere else to go.

Marius's republicanism is driven inward by the revolutionary fraternity's withdrawal from him. "Deserted," he is a would-be republican in a liberal-democratic world: his death sentence is pronounced by his military rival, who under the sham of popular rule smirkingly articulates the administrative prerogative ("Why fall your sharp reproofs upon me... since I make not the laws, nor yet enforce them"). His only possible destination is interior, a destination that can only destroy an other-directed, fraternal character, and he remains mad, a "vain boaster," throughout the bloody victory that precedes his death, recovering his sanity only on the instant of his suicide, articulating the possibility of "Freedom, freedom, freedom/ With the Gods!" and not in this "abject world" (132). In a remarkable redaction of the revolutionary motto "Liberty or Death," Smith has his hero and his colleague Sulpitius choose "Liberty and Death," a redaction that serves as the latter's last words (Marius reiterates them twice to underline the point), and which imagines the evaporation of the possibility of republican political action.

The ideological tensions between liberal democracy and republicanism remain active in these native-authored romantic dramas of the 1820s, that socially unresolved tension in one form or another providing the tragic energy of each of the plots. On the one hand, the irresolvability of that tension argues persuasively for Jacksonian individualism as a cultural emergent and not yet as a cultural dominant: the tragedies fail to contain

liberal-democratic values and everywhere show the ascendancy of them, but republican alterity—though strongly challenged—remains deeply ingrained in the plays' economy of values and political logic. On the other hand, the irruption of a new genre—heroic melodrama—largely free of the ideological complexity of the romantic dramas, and dedicated to circulating liberal-democratic discipline, argues for the extreme pressure that a radically liberal democracy was placing on cultural production. There is no "transition" from romantic tragedy on classical themes to heroic melodrama, despite lines of influence between the two genres. Romantic tragedy answered the structure of feeling which saw both elite and artisanal republicans imagining themselves as the "last of their kind" in a new social organization, a social re-organization troubling to elites because more democratic and equally troubling to artisans because liberal. By contrast, heroic melodrama erupted to answer the new, more widespread feeling of individuals that they were "one of a kind" under a democratically-distributed rhetoric of rights, individuality, and personal worth. But while the generic rupture is clear, the relation between the structures of feeling that they differently answered is complex: the honor, worth, and perquisites of the "last of their kind" offered a starting point for the (as yet) largely-unimagined content of the characters of those beginning to see themselves as "one of a kind." The unique individual begins as a subformation of the heroic exception: the paranoid style of American subjectivity, violently expressing personal worth in the asocial, emerges in the posture of heroes who like Caius Marius can no longer take the risk of fraternity.

Chapter Four

A Necessary Treason:

The Subject of Mystery in Cooper and Sedgwick

The startling working-class popularity of *Coriolanus* (and melodramatic productions of romantic dramas in classical settings drawing upon it) makes the most sense when it is read alongside the prevalence of other "last of the kind" cultural formations such as Forrest's heroic melodramas and Cooper's novels. In Forrest's version of *Coriolanus*, the play resonated with the ethos of the noble savage: when the first night of his first production of the play went poorly, he salvaged the run by presenting a remarkable hybrid drama on the second night, interleaving scenes of *Coriolanus* with excerpts from *Metamora* (Odell 4: 197; Moody 173). The chiasmic identification of savage noble/ noble savage in Forrest and in these two roles was not contained by him: it preceded him, informed him, made him possible. In the aftermath of the success of Forrest's first prize play, *Metamora* (1829), Philadelphia-school playwrights Brown and Smith immediately and quite "naturally" won the next year's two prize competition by turning to *Coriolanus*. Novelists Catharine Sedgwick and Fenimore Cooper, in their own versions of King Philip's War, had already similarly, "naturally" turned to

Shakespeare's Rome and specifically to Coriolanus: Sedgwick's Hope Leslie (1827) and Cooper's The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish (1829) both explicitly draw upon the play's cultural capital and develop Native heroes on the model of the implacable Roman at the mercy of a mobocracy and troth-breaking Puritan tribune-demagogues. The interpolation of Shakespeare's Coriolanus with white representations of Native heroism was an important Jacksonian cultural formation, intended by no one, shared by everyone through the common symbolic order, and not an accident of Edwin Forrest's repertoire. The period of the play's first popularity in New York theaters, 1823-1827, not only saw the publication of Cooper's first three Leatherstocking tales, it also initiated the widespread appearance of Native Americans performing war dances and orations on the same stages as a curiosity, and the appearance of Native American autobiography as a major genre of masculine self-fashioning (Sweet).

This identification participates in and extends the 18th-century identification of the native with the neoclassical (Sollors), and the particular deployment of the Native American as a "rhetorical surrogate" in democratic strains of republicanism in the U.S. after the 1790s (MacGregor 392). Through the figure of the Native, democratic republicans gained access to the neoclassical symbology previously reserved to elite republicans, typified by the cool, Augustan representations of Washington widespread throughout the early national period. Precisely because the "nobility" of the indigenous people was, as Roy Harvey Pearce described it, "an inferior kind of nobility" (79), it was more available to the non-elite imagination. Like the savage, the working man could only be one of "nature's noblemen." But by gaining access to the noble savage, the antebellum democrat created a standpoint where it was possible to bid for the neoclassical symbolic

underpinning the nobility of republican elites. The relationship between the savage noble and the noble savage in antebellum American cultural production was intrinsic to the cultural project of creating an "aristocracy of the democratic type." This democratic "aristocrat" would be both American (hence the utility of the Native) and noble (hence the necessity of capturing the cultural currency of the Roman). The suitability of melodrama's expressive individualism to achieving this initially tenuous cultural amalgam is audible in the newly-legitimated savagery of expression in melodramatic heroes such as Ralph Stackpole ("I'm a gentleman, and my name's fight!"): however barbarous (immodest and undisciplined) their expressivity, these melodramatic heroes—unlike the "avengers" splintered away from the main trunk of heroism and doomed to extinction—observe noble (disciplined) codes of action.

The changing emphasis placed on the social dimension of Native life in white representations of the Native illustrates changes in dominant colonial and early national attitudes toward democracy. Colonial representations emphasizing the non-individuality of the (demonic) tribe gave way to revolutionary representations underscoring the fraternity and equality of the Native social organization—in, most especially, the secret-society Native masquerade of the revolutionary Sons of Liberty and early-national Tammany Society. Early-national representations emphasizing romantic Native heroes at the head of insurrections (e.g. the overtly Miltonic war councils of Eastburn and Sands's 1822 Yamoyden) gave way to heroism-as-solitude as liberal individualism became the dominant strain of democratic thought. Heroic melodrama (and its precursor formations, such as Coriolanus and its corollaries, such as Cooper's novels) took up and transformed these two most active and interlocking topoi of the American

citizenship discourse. Before 1820, the Roman and the Native had previously carried the values of revolutionary civic virtue: the positive agency of participation, integration, and engagement. After 1830, under melodrama, they implied instead the liberal agency of standing alone: the solitary savage and the independent Roman. The cultural work of the melodramatic made it possible for the pleb to scorn the plebiscite, the citizen to scorn the city.

The exceptionalism which dominates Fuller's melodramatically-inflected perception of the Native circa 1840 testifies to the complete transition of the Native from a tribal figure to an exemplar of heroic individualism. Fuller's account (in "Summer on the Lakes") of the "Pottawattamies" of "Milwaukie" and environs takes the categorical and highly theatrical association with Rome entirely for granted. After describing the destitution of the tribe (later she calls it a "mob"), she individuates two figures:

An old theatrical-looking Indian stood with arms folded, looking up to the heavens, from which the rain dashed and the thunder reverberated; his air was French-Roman, that is, more romanesque than Roman. . . . With them in Milwaukie, was a chief, the finest Indian figure I saw, more than six feet in height, erect, and of a sullen, but grand gait and gesture. He wore a deep red blanket, which fell in large folds from his shoulders to his feet, did not join in the dance, but slowly strode through the streets, a fine sight, not a French-Roman, but a real Roman. He looked unhappy, but listlessly unhappy, as if he felt it was of no use to strive or resist. (141-142)

Fuller's romantic portraiture of the Native offers a near-complete elision of Native difference in the neoclassical. The pathos attending both figures proceeds from their relation to Rome; the first only "French-Roman," the second, though "a real Roman" in his person, his blanket wrapping him like a toga, nonetheless appears alienated by his circumstances from the imperious subjectivity emblemized by Coriolanus and Julius Caesar ("Every Roman was an emperor"). Melodrama pervades this romantic recovery of the neoclassical. Appearing in their individual character, and not their tribal relation, these pictures rely on the familiar postures of the "wooden Indian"—arms crossed, standing apart—disseminated in the curtain tableaux of the melodrama. Signally, these characters communicate themselves by way of gesture: in stage plays and cultural production generally before the mid 1820s, the ethos of the Native stood for eloquence (viz. the wide distribution of Logan's address, the speeches of Tecumseh and others, and the performance of Native orations in schools and on the public stage), but after this period, the sign of the Native increasingly was action (captured in frozen gesture) rather than eloquence, standing for the theatricalized sincerity of the melodramatic hero. Beginning with *Metamora*, and rapidly increasing thereafter, the Native resorted to monosyllables, pidgin English and grunts ("How!"). Eloquent in gesture but increasingly only in gesture, the wooden Indian typifies the pathos of the melodramatic hero. Challenged to speak himself before administrative authority, the Native remains perpetually mute: while his gesture tells the spectator that the Native exists in wrong relation to authority, his muteness also signals to the spectator that that relation will never be rectified. Fuller's picture of the Native depends utterly on the melodramatic convention that

the spectator understands the language of gesture, but authority does not: the Native's body is at once perfectly legible and perfectly inefficacious.

By stripping eloquence from white representations of the Native, as Fuller's concluding sentence suggests, the melodramatic reduces the potential rebel to a figure of "resistance," shifting the frame from remaking social relations to resisting the re-making of the self. The explicitly Miltonic representations of the Native as a compelling Lucifer before the mid 1820s (Yamoyden, Ponteach) portray a figure that really might alter white-Native relations. The rebel leader re-makes the social, or has the chance of it. But the neoclassical "last of the kind" representations that predominate after Cooper's success focus instead on a stoic repudiation of an inevitable social order. Whether brazenly defiant, nobly melancholy or, as Fuller has it, "listlessly unhappy," the represented Native no longer offers a serious challenge to the social: the only motivation to "strive or resist" is to preserve the dignity of the individual. Representations of the Native share into the interiority articulated by Caius Marius after his genocidal vow to murder the women and children of Rome, a terrible oath through which he fashions his implacable resistance: "I rise regenerate--Antaeus like;/ And though they heap a slavish world upon me/ It shall not make me groan, much less crush me" (90). The "world elsewhere" is the interior world of resistance--not rebellion. The wooden Indian featured in Fuller's description is the ekphrastic realization of the white-constructed "wouldn't Indian"--who wouldn't convert, wouldn't civilize, wouldn't negotiate, wouldn't remove, and was therefore rightly exterminated (if not by Providence then by the "natural" progress of history). This wooden figure did not, of course, represent Natives to themselves, it represented the Native to whites as a model for self-fashioning, and in the "listless" resistance of Fuller's "real

Roman," we see the ideologeme of white representations of the Native in the first flush of that ideologeme's maturity--the individual who "wouldn't."

The shift from rebellion (the social agency of an association) to resistance (an individual's refusal of social encroachments on the self) is the product of a melodramatic ontology in which neither characters nor administrations change --only the relationship of characters to administrations--so that rebellion is framed out of the field of possibility and the aim of resistance is to achieve an audience with authority. The subjectivity of the "wouldn't Indian" became widely available during the "American Renaissance" period as an important alternative to the socially-engaged posture of associational life. This liberal, middle class posture, of course, doesn't describe the Native--it describes Melville's law clerk, and the vast class of young Americans entering an increasingly administrated life. The conviction that participation is futile reverberates in Bartleby's bleak "I prefer not," and the production of that preference, and the melodramatic ontology supporting it, is genealogically traceable to the hegemonic forces that produced "Metamora" and "Coriolanus" (the "wouldn't Roman," whose implacability was realized in white marble) as interpellated heroes of the same decade.

The change from Satanic representations of the Native to Coriolan representations of the Native articulates the early-national and Jacksonian shift from a discourse of rebellion to a discourse of treason. Liberal individualism produces subjects incorporated in perennial resistance to corporatism--a kind of institutionalized treason to the administrative tyranny of the democratic republic. The problem of melodrama--realizing the identity known to the self but unknown to authority--legitimizes the pursuit of self-interest against administrations, until the scene of recognition

(re-cognition, or the changing of the administrative mind) forgives and resolves that treason by altering the relationship between itself and the traitor. Individual treason is both necessary and intolerable to the life of the liberal-democratic republic, in which individual pursuits must be made to reconcile with the interests of the whole through various invisible agencies. These include the logic of the market and the heroic ontology of melodrama, which asks the subject to emerge from all relations into a primary connection with administrative authority: the purported betrayal of the state is in fact the state's greatest support, so long as that betrayal remains the betrayal of an individual and not a group. The implacable and solitary resistance of the Coriolan Native offers a satisfyingly impolitic and bellicose model of treasonous, implacable resistance to the democratic state--that, repudiating association, fails to challenge the state itself. The "problem" of achieving an ironist's standpoint to the melodramatic ontology of mass culture is itself the ideological product of mass culture. The collective production of rights-based heroic individuality under liberal-democratic capitalism produces both its heroes and its heroes' tasks.⁴⁰

Neoclassical and Native heroes had an immense utility to liberal individualism and its melodramatic cultural formations in the late 1820s. Discussing religion as a social instrument of authority in the English Renaissance, Greenblatt comments that the late sixteenth century, atheism was not "literally unthinkable" but that it "was almost always thinkable only

⁴⁰ Recently Richard Rorty appears to be emphasizing solidarity over contingency: in a contribution to the New York Times Sunday Magazine (September 29, 1996) dedicated to imagining the future, he envisions a social utopia achieved by resurrecting fraternalism through the illiberal social instruments of trade unions and churches ("Fraternity Reigns: The case for a society based not on rights but on unselfishness," 155-158).

as the thought of another" (22). The same was true of treason in post-revolutionary America: treason was not thinkable as the thought of a white republican of any class, only as the thought of another. But as liberalism became ascendant, "another" became—under elite romantic orientalism and democratic melodrama—"an Other." With a promiscuous orientalism, melodrama encouraged republican citizens to play at treason—to think the thoughts of treason in untrammelled, indomitable subjectivity. Melodrama asked, and continues to ask, citizens to forsake citizenship (in primary relation to other citizens) and become "free" subjects (in primary relation to administrative authority), free like Emerson, Melville, and Whitman, to think, speak, and even celebrate the implacable treason alien to themselves but "natural" to Others. The melodrama enabled liberalism to convert citizens to subjects under a reconstruction of republicanism's symbolic order that jettisoned revolutionary fraternity (treason-in-association) and replaced it with self-actualization (treason to association). Liberal democracy urges every citizen to betray the revolution, like Napoleon, but to become a heroic individual (in the modality described as universal to the Western subject by Charles Taylor, emerging out of webs of association) rather than a republican hero, the foremost individual of an association.

Removals and Refusals

To be describable as a social ontology, the melodramatic must 1) have circulated beyond the melodrama, and 2) be distinguishable from other dramatic accounts of social reality. Two novels of the 1820s anticipate the work of the melodrama in seeking to more democratically distribute the

heroic subjectivity. Both Hope Leslie (1827) and The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish (1829) are historical novels set, like Forrest's Metamora, in the Pequot wars of the seventeenth century. Anticipating Forrest's interpolation of the two roles, both works unite the Native with the neoclassical in the figure of Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Both Cooper and Sedgwick were themselves elite republicans with reservations regarding Jacksonian democracy, and each creates "solitary savages" who wilfully choose the asocial as an expression of their heroic repudiation of a state led by (Puritan) demagogues. Sedgwick's novel ultimately refuses to endorse the melodramatic ontology explored therein (asserting an alternatively theatrical account of social agency), while Cooper's novel, written during his stay in France, shows a markedly melodramatic organization and hospitality to the melodramatic ontology of liberal-democratic statism.

Cooper's The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish is an early instance of the dispersal of the melodramatic into other forms of cultural production, and the corresponding contribution by those other forms to an heroic variant of that melodrama. His earlier books had already made the fortune of at least one melodramist (Edward "The Terrible" Fitzball), and this novel entered the Bowery Theater in an adaptation by Louisa Medina (Thomas Hamblin's companion) in 1834, becoming the second most popular play of that season in the repertoire of its star, Madame Celeste (the most celebrated melodramatic actress of the season), and remaining the third most popular of the next (Shank 397). (Tellingly, in adapting the novel for a female star, Medina appears to have interpolated into Cooper's tale matter from Hope Leslie and Hobomok.) The book was hospitable to melodramatic adaptation in large part because it self-consciously compared its narrative logic to the drama:

If the pen of the compiler, like that we wield, possessed the mechanical power of the stage, it would be easy to shift the scenes of this legend as rapidly and effectively as is required for its right understanding, and for the proper maintenance of its interest. That which cannot be done with magical aid of machinery, must be attempted by less ambitious, and we fear by far less efficacious means. (267)

Cooper's fascination with, and attempt to reproduce textually, the sensation-producing machinery and techniques of the melodrama is evident throughout the book. The first half of the narrative, for example, revolves almost entirely about a two-story blockhouse in the center of a remote Puritan fortified settlement. As if placed on center stage, this structure organizes nearly all of the themes and action of the story's first part.

Simultaneously mechanical agent and "secret place," the blockhouse represents the Heathcote family's military domination of the valley (through a piece of artillery mounted there), and also the spiritual dominion of the patriarch, Captain Mark Heathcote: the blockhouse is his place of prayer and contemplation, to which no one is admitted until the capture of the Native youth Conanchet requires a place of incarceration and interrogation. This "anchoritish" retreat at the center of the settlement is searched by Cavalier agents of the Restoration who suspect Heathcote of treason, and it is also the place where the doubling between Heathcote and Conanchet is accomplished, through long private sessions in which the Puritan heroically labors to convert the Native and in which the Native heroically resists. Finally, under Native assault, the family retreats to this secret place and then—at the climax of a battle which Cooper takes one hundred pages to

describe, miraculously appears to vanish before the astonished eyes of their enemies. Eventually, this piece of stage-magic is explained: under cover of the smoke of the burning structure, the family has escaped from the upper story into the stone column of a well driven through both floors even as the Indians occupied the lower story and surrounded the building. The Natives believe that the Puritan god has spirited them away, and taking two captives who failed to find refuge in the blockhouse with them, thereafter avoid the place as a totem of Puritan spiritual power. Like the barber-chair/meat grinder at the center of Sweeney Todd or the special effects of a Schwarzenegger movie (or more contemporaneously, the two-story inn necessary to productions of the popular murder-melodrama Jonathan Bradford), Cooper's blockhouse operates as stage-machinery that is vital--and not accessory--to the narrative.

The character-organization is similarly explicitly melodramatic. Captain Heathcote's one-time rebel comrade appears early in the story as the Nameless figure familiar to the stage, whose name ("Submission") is not revealed to the reader for more than a hundred pages and whose identity as one of the Roundheads who condemned Charles to death (or "helped to take the scalp of a great Sagamore") is concealed for most of the tale. The figure hints at his relationship to Heathcote by what the narrator describes as "dumb-show" in which the stranger stands before Heathcote "like one courting a strict and meaning examination of his person" (46). This melodramatic recognition scene is repeated several times over in the story's second half, which begins many years after the destruction of the blockhouse. After a lengthy captivity, the yeoman Whittal Ring is recaptured by white soldiers. He inhabits a Native costume (and more important, Native subjectivity, bearing the name and consciousness of

"Nipset, a Narragansett," so that he neither knows "himself" or his family). His very race is debated by Puritan experts, until he is recognized by his sister: "This is no plotting miscreant but a stricken innocent!" (288). The other captive, Ruth Heathcote, similarly remains unrecognized (because unconscious of herself as "Ruth") until her Native husband (like Child's Hobomok) returns her to her family and commands them to recognize her: "He telleth a mother to know her child!" (387).

Both of these returned captives face the melodramatic problem of speaking themselves: neither of them know themselves any longer as Puritans, and the challenge of their return is to answer the recognition of their family with a recognition of their Puritan "selves." While both recover their ability to speak English, neither can communicate their now-complicated identities to their families or Puritan authorities, and both are driven to gestural expression--what the narrator describes alternately as "eloquent and artless gesture" (407) and disgusting but expressive pantomime" (412). When, after the execution of her Native husband, Ruth Heathcote at last completes the circle of recognition by speaking the single word "Mother!", she regains her Puritan identity but loses all memory of her Native life, transported back to the mental age of the time of her capture. In recovering the ability to speak "herself," she really only recovers the ability to speak her "self" under Puritan authority: her life as the white "bond-woman, the servitor, the wife of a savage!" (315) and the mother of his son is not tenable in the Puritan community. Ruth speaks her Puritan self briefly, loses her Native experience, and dies (becoming in her death the book's title figure, "the wept," or mourned, of the valley of Wept-ton-Wish). Even Ruth's mother cannot look on her grandchild with tenderness, and her maternal feelings are dramatized as repugnant to the family. The Puritans cannot

recognize Ruth as Narramattah. Correspondingly, as Narramatah, Ruth cannot recognize her Puritan relations (or, more importantly), their social authority. The problem of Ruth Heathcote/ Narramatah was historical: returned captives, including women like Mrs. Jemison, often failed to reintegrate and either lived on the margins of the white community or chose to return to Native lifeways.

Cooper's resolution of this historical problem is, under melodrama, the only possible answer. Historically, persons can live like Mrs. Jemison, in incomplete recognition of authority; under melodrama, they cannot. In this and more especially his Leatherstocking novels, Cooper has a great deal invested in showing how the white can (and ought) emerge into a subject-position bearing some of the virtues he ascribes to the Native. The virtual non-participation in the plot by the book's title character (and her convenient demise) instantiates some of the difficulty which the melodramatic ethos imposes on this goal. (So does Natty Bumppo's virtual non-participation in white society.) Similarly, *Wept's* plot fails under melodrama to resolve the fate of Whittal Ring who, like Ruth Heathcote, experiences his Puritan and Native identities as incommensurate, inhabiting them alternatively—emerging into speech when he "knows" himself as Ring, lapsing into mute gestural expressivity when he knows himself as Nipset. On the book's final page, Cooper records and erases Whittal Ring's final effort to speak himself as a Native before Puritan authority. Describing the church graveyard in the authorial present (c. 1830), Cooper details the many stones bearing the Ring name: among them, is one

on which was rudely carved, "I am Nipset, a Narragansett;
the next snow, I shall be a warrior!" There is a rumor, that
though the hapless brother of Faith gradually returned to

the ways of civilized life, he had frequent glimpses of those seducing pleasures which he had once enjoyed in the freedom of the woods. (482)

This exclamatory self-expression, framed in the English language and located on the grounds of the space of Puritan *communitas*, directs itself at Puritan administration, demands recognition, and signally fails. Carved on a tombstone in the company of the family stones, this expressive claim to agency does not indicate an agented subject. The strong subjectivity does not translate into enlarged agency but rather the opposite for this "hapless" figure.

This tombstone declaration does not memorialize Ring's death, who is rumored to have returned to Puritan lifeways. Instead it is a record of a specific moment in time, lived by the subject at the story's climax ("the next snow, I shall be a warrior!") before his rumored "gradual return" to Puritan ways. The stone marks the untenability and demise of a subjectivity, "Nipset," even in the moment of declaring that identity before authority. Yet Ring leaves no other record, no other speech before administration than this failed, defiant charge—not even a gravestone for his person. Cooper can hardly be said to intend the goals of melodramatic ontology, which substitutes expressive individualism for social agency-in-association: he only wishes to capture the expressive power of melodramatic stage technology for representing social relations, including defiant self-fashioning. In declining to put Ring/Nipset clearly in right relation to melodramatic authority, Cooper seeks to have melodrama without its ontology, at least for his young male hero—but he fails to represent the life lived by Ring/Nipset. Similarly, the larger white male roles of Wept, filled by Content Heathcote, the son of Mark, whose name indicates Cooper's

intended doubling of both figures with the Native hero Conanchet, and Eben Dudley, the valiant yeoman, drop out of the story's action after they accede to the betrayal of Conanchet into certain death by a Puritan tribunal of governor's appointees (previously unknown to the story). This action declares the Heathcotes and their retinue Puritans before Puritan authority, and with it they lose their Leatherstocking-like double consciousness with the Native.

Cooper's vulnerability to an administrated melodramatic ontology despite his evident commitment to a more democratic republic proceeds in large part because he shares the epistemological goals of the melodrama which, in its sensation scenes and tableaux, seeks chiefly, as Cooper's narrator appreciatively tells us, "right understanding, and. . . the proper maintenance of interest."⁴¹ In addition to the recognition scenes, Cooper's battle sequences feature numerous textual equivalents of the melodrama's scene-ending or crisis-defining tableaux. The most elaborate instance occurs when Mark Heathcote's grandson encounters Conanchet in battle. Cooper initiates the tableau by throwing both characters into freeze-frame: "Neither spoke, neither permitted play of muscle, neither even seemed to breathe. The delay was not like that of preparation, for each stood ready for his effort. . ." (351). The characters stand bare-chested, gripping their weapons

⁴¹Kelly traces the ways in which Cooper's narratives often "surrender autonomy, self-reliance, and the eternal prospect of new beginnings" in an interventionist, elite-republican historiographic mode that memorializes characters dedicated to "wellbeing of the community and not self-interest" (10, 15). Kelly also traces Cooper's self-conscious deployment of melodrama (58) and historicizes his dedication to liberal-democratic epistemology in a discussion of his relation to mechanistic accounts of human consciousness produced by associationist psychology that argue the "uniformity of human perception and response" (77).

in mid-stroke, like the French romantic versions of the neoclassical that Cooper was viewing in Parisian salons while penning the tale. The Puritan grips his musket as a club, "arms extended to the rear," the Native "as one prepared to leap." Slipping into the language of art criticism, Cooper describes the scene as if he were literally describing a painting, noting the line and balance of these bodies: Heathcote's head "was a little advanced above the left shoulder, and seemed placed in a manner to preserve the equipoise of the whole frame" and Conanchet's "projecting leg sustained the body, bending under its load more with the free play of muscle and sinew than from any weight, while the slightly stooping head was a little advanced beyond the perpendicular." These freeze-frames provided the chief technology of melodramatic epistemology—wordless moments in which action is frozen into picture, the vivid gesture held and displayed so that mystery is dispelled and meaning is made clear. Cooper's narrator virtually defines the epistemology of tableau in describing the scene: "The momentary pause that succeeded the movement by which the two antagonists threw themselves into these fine attitudes, was full of meaning" (351). In the moment of tableau, all of the ambiguity in white-Native relations is dispelled.⁴²

⁴²See in particular R. W. B. Lewis's observation that "The 'scene' is the distinguishing element in Cooper's best compositions" in his discussion of American 'spatial heroics' ("The Hero In Space: Brown, Cooper, Bird"), describing these tableaux as moments which spatialize heroic agency, locating it—and its originary force—outside the temporal frame of the social. While Lewis does not link narrative scene-painting to the melodramatic tableau (instead, somewhat ahistorically, opposing tableaux and spatiality to "dramatic structures" and time), he gets exactly at the effect of this melodramatic technology upon the heroic subject, an "initiation away from [society]: something I wish it were legitimate to call 'de nitiation' (115; *emph. orig.*). This denitiation, understood through Taylor's analysis of the

One of the most important themes of the text is the dispersal of various mysteries to which Cooper portrays the average Puritan to be deeply devoted. This discourse begins when the Heathcote compound is first troubled by Natives, when the yeoman Eben Dudley ascribes supernatural powers to a deer that passes without leaving a trail and vanishes in a thunderclap: the Puritan household comes with little demurral to the conclusion that "invisible agencies are now at work in the Colony" (150). The Puritans gravely debate whether Providence has not "seen fit to provide an agent of its own [ie, themselves] to defeat their subtleties" (167). As the signs of approaching "prestigious agency" (155) multiply, tension mounts, and at last certain of a "marvellous visitation," the Puritan sentinels eventually run in terror from the sound of a blown conch: "Lip of man is not at the shell!" (168). At this crisis, however, Cooper introduces an abrupt reversal: the most superstitious of all the Puritans, the yeoman Dudley (who had loaded his musket with a silver bullet), recognizes the real agent as the heathen, "recovering all his manhood as the familiar danger became apparent" (169). The chapter ends with a sudden tableau detailing this revelation: "each dark object, in the fields, gave up a human form" (169). Cooper invests the debunking of "mysterious agencies" (and the correspondent assignation of agency to persons) with high moral value. At the narrative crisis of the novel's second half, for example, the mystery of the blockhouse is reintroduced and resolved: Conanchet, having captured in battle and subsequently recognized the Heathcotes and their

foundational romanticism of the Western subject's emergence out of association, offers a tremendously appealing sense of agency, while delegitimizing the human relations necessary to social agency. As Lewis (and Kelly) point out, Cooper increasingly puts pressure on these Adamic heroes to return to social and thus "impinge upon the products of time," a pressure more fully exerted by Melville and Hawthorne (98; 110-11).

retinue, whom he had believed dead, strives to rescue them from torture and execution by telling his bloodthirsty ally, Uncas, that supernatural agency protected these particular whites from harm, giving the tale of the blockhouse as evidence. Content Heathcote, however, when invited to support the claim of prestigious agency, scorns to support the mystery and even leads his captors to the ruins of the structure to demonstrate the mechanistic explanation for their survival. His refusal to sustain the lie of supernatural agency even to save his life is one of the book's climactic moral actions.⁴³

The thirty-five page episode featuring the Puritans' supernatural fear of the Native is Cooper's answer to Cotton Mather's illiberal epistemology, which Cooper quotes at length.

"Flashy people," says the learned and pious Cotton Mather, Doctor of Divinity and Fellow of the Royal Society, "may burlesque these things; but when hundreds of the most sober people, in a country where they have as much mother wit, certainly, as the rest of mankind, know them to be true, nothing but the absurd and froward spirit of Sadducism can question them. (136, emphasis original)

Cooper, using the authorial "we," goes on with heavy irony to pretend no skepticism, except to remark that he "fully trust[s]" that the subsequent thirty-five pages "will throw some additional light on the subject" (wryly observing that "credulity is sometimes found to be bound by geographical

⁴³Importantly, however, Content Heathcote explodes this mystery only to reaffirm the mysteries of Providence: the text is firmly committed to portraying the Puritan devotion to mystery as a straw man for Cooper's liberal epistemology.

limits"). This uncharacteristically ironic aside by Cooper, of course, identifies him as one of the "flashy people" complained of Mather, and he intends his burlesque of the bold Puritan yeoman quavering at bumps in the night, to function as a low-comic satire upon the mysteries of Puritan associational life. Repeatedly in the second half of the novel Cooper returns to the illiberal Puritan episteme, sustained by Puritan worship, Puritan communitarian habits of thought, and Puritan theological demagoguery. This assault on factional group knowledge ("when hundreds. . . know them to be true") is a central objective of the text.

This discourse revolves tightly around the sermons of the Reverend Meek Wolfe, whose rhetorical subtleties hold his congregation in willing thrall. Noting "the revolting aspect of a sublimated austerity" (319) characteristic of the Puritans, Cooper's narrator observes that they turned to religion for "recreation" and "entertainment." He describes the reception conditions of Puritan preaching as a form of associational theater: "To them, a sermon was like a gay scenic exhibition in other and vainer communities, and none listened to the word with cold and inattentive ears" (329). This produced "literal obedience to the command of the preacher," and the maintenance of this illiberally zealous, irrational, inconsistent, truth is what the community in turn demanded of its preacher's various orations, the task of "aptly reconciling" all "moral incongruities" and "seeming discrepancies" (333-334). By these terms Cooper meant chiefly the Puritans' willingness to slaughter Natives, a task which typically required a Meek Wolfe sermon, delivered with Bible in one hand and sword in the other, to put them inwardly at ease. After each of these performances, the community felt of one mind: "The congregation quitted the building with the feelings of men who thought themselves favored by peculiar and extraordinary

intelligences, while the army of Mahomet itself was scarcely less influenced by fanaticism than these blinded zealots" (393).

Cooper's vision is not of an heroic community led astray by a single demagogue, but of a community whose illiberal episteme ("peculiar and extraordinary intelligences") support their own wish to believe in the sanctity of genocide supported demagoguery: "most of his listeners willingly lent their ears to so soothing an argument" (327). Cooper's rationalism is similarly pointed at the claims of another Puritan learned doctor, introduced into the tale in order to misidentify Whittal Ring's race. The learned Dr. Ergot in his first appearance articulates an early version of manifest destiny, "an important mystery. . . This continent was created with a design" (256). He goes on to fail to identify Ring, despite various learned locutions: his interlocutor, the yeoman Dudley, finally raises Ring's leather jerkin like a curtain, exposing "the unequivocal skin of a white man" (263). Cooper offers this revelatory curtain tableau as a complete refutation of Ergot's spurious observations, but illustrates how the learned doctor's "monopoly, in certain branches of knowledge" had "benumbed" his wits, driving him to fall back on "the wonderful agency" of nature as an explanation for the captive's piebald skin. Dudley's steadfast yeoman response to these mystifying academic observations ("The man is white!") maintains the tableau as a democratic knowledge technology against the doctor's academic status, enervated by its privilege, Cooper comments, like "any other aristocracy" (263).

Like the melodrama, Cooper locates democratic value in the clear, all-revealing, common-sensical tableau. This liberal vision of the democratic polity cannot sustain group knowledge (representing faction and as both Cooper's assault on academic knowledge and the courts' assault on the

mysteries of artisanal association reveal, "aristocracy in a small sphere"). Where culture takes aim at intersubjective knowledge (save only the intersubjective knowing of the national imagined community), non-instrumental knowing is thrust inward.

Only the individual hosts sustainable mystery. In this paradigm, the individual has a right to subjective knowledge, may even be admired for it, but cannot express (or in the contemporary stage's term for tableau, "realize") that knowledge in a social connection. Subjective knowing transpires in the asocial. Several characters in the story engage in this sort of knowing apart. The first is the patriarch Mark Heathcote, a "private gentleman" and "a stern, fanatical soldier" who in the first pages initiates the story's plot line by removing his household from the Puritan community and establishing a settlement in the valley of Wept-Ton-Wish: "he intended for a second time to establish his altars in the wilderness, in the hope that he and his household might worship God as to them seemed most right" (15). Cooper relates that the elders "communed with him freely and in charity," that Heathcote listened to them "in sullen respect," but that "the voice of conciliation and alliance came too late," and the "purpose of the stubborn sectarian remained unchanged" (16). This antinomian temperament, the narrator observes, was common among the Puritans and these self-removals characterized them, providing "a wholesome moral on the vanity," the "presumption," the "folly," and the "absurdity of the race." At this initial stage of the narrative, it seems clear that Cooper intends to portray Heathcote as a tragic figure, with "undeniable virtues" and the single Puritan flaw of fomenting "schisms and doctrinal contentions." Two epigraphs from Shakespeare's Coriolanus mark the early chapters of Heathcote's career, and the uncompromising, noble, martial Heathcote

draws on the Roman traitor. Cold, commanding, self-removing, Heathcote's fortified blockhouse represents the space of spiritual removal from even his family.

The other two Coriolan characters that similarly represent what might be called "subjects of mystery" are the captured Native, Conanchet, and Heathcote's one-time comrade in arms, the Nameless eventually known only by the sobriquet Submission. Of Conanchet, Submission observes to Heathcote on the brink of an interrogation regarding the strength of the Native forces assailing the compound, "The mind of a native does not give up its secrets like the surface of a vanity-feeding mirror" (172). Conanchet is initially doubled with Heathcote, spending sessions (of "long and familiar communication") in the blockhouse with him while the Puritan attempts to initiate him to the mysteries of Christianity, and the Native silently resists, "adhering with a singular, and almost heroic pertinacity to the usages of his people" (115). Conanchet's resistance to joining the Puritan community is predicated on his silence. He is both "wouldn't Indian," in this cultural heroism, and, unspeaking, equally the wooden Indian, "a living memorial," as Cooper describes him, "standing aloof" from the games of the Puritan youth, regarding "their sports with a vacant eye" and passing "long hours gazing wistfully at those endless forests in which he first drew breath." These postures, a "silent but expressive exhibition of his suffering," draws the attention and kindness of Ruth Heathcote, but "the resolute but still quiet boy would not be lured into a forgetfulness of his origin" (115-116). His heroic individuation grows out of his refusal to speak himself before Puritan authority, doubling Heathcote's similar refusal: the only difference is that, incarcerated, Conanchet's removal is interior.

In the story's second part, Conanchet is no longer doubled with Mark Heathcote, but with the regicide now calling himself Submission: the climax of this doubling is Conanchet's waving of a tomahawk over him, declaiming "Our lives are one!" to hold off a hostile Native party(442). Submission resides in a hermitage overlooking the now-populated valley. This is the point in the tale where at last "the man that has often been introduced into these pages under the shade of mystery" (398) emerges into the central white role. This regicide appears in an extraordinary three-page ekphrasis locating the figure in a German romantic landscape, featuring deep ravines and a "tumbling brook," and a hermit-like grotto located "precisely at that point where. . . the rocks assume the wildest, the most confused. . . appearance" so that the stones rolled by the occupant into "a little breastwork" before his retreat are undetectable from the landscape itself. This image is introduced immediately following Cooper's sardonic debunking of the mysteries of Puritan worship, and provides contrast to them: "while the people were still listening to their pastor, a solitary individual was placed on a giddy eyrie, whence he might note the movements of those who dwelt in the hamlet, without being the subject of observation himself" (393-396).

By withholding the figure's identity, features, and consciousness, Cooper realizes the human form as a compositional element in the picture: "The figure of the tenant of the ravine was as immovable as any other object of the view. It seemed, in all but color and expression, of stone. . . . An hour passed, and scarce a limb had been changed, or a muscle relieved." This posture remains unchanged until Conanchet appears on the scene, and they enjoy a mutual double-take, a shock of recognition, cementing the doubling which will lead to the regicide's survival and the Native's death. The Native

penetrates Submission's enclosure, just as he was the only being admitted to Heathcote's blockhouse, and it is evident that his and Heathcote's heroic individualism belongs in large part to his accessibility to the Native: Submission follows Conanchet rescue of him with the claim a few pages later, "I can almost say that my heart is Indian" (445).

Submission, as Cooper is careful to point out, does not seek "absolute solitude," but instead "court[s] secrecy with the most jealous caution" (395). Secrecy enables the regicide to continue to affect the community from which he has separated himself; solitude does not. His "secrecy," like the reserve of Heathcote and the resistance of Conanchet, is a precondition of heroic agency. The mysteries of the individual mind support the possibility of the individual acting socially, just as the collective mysteries of Puritan worship support their collective agency. Not-speaking has two values in the melodramatic hero: in the dumb character, it connotes helplessness, the posture of him who would speak, but cannot; in the strong character, it connotes wilfulness the posture of him who can speak, but will not (always, under liberalism, connoting a certain petulant passive aggression, as *Bartleby*). This second value of silence, associated particularly with the eternally-posturing but eternally-ineffective defiance of the no-longer-eloquent Native, becomes in whites a neoclassical ethos of reserve (later formulated in Carlyle's meditations on "continence"). The discussion of Conanchet's silence ("The mind of a native does not easily give up its secrets") is immediately followed by this narration of the demeanor of Submission (still the Nameless) and his interlocutor: "The stranger spoke like a man who wrapped a portion of his thoughts in reserve, and his companion listened as one who comprehended more than it might be seemly or discreet to betray" (172). Like *Coriolanus* and the Native, these

Cooper heroes are dedicated to action rather than rhetoric, and their refusal to speak before (republican-demagogical) authority signals their willingness to oppose it.

This ethos of continence produces Cooper's model of a social leader, "the quiet and self-restrained individual to whom the legal and perhaps moral right to command belonged" (332). But this version of melodramatic heroism produces leaders unsituated to lead: the place of the exceptional individual who refuses to speak is asocial, their "reluctance to appear before the world" (*Wept*, i), or (as Coriolanus) the marketplace, unfitting them for quotidian liberal-democratic life. Through melodrama, an enduring problem of republicanism--what to do with charismatic leadership once crisis has passed (the "situations of emergency" repeatedly invoked in *Wept*)--becomes a general problem of subjectivity: what to do with heroically-individuated subjects with no social mandate for heroism? Cooper seeks to profile in melodramatic tableaux the liberal-democratic subject usurping imperial selfhood, producing in all three generations of Heathcotes, in Conanchet and in the regicide Submission, various iterations of Cromwell, "the extraordinary individual who was, in substance if not in name, seated on the throne of the Plantagenets" (21). On the one hand, under liberal democracy, all subjects emulate the ideal of the extraordinary individual. At the same time, these extraordinary individuals, if they speak themselves, if they fail to self-banish to the world elsewhere like the antinomian Mark Heathcote or maintain interior continence like Conanchet or his son Content, produce faction-- the great political problem faced by elite republicans like Cooper, whose sympathy to a more general democracy was tempered by a desire to produce corporate experience in national life.

Signally, both the four nations of the Native and the three colonies of Puritans encounter social unity as a precondition for survival. Cooper portrays the military outcome of King Philip's War as the result of a civil victory, of the "greater concert" achieved by Puritan leaders over the "ordinary and selfish feelings of man" represented by schism in the white community and tribalism amongst the Natives (300-303). This achievement of social concert is attained by "wily politicians" like Metacom and faceless Puritan administrators ("the Commissioners of the United Colonies, as they were called"), not by the heroes of the tale. Instead the heroes of the tale abdicate leadership, especially in moments of moral complexity, leaving the problematic decisions of making genocidal war and determining justice to the amoral Rev. Meek Wolfe and his faceless administrative cohorts. Conanchet dies when Content Heathcote and the yeoman Dudley pass off the responsibility of judging the Native to a Puritan tribunal of "ingenious casuists" (454), which in turn hands that responsibility to his Native enemies (asking only that the certain death sentence not be accompanied by torture). The strong hero's silence in the face of moral complexity enables him to evade implication by collective acts of injustice (while continuing to clear the profits of genocide). Under melodrama it becomes possible—even necessary—to become a hero without being a leader: to be a hero of the self, for heroism to be defined by self-culture rather than reformation of the regime (as in tragedy). Paradoxically, expressive individualism makes speech unnecessary, even in some instances undesirable. Should the hero decide to act socially, however, his inability or disinclination to speak supports conspiracy—the action of the like-minded few who understand each other with few words.

In Wept as in melodrama the hero need not act. But when the hero does act, becomes an agent of any purpose other than that of administrative necessity, he acts under the sign of mystery, in conspiracy with others, directed by the truth of their association. Melodrama models agency as treason, a treason that always fails because the democratic-republican administration always survives, necessitating the exile, madness, or death of the agent. The regicide Submission, who reveals himself only to the Native Conanchet in the tale's last act ("time hath been, when my voice was heard in councils which struck heavily at the power of [the Stuarts]"), is the paradigmatic instance of this agency-as-treason, and it immediately strikes a bond with Conanchet who remarks with wonder that one who has fought so honorably for the Puritans has "no seat at their council-fire" (403). The white heroes have agency only in furtive, transitory, secret doublings with Conanchet.

Under pressure by the sign of treason, group life is reduced to an emblematic dyad, rather than a full community of revolutionary alterity--but this reduction still does not allow even couplings to escape criminality. These doublings are romantic, intense, intersubjective--producing a brief overlap between nomadic subjectivities--an often unspoken conspiracy against administrative authority which renders both parties traitors to different communities. Conanchet is himself twice over a traitor to his tribe and to the Native confederation, repeatedly acting to save the lives of the Heathcotes and their retinue. The betrayal of tribe and nation (or race) implicit in these short-lived affective bonds is not sustainable in the long term (Submission and Conanchet invite the other to take seats at the council fire of their own community and both decline), and each is lethal: Conanchet's Christ-like submission to an avoidable humiliation and

execution at the novel's close serves him up, like Coriolanus, as a scapegoat to what Burke described as the delights of faction.⁴⁴

Cooper serves up Conanchet as a martyr to involuntary affiliation (tribe, race, nation) and with the melodrama actively criminalizes voluntary association (while investing it with the homoerotic pleasure of fraternity and the transgressive pleasure of miscegenation). At the same time he holds up heroic individuation as a model for subjectivity. Tellingly, he offers no model of sustainable community for such individuals: each of his heroes, to survive in community, passively consent to the administrative genocide and injustice perpetrated by Puritan administration. The scene of Cooper's writing is the Coriolan scene described by Lars Engle, of elite republicanism faced with problem of market society. The individualism that he supports, Leatherstocking-like informed by Native consciousness, unfolds in the paranoid space of the Native knowing only betrayal in affiliation (or, more accurately, the paranoid space of the white displaced onto white representations of the Native): Conanchet's intense bonding with individual whites is bordered by a complete absence of ties to individual Natives, and all relations between Natives in the novel degenerate, necessarily, into hostilities. The vision of society which supports the sort of individualism Cooper advocates is, of course, the liberated self-interest of liberalism, which reconciles the conflicting pursuits of individual actors by means of the transcendental, purporting to retain corporate experience by the fiction of

⁴⁴ Wallace claims that Cooper seeks in the novel to portray the "glories of amalgamation," or the utopian possibilities of miscegenation (as numerous women writers, including Child, had before him). Cooper's support for the reddening of white consciousness, however, seems to rely on the transcendental operation of Romantic doubling rather more than an idealistic program of utopian miscegenation.

the market: the fact that Cooper cannot be said to have intended to support liberalism per se only underscores the ideological presence of liberalism in the theatrical technologies structuring his composition.

Ensemble Agent

The swift ascendance of heroic individualism presented particular problems for the woman novelist. As Mary Kelley has already carefully elaborated, Catharine Sedgwick had strong reservations regarding individualism, heroic or otherwise, and in her own version of the republican-liberal synthesis leaned toward the republican, emphasizing citizenship over self-determination. Introducing Sedgwick's autobiography, Kelley writes that the novelist

departed from an autobiographical tradition in which the self moved inexorably toward separation and individuation. In sanctioning connection, in stressing reciprocal commitment, Sedgwick stood in contrast to other notable American autobiographers such as Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Adams, each of whom represented the self on a trajectory toward autonomy. (Kelley, "Negotiating" 5)

The most active segment of Sedgwick's novel-writing career (1821-1836) closely approximates the rise of Andrew Jackson and throughout the five major novels and dozens of shorter fictions she produced in the period, she continuously expresses reservations regarding Jacksonian practices of the self.

In light of these reservations, Sedgwick's occasional creation of heroines exhibiting a pronounced individualism attracts attention. Most of her youthful, white, elite heroines—such as Jane Elton in her first effort, A New England Tale (1822), or Ellen Bruce and Grace Campbell of Redwood (1824)—characteristically place "others before self," as Kelley observes of Hope Leslie. But her other women, older, nonwhite, disadvantaged, are often characterized by an unapologetic wilfulness. Sedgwick in fact tends to enlarge the roles of character types which would elsewhere be subordinated to a conventional central figure. Her novels exhibit a remarkable ensemble heroism so that Hope Leslie does not by any means dominate the novel bearing her name, sharing about equally with Magawisca, the Native heroine and other female characters. Nor is selflessness an entirely privileged response to domination. Each of Sedgwick's novels resemble the other in in presenting through this ensemble of heroines a kind of pattern-spectrum of responses to patriarchal oppression, ranging from complete submission all the way to armed resistance. At the far end of the scarlet section of the spectrum are figures such as Magawisca and "Miss Debby" Lenox, the fierce "she-grenadier" of Redwood. Six feet one, "grizzled" and "martial," Miss Debby is introduced by the narrator as having declined an offer of marriage shortly after the Revolution: "so imbued with the the independent spirit of the times, that she would not consent to the surrender of any of her rights" (Sedgwick 32). Declining to "surrender" in this way constitutes the mode of Miss Debby's "monstrous" heroism, hinted at by the chapter's anonymous epigraph: "A fine Heroine, truly! A Patagonian monster without a show of breeding." Her spinsterism exempts Debby from the constraints imposed upon the novel's more conventional figures, and it is a similar distance from youth,

whiteness, or elite status that similarly enables the fierceness of Sedgwick's other militant heroines.

The most memorable of these heroines is of course Magawisca, the Pequot princess of Hope Leslie. Like the preceding novel's Miss Debby, she is a monster of her own making, one-armed in consequence of interposing herself between her father's vengeance and a white lover. Magawisca's physical condition is of central significance. The absent arm marks not only the moment of her heroic individuation, but the presence of an indomitable will which refuses to be governed by the legitimate authorities of either Massachusetts or the Pequot nation. Sedgwick's portrait of Magawisca can be approached by way of several cultural discourses. It belongs most broadly, first, to the exoticizing tendency of Romantic writers to conflate Otherness with strains of Gothic otherworldliness in an effort to represent an otherwise unspeakable social and political agency. From a broad Atlantic perspective Sedgwick's orientalism resembles the tactics of feminist cultural intervention pioneered by elite women Romantics like Wollstonecraft and Shelley. She appropriates Native experience for the advantage of another social group: in this case, white Protestant women elites like herself perpetually minding the moral of Redwood, "the humiliating lesson, that no human creature can command independence" (Sedgwick 1824: 34). But this lesson is far from universal. Because their otherness exempts the she-grenadier Miss Debby and Magawisca from this lesson, Sedgwick's white heroines eagerly but carefully associate with them, attempting to share into a measure of their independence without sharing their monstrosity—that is to say, they struggle to emerge as an agent while remaining a "human creature." And what is most sophisticated about Sedgwick's exoticism is that these heroines never quite succeed; their

agency retains a trace of the unsentimental "inhuman" associated with otherness: "Sedgwick allows her Indians dignity in their difference. . . she does not try to make Indians 'human' by showing them to be identical to Anglo-Americans" (D. Nelson 75; emphasis original). Adding the alien to the familiar and insisting on the strangeness she's introjected, Sedgwick pushes the envelope of sympathy for the possible monstrosities of elite white women.

Sedgwick's feminist orientalism also has a second, local, dimension which is peculiarly national and theatrical. The scene of Magawisca's mutilation actively reimagines the most visible and enduring mytheme of the Native-European encounter in American drama, Pocahontas's interposition of her body between the righteous anger of the Native father and the defenseless Captain John Smith. Dozens of Pocahontas plays were produced in the Federalist and Jacksonian period: Sedgwick's version of the scene is the only one in which the father's axe actually falls upon the princess. Most other variations upon the Pocahontas figure belong to the type that students of the Indian plays have labelled the "Indian Princess" (Sears 47) or "Pathetic Dusky Heroine" (Jones 41); they are, with the notable exception of a female-authored version of the character not authored until 1844, "royal, dark complexioned, well formed, courteous and discreet" (Sears 40). By contrast, Magawisca has elements of what David Reynolds describes as the "adventure feminism" widespread in certain strains of sensation fiction in the subsequent two decades.⁴⁵ Dana Nelson emphasizes that the

⁴⁵As Reynolds's own reading emphasizes, Magawisca does not display the sort of breeches-role feminism of these later "Amazonian" pulp-fiction texts, in which a woman appears "so bold as to fight, explore, command, or shoot just like a man" (*Beneath*: 339). It is of course exactly

novel is "remarkable" precisely "for its valorization and foregrounding of feminine heroics" (68), and Sedgwick herself offered the justifiable claim that Sedgwick's revision of this strongly-gendered scene relies on the amputation as an ineradicable sign of implacable resistance and unsentimental noncompliance.

Indeed it is a sort of authorial amputation. For Sedgwick, agency is more than effectiveness, it is the enduring trace in the agent of having acted. Her removal of Magawisca's arm not only describes that trace of having acted in the woman-as-agent as a blemish or deformity, it--taking the arm as synecdoche for the embodied agent--eloquently marks the lack of agency in dominant constructions of womanhood while testifying to the consequences of transgression. All of her white heroines can be seen as Magawiscas in makeup, deformed by virtue of their noncompliance, but unwilling (and unable) to display those scars in public. Knowing herself as an agent, the white Sedgwick heroine cannot be perfectly a woman in public without some pretense: where Magawisca is instantly knowable to her captors as "an active agent" in conspiracy, Hope Leslie preserves the deniability which the male love-interest observes somewhat tartly of the acts of least oppositional of the white heroines: "Her agency, would certainly, he believed, not be detected; and, at any rate, could not involve her in any disagreeable consequences" (234, 277). Ambivalent about the possibilities for action represented by histrionics, Sedgwick was nonetheless sure that action initiates an ongoing histrionics in the agent: having acted, she becomes unfit for society and a perpetual masquerade becomes necessary to conceal what could be called her "double consciousness."

Sedgwick's point to separate the notion of agency from the idea of masculinity.

By initiating a contest over the meaning of Pocahontas, Sedgwick was also necessarily participating in a third discourse, the ongoing contest over the logic of being in America. Jacksonian individualism was deeply entangled with white representations of Native experience. As Arnold Krupat observes in his famous essay on Indian autobiography, "the celebration of the hero-as-solitary" evident in that Jacksonian genre "was never legitimated by native cultures" and "would have been incomprehensible" to them (22-23). In this view, Native experience serves as a vehicle for Jacksonians to express their own "egocentric individualism" to themselves. Insofar as these white accounts of Native individuation were deeply dependent on the warlike--and masculine--dimension of Native experience (Sweet 476), this orientation was doubtless reflexive, expressing the violence of Western expansion, occupation, and removal.⁴⁶ As Lucy Maddox points out, there are numerous social dimensions to Sedgwick's representation of Native experience, most prominently the explosive emergence, while she contemplated and wrote Hope Leslie, of various controversial proposals to remove the Native population west of the Mississippi--including, famously, the pacified, literate Cherokees and their model apartheid "civilization." (One of the most repressive schemes was in fact enacted upon Jackson's ascension to office in 1830, leading eventually after a protracted legal struggle to the dispossession of Cherokee lands and the infamous death march on the "Trail of Tears.")

⁴⁶It is not significant in this respect whether Krupat's suggestion of the primacy of the collective in Native life is correct--only that it was available for white appropriation. Tim Sweet in any event recently explores certain features of Native experience that would appear hospitable to this sort of Jacksonian appropriation, most particularly a warrior tradition of individuation through masculine self-performance.

But perhaps more important to Sedgwick than unmasking the identities of the true offenders in violent encounters between white and Native is her strategy of "merging issues of gender and race" so as to analogize "the Indians' struggle with Puritan patriarchy and the struggle of white women with nineteenth-century American patriarchy" (Maddox 92, 96). Maddox quite persuasively focuses on the insufficiency of this tactic as a means of meliorating or even representing Native experience. The present question involves the other trajectory of the represented alliance between white women and Native under patriarchy: what feminist gains does Sedgwick seek under the sign of the Native?

Perhaps Sedgwick was somewhat fastidiously "trying on" Jacksonian individualism. Mary Kelley's account of Sedgwick's republican emphasis on a relational self-for-others surely describes the novelist's general practice. Nonetheless, Sedgwick was not immune to the immense appeal of Jacksonian individualism, the promise that subjectivity and agency might really overlap for more persons than ever before. In this connection, Magawisca is merely the most prominent of the novelist's numerous attempts to investigate the suitability of various contemporary individualisms for a feminist subjectivity. Influenced by her own rising democratic convictions and the terms of the Jacksonian race discourse, Sedgwick in Hope Leslie seeks access to the variant of heroic individualism dominant at the time she was writing—a neoclassical, Native, masculine. Explicitly seeking to evade the dominant neoclassical role available to post-Revolutionary women, republican motherhood, Sedgwick gains access to the Roman ethos for the gendered other only by way of the racial other: a wondering Puritan goodwife comments of Magawisca that "her mind doth naturally seem to assimilate" the traits of Greek and Roman heroes (31).

Magawisca's scar testifies to the central problem for Sedgwick, her awareness that the notions of "subject" and "agent" were increasingly understood as overlapping each other under Romanticism--and nowhere more so than in Jacksonian America, where the motto of unfettered subjectivity, "the mind is its own place," was increasingly obtaining ontological reality through liberal-democratic social and political instruments. While possessive individualism meant for Jacksonian men (or at least for some of them) the opportunity to make their wills real in the world, the same could not be said for women.

Sedgwick's intervention in the emerging codes of heroism is strongly gendered. Consistently she locates the subjectivity of her masculine major characters in models of romantic heroism and reserves the neoclassical mood for her female characters. While the men operate within the neochivalric code--true knight, false knight--they are hampered with moments of romantic melancholy and misgiving, a disabling inwardness that interrupts their purpose and erupts in some cases as gothic madness. This is equally true of the young Puritan knight, of the scheming cavalier, and Mononotto, the vengeance-driven chieftain of the Pequod tribe. By contrast, the heroines consistently appear as figures of action, decisive and implacable in declared opposition, and rarely troubled by interior misgiving. Chief of the heroines is the native Magawisca, who performs the Coriolanus plot of heroism. Repeatedly identified throughout the novel with an explicitly classical heroism, her central scene before the Puritan court reenacts Coriolanus's trial for treason before duplicitous magistrates and an ungrateful people--at which he exhibits unbridled defiance, flouting the plebiscite and denying their right to judge him ("Must I show them my

unbarb'd sconce. . . mountebank their loves. . . I wouldn't buy their mercy with one fair word!")

Charged with what is described as "active agency" in attempting to lead a confederation of Native warriors against the colony, Magawisca, similarly compelled to show her scars in the marketplace, and likewise advised to "speak humbly" before the people, chooses like Caius Marius to appear before the court triumphally, in her native costume, and answers her accusers with violence: "you may slay me, but I deny your right to judge me. . . not one of my race has ever acknowledged your authority" (286). She refuses even to engage administrative necessity as reality ("I neither confess nor deny aught"[287]) and demanding "liberty or death" (293), utterly repudiates all social avenues of compromise with administrative authority. As at the Roman's trial, the people's magistrates are represented as self-interested conspirators, the people experience a series of sudden reversals of sympathy, and the patricians stand by, her helpless partisans. Like Coriolanus, she openly scorns the plebiscitic authority and the easy terms of mercy it offers: "Do you wait for [my accuser] to prove that I am your enemy? Take my own word, I am your enemy" (292).

This Coriolan revision of the Pocahontas discourse--in which the Native woman interposes her body between the white lover and Native justice--begins with a representation of the Native woman as agent. Unlike any other Pocahontas, Magawisca has to act to enter the scene (all of the others are already on the scene): she has to escape captivity, drug a guard, and climb a cliff by moonlight; and when she does force herself onto the scene, she does not plead for the captive's life but, uttering the imperative, "Forbear!" thrusts out her arm in a gesture of command. The tomahawk descends on her imperative. And as the quivering limb tumbles over the

cliffside into the void, the wielder of the tomahawk "staggers back" and "falls senseless" but Magawisca, mutilated, holds her ground, demands the freedom of the captive, and collects the "involuntary homage" of all present.

All of Sedgwick's Native women exhibit a Roman savage nobility in escaping the Pocahontas code. Magawisca's mother articulates implacable revenge (52), and Nelema the medicine woman gives a last-of-the-race speech, concluding, "I hear the voices of my children crying for vengeance, and. . . I could myself deal the death-blow"(37). Sedgwick's fierce Native matrons also emerge in the intertext with contemporary productions of Coriolanus, which was usually subtitled in versions based on the Kemble text, "Or, the Roman Matron," reflecting the enlarged role assigned in that version to the warrior's equally warlike mother, Volumnia, played by Mrs. Siddons. This aspect of the intertext is significant because Coriolanus and his mother share the heroic subjectivity ("Thy valiantness was mine," she tells him, "thou suck'st it from me,"), so much so that when she withdraws from it, he can no longer make war.⁴⁷ From one plausible viewpoint enhanced by early-national and Jacksonian productions of the play—one appealing to Sedgwick's project in this novel—the Coriolan heroic posture is a joint production, one that rests between gender and not in it.

If the masculine characters are all Romantically debilitated, and the Native feminine characters are all iterations of the that subjectivity joined across gender, Volumnia-Coriolanus, what of Hope Leslie? Like the Native women, she is a figure of action, decisive, occasionally fierce, unhesitating, and uniformly effective. But her "active agency," unlike Magawisca's, is not

⁴⁷ The role of Volumnia in Forrest's first production of Coriolanus, Or, the Roman Matron was played by the 'masculine' Charlotte Cushman, transatlantically famous for her performance of "breeches roles."

openly resistant. Her early childhood gestures of defiance are progressively disciplined en route to her marriage with the young Puritan, and her agency consistently expresses itself in subterfuge and masquerade. Unlike Magawisca and Coriolanus, she repeatedly stoops to "cog the hearts" of the people to achieve her ends, playing the ingenue to the jailer to engineer Magawisca's escape, for example, and enacting the incarnation of the Catholic virgin before a credulous Italian sailor to gain his assistance in escaping rape by his shipmates. It becomes clear that she has only limited access to Coriolan heroism, and then only insofar as she is associated with Magawisca. She says to the judge when pleading upon the Native's behalf, "[Speaking] of myself, humility became me, but surely you will allow me to speak courageously of the noble Magawisca" (273). Hope Leslie can play at, but not rest in the white construction of defiant Native subjectivity (as constructed by Sedgwick in the preface: "They could not submit, and live"). Instead, she rests in the masked subjectivity of an agency that "would not be detected" and "could not involve her in any disagreeable consequences."

Magawisca, a female-feminist variant of the "solitary savage" (73) shaping Jacksonian ideas of rough-democratic aristocracy, instantiates Sedgwick's attraction to—but negative evaluation of—heroic individuation as an instrument for social agency. While the novel, like Cooper's, is full of melodramatic incident, its valuation of the melodramatic as an epistemological and ontological instrument is sharply negative: each of the tales told as a melodramatic revelation scene—prototypically the aristocratic villain's false accusation of Magawisca's devil-worship, revealed to him, he says, by "a flash of lightning" (285)—are revealed as lies, or represent complications to the plot, not resolutions. Instead, Hope Leslie's theatricality belongs to the field of association: the jail-break of Magawisca does not

represent individual masquerade, but a conspiracy of play-actors, in which the white heroine appears as the agent of theater, costuming, making up, and costuming the others in a mutual cross-dressing ("Both parties were passive in her hands, Magawisca not seeming to relish much better than Cradock, the false character she was assuming" [311]).

All of Hope Leslie's mature agency is expressed, over several pages, in coaching the others in the art of theatrical representation ("now, Magawisca, if you will but contrive to screen yourself and shuffle a little in your gait.... dear Master Cradock, sit a little straighter--there--that will do--turn a little more sideways, you will not look so broad--there--that's better," etc.). Sedgwick represents a similar jail-break trans-gender, trans-race cross-dressing under the sign of an even fiercer orientalism in The Linwoods (1835), showing a knife-wielding jailer physically overpowered by an unarmed African-American woman, forced by her to drink a narcotic cocktail, submit to being tied with her garters and stand with a rope around his neck on the bedstead while she threatens to kick away the support: "One mercy I'll do you; if you hold your tongue, I'll not let out, while the war lasts," she says, "that you were strung up there by a 'darn nigger--a nigger woman!" (235; emphasis original). On the one hand, the agency of Hope Leslie fails to declare itself a heroism. On the other hand, this theatrical masking of the agent transpires under the sign of association and determined resistance.

The failure of Hope Leslie to individuate heroically comes from Sedgwick's insistence that her white heroines abjure the appeal of "the world elsewhere" and engage with community. Admitting the Other as code for the appeal of individualism, Sedgwick retained whiteness as the marker of the primacy of the social, "a multitude of people where the solitary savage

roamed the forest—the forest vanished, and pleasant villages and busy cities appeared—the tangled foot-path expanded to the thronged high-way" (73). While she wished for her white heroines not to submit, she also insisted that they live, and represent models for living—in imperfect community, and not in the "hideous solitudes" and transcendental communion with the Great Spirit that resolve Magawisca's fate. Hope Leslie, after the failure of her audience with administrative authority, articulates the special pressure Sedgwick put on her white heroines. "There must be a warrant," she says, "for sometimes resisting legitimate authority" (278). This is the nub of Sedgwick's vision: the authority which must be resisted is also legitimate, and there is no escape into the asocial.

For Sedgwick, the necessary resistance of legitimate authority initiated an ongoing histrionics in the feminine agent. Having acted, she becomes unfit for society—monstrous, scarred—and a perpetual masquerade becomes necessary to conceal her monstrosity. But this masquerade is the making of a scene by a fraternity of conspirators, not spectacular self-display or the rough expression of self-authentication. The collaborative scene-making is a bid to re-make the social scene, an intervention in the unjust operations of legitimate authority by means of a tactical, occasional, oppositional theater. This for Sedgwick was the necessary treason of group life, constituting selves-in-concert against the whole, avoiding as much as possible the disagreeable consequences of delegitimizing the whole or self-banishment. This is not heroism, but it is exactly the mode through which nineteenth-century associations renegotiated the increasingly democratic republic, and it is Sedgwick's own mode of authorship, a drama of affiliation that invited treason-in-company (*Hope Leslie* is filled with scathing asides that excoriate the contemporary ideals of womanhood in Jacksonian

America). The white heroes and heroines of Sedgwick's novels learn the lesson of the body of her work--"the humiliating lesson that no human creature can command independence"--not to relinquish social agency, but to acquire it.

Chapter Five

Rites of Dissent:

Demobilizing the Subject, 1840-1865

Our Evils are SOCIAL, not POLITICAL, and a Social Reform only can eradicate them. – Albert Brisbane, A Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association (1843)

When the Nazis spoke of the necessity of a highly ritualized and symbolized life, I could hear Bigger Thomas on Chicago's South Side saying: 'Man, what we need is a leader like Marcus Garvey. We need a nation, a flag, an army of our own. We colored folks ought to organize into groups and have generals, captains, lieutenants, and have a national home.' I'd know, while listening to these childish words, that a white man would smile derisively at them. **But I could not smile, for I knew the truth of those simple words from the facts of my own life.** The deep hunger in those childish ideas was like a flash of lightning illuminating the whole dark landscape of Bigger's mind. Those words told me that the civilization which had given birth to Bigger contained no spiritual sustenance, had created no culture which could hold and claim his allegiance and faith, had sensitized him and had left him stranded, a free agent to roam the streets of our cities, a hot and whirling vortex of undisciplined and unchanneled impulses. The results of these observations made me feel more than ever estranged from the civilization in which I lived, and more than ever resolved toward the task of creating with words a scheme of images and symbols whose direction could enlist the sympathies, loyalties and yearnings of the millions of Bigger Thomases in every land and race. ...

–Richard Wright, "How 'Bigger' Was Born" (1940, emphasis added)

In a sense, all American rituals are invented traditions, even where they are borrowings or nationalizations of European and indigenous practices. This understanding emerges out of the involution of two claims, that: 1) the new nation "invented" itself, and 2) the new nation appropriated the very idea of invention and newness to itself, so that any act of making-new

becomes by definition an "American" action. These two claims are involved because the second claim appears to critically dismantle the first: by making the ideas of "new" and "invention" too complex to apply uncritically, by decoupling the national identity from certain values of modernity, and by exposing the ideological order beneath the consensual model of national symbolic action. Most of the recent work to the latter purpose is deeply indebted to Sacvan Bercovitch's application of a Turnerian understanding of the relationship between tradition and ritual (in non-nationalist social organizations) to the relation between liberal-democratic ideology and "classic American literature." Following John Higham's appreciation of ideology as an agent for consolidation, Bercovitch describes the "tyranny... of a liberal-symbolic system of thought" (Assent 41) which has appropriated the rhetoric of revolution so that dissent and even the historical changes wrought by reform and radicalism appear as continuous with the (ongoing) project of democratic revolution. The rhetoric of continuing revolution permits liberal dominance to coopt utopia: it "ritualizes the egalitarian energies of the liminal process in such a way as to control discontent and harness anarchy itself to the social enterprise (Ideology 432). Particularly effective at creating homologies between the cultural artifacts of the Puritan, Revolutionary, and cold-war Americas, this insight argues persuasively for canonical literary expression as a powerful social instrument, an important historical agent in the "ritual recycling of the energies of radical change into the structures of continuity" (Investigations 983). This insight brilliantly traces the path to dominance of liberal domination:

It was the cultural work of Emerson and Emersonians, from (say) William James through Paul Goodman, to obviate socialist or communist alternatives to capitalism. This form of

cultural work joined Thomas Jefferson to Henry David Thoreau and both to Martin Luther King, Jr. in an omnivorous oppositionalism that ingested all competing modes of radicalism—from the Fourierists to Herbert Marcuse and Noam Chomsky. . . . (Investigations 983)

What is most appealing about this formulation is its disarming frankness. Because it confesses dominance as such, it compels the respect of left criticism, and even seems—in providing so relentless an anatomy of liberal dominance—to have done left-critical cultural work. And in critically engaging the complacently Leavisite faith of the American academy repetitively dramatizing "an essentialist conflict between an always oppressive society and an always liberating literature," Bercovitch has properly demanded an end to the confusion of literary criticism with social action (Investigations 983-984).

Yet Bercovitch's anatomy of liberal dominance helps to perpetuate that dominance, explicitly apologizing for this "ideology in a new key" and developing a pervasive exceptionalism. The essentially "American" thing, in this account, becomes appropriation instead of newness: "here only, of all modernizing Western nations in 1840, the values of newness and of tradition were made to correspond" (Assent 45). To speak of the appropriation of utopia is to speak of the "Americanization" or colonization of it: in one widely influential version of this narrative, "America has from the beginning appropriated the aura of the neutral territory, the world beyond political dissensus, for its own political legitimation" (Berlant 32).⁴⁸ Hence

⁴⁸ Berlant, of course, instantiates this colonization of the imaginary in order to develop an idea of a "critical nationalism" (58) permitting an other-

Bercovitch's "nonpejorative" recovery of liberal hegemony as ritual: "I turned, accordingly, to the more flexible, nonpejorative definitions of the concept available in anthropology: ideology as a web of ideas, practices, beliefs and myths through which any society coheres and perpetuates itself" (*Investigations* 980). Americans didn't invent traditions, he argues; they appropriated inventiveness, and they did so for the (laudable) purpose of unity-in-difference, so that the containment strategies occurring to the anxious inventors of Concord, Mass., become the heroic agents of—mass concord.

This recovery of the (Puritan) father turns around the revelation to the liberal intelligentsia of the truth it didn't want to hear—that the politics of liberalism are in fact the politics of hegemony—while himself anxiously reinventing hegemony as concordia discors, a figure he uses to gloss the different multiplicities of federalism, pluralism, and many historically-variant politics of difference. Critics from the left are eager to point out that Bercovitch is not merely an observer in the liberal appropriation of utopia; he participates—by "rejecting in advance any possible grounds for the conversion of dissent (whether expressed implicitly by literary works or explicitly by political groups) into the bases for actual social change" (Pease 21). The critical-utopian complaint is joined by a realist complaint from a more traditional historiography: Bercovitch's chronicle of liberalism's will to power, it is charged, tends "to collapse substantive differences onto a bedrock of underlying agreement" (Harlan 963), attributing a liberal social destiny to Puritan experience and denying the lived reality of alternatives. The most powerful left critique similarly charges Bercovitch with

than-hegemonic counter-discourse. From a post-colonial standpoint, however, the nationalism of this critical nationalism remains salient (Mackenzie 504-507).

perpetuating the cold-war imaginary by eliminating "the context for contentious dialogue" in cultural historiography, observing pointedly that, "at the time Bercovitch claims for it the greatest cultural power, the pre-Civil War years of the American Renaissance," the liberal-integrative model that figured dissent as jeremiad "was, in fact, breaking apart" (Pease 21-29).

The figure in this carpet is the substitution of the "jeremiad" of (individual) expression for (collective) action in the social-oppositional practices of a remarkably, irreducibly other America. The left-utopian and right-realist critiques can be reconciled by focussing on the pervasive substitution of individual for group experience. The history of American invented tradition is not primarily a relationship between the individual and the national, but a negotiation of complex group experience at the subnational level: intergroup, intragroup, and overlapping, infra-group life, the creation not of a national apparatus, but of small face-to-face associations. In politics, these included the republican social groups named by the emergent liberal discourse of faction, workingmen's associations and democratic clubs, the "self-created societies" (that initially named elite conspiracies such as Franklin's "junto" but rapidly indicated powerful political agencies such as nativist clubs and Tammany Hall). Far more pervasive than the organizations explicitly dedicated to political and political-economic intervention and equally important in locating groups as historical agents was an elaborate infrastructure of associations in social life: sports clubs, performance groups, lyceum societies, Masons, Washingtonians, unions, nativists, Sunday-school societies, and so forth.

The allegorization of the antebellum U.S. in the mood of the cold war obscures a whole sphere of social interaction between 1840 and 1940, this "buzzing complex" of associational life observed by Weber and Tocqueville.

The concomitant projection of the idea of a national mass—an unmarked, disembodied aggregate of (war) mobilized subjects, eager for nationality to root and hold them substitutes—with limited usefulness—the "formless sand heap of individuals" for the buzzing complex. Liberal hegemony is really only consolidated during the cold war. In 1940, it is still longer possible for Richard Wright to allegorize his ambition as a novelist to the mobilization through ritualized group life of "millions of Bigger Thomases." After 1950, he must instead create an ultraist "Outsider" hostile to group life of all kinds, (though still demanding a new "organization of social life" which he is unable to define).⁴⁹

This breathtaking leap of the liberal imagination appropriates ritual practice to itself, simultaneously completing the statist aim of eradicating the utopian prospects of subnational group life while jealously harnessing all desire for collective experience to the liberal state. But the irreducibly other America of 1840 was very far away from placing the relationship

⁴⁹ From the interrogation of Cross:

"Well, what kind of instrument woul you use in organizing people?"

"I don't know, sir."

"But you agree that people ought to be organized?"

"Certainly, sir,"

"Why?"

"Human life on this earth must proceed on some rational basis, sir."

"Then what organizational instrument would you advocate?"

"None. I've not discovered any to my liking, sir."

..."But you feel that all this unrest on earth today is because man is urgently seeking for an organization of his social life?"

"He urgently needs one," Cross said stoutly. "I'm guilty of thinking and believing that, sir." (Wright, Outsider 515, 517)

between nation and citizen-subject at the center of ritual experience. The inventors of invented tradition and their illiberal, subnational intersubjectivity engaged in a 150-year struggle with juridical regulation, political oppression, and social suspicion by liberal democracies of subnational group life.

Indeed it is not at all clear that the figure of "ritual," implying a face-to-face scene of presence and practices of participant-observation, is at all appropriate to the artifacts of a liberal-democratic, nationalizing, mass-mediated culture (to which the figure of "theater" is more commonly applied, evoking the failure of citizenship by way of the passive bourgeois spectator of the statist imaginary).⁵⁰ While there are ritual dimensions to mass culture, and it is surely through these that the national symbolic order appeals to the subject's desire for imaginary wholeness (Berlant 24) in much the way that Bercovitch describes, this likeness-to-ritual begs the question of the social function of actual ritual inventions, sustaining the actual collective life of real social groups. The result has been the marginalization of the social history and cultural production associated with two of the major social formations of the 1840s, formations generally

⁵⁰ See for example Brodhead, chapter 2 ("Veiled Ladies: Toward a History of Antebellum Entertainment"). In chronicling the emergence of mass publics and the spectacular economy, Brodhead passes over the social and political significance of "that congeries of new systems. . . that developed into something between fad philosophies and surrogate religions in the 1840s" (49) in creating non-mass group life. Nonetheless, his discussion of Coverdale in historically-informed terms points up the difficulties of Bercovitch's appropriation of ritual participant-observation for the liberal lifeway Coverdale epitomizes: "eye-life," Brodhead writes, "has become his way of having life" (61, emphasis original). Spectacle can represent ritual, and be part of ritual, but its regularized substitution of eye-life for life is hostile to the participatory ethic of ritual action.

represented as aberrations in American social history, prominent on the roster of "cult movements and pseudosciences" (Brodhead 51). (Bercovitch in fact takes this group life far more seriously than most literary critics, if only as the sinewy antagonist of the liberal imaginary.)

Resistance and Ritual

The utopian-socialist and workingmen's movements are frequently regarded as failures of a sort, futile gestures of collectivity in the face of the certain rising tide of liberal individualism and a liberal-capitalist social organization. In fact, they were only a small part of a larger development in American life, the vast field of associational practice that emerged into political significance with the Revolution, grew explosively through the antebellum period, multiplied exponentially after the Civil War, and did not begin to fade until 1945.⁵¹

Of the many different modes of associational life erupting in the decade, the working men's and utopian socialist movements are particularly useful because they both practiced and theorized associational life; they employed advances in print technology to reach a significant group (yet non-mass) audience, thereby leaving records of their invented traditions and ritual. Furthermore, the social pressures surrounding their group life were more extreme, intensifying and concentrating the otherness, alterity, and

⁵¹ The cultural work of most cold-war discussions of antebellum group life as the agency of "social control" is to mobilize the reader's subjectivity in a liberal disaffection. See Katz, Banner, and the critique of the social-control thesis in Chapter 2 above.

oppositionality of the group. Utopian socialists kept a close watch not only on each other's communities but on all the other forms of association emergent during the decade. Writing in Brook Farm's Fourierist organ The Harbinger, William Henry Channing, John S. Dwight, Charles A. Dana, Albert Brisbane, William Wetmore Story, and Elizabeth Peabody among others surveyed the social utility of odd fellowship, masonry, mutual insurance, the lyceum movement, Young America, physical culture, the Washingtonians and other temperance fraternities, and many others. Similarly, the city-mysteries novelists associated with utopian or artisan culture (such as George Lippard, Augustine Duganne, George Foster and E. Z. C. Judson, or "Ned Buntline") were alert to all kinds of associational life.

Indeed, the various urban realisms which continued to explore the mysteries of the city well into the 1940s (beginning with Howells, but continuing into the second wave of naturalists like Nelson Algren, James T. Farrell, and Richard Wright) pursued this preoccupation with the ritual practices of group life, often explicitly portraying the individual as an after-effect of social processes. Howells's early novel, Mrs. Farrell, was originally published serially as Private Theatricals (1875); his extensive playwriting was one of the leading contributions to parlor, college, and associational performance culture (Meserve, "Introduction," Complete Plays xv); Judgement Day (1935), the final installment of Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy, pits the longing of melodramatized man (Lonigan, who draws his identity from film and sports heroes) for collectivity in a lengthy scene set in the initiation ritual of a Roman Catholic service fraternity; Algren's Never Come Morning (1941) turns around the invention and continual reinvention of the "Baldheads True American Social 'n Athletic Club." By 1953, Wright's attitude toward the role of ritual in organizing social life reflected the

triumph of liberalism: The Outsider identifies ritual action closely with ideology and—while demanding a new social organization—identifies nearly all forms of organized life with the total state: "these Jealous Rebels proceed to organize political parties, communist parties, nazi parties, fascist parties, all kinds of parties... In order to catch their prey, they deliberately spin vast spiderwebs of ideology, the glittering strands of which are designed to appeal to the hopes of hopeful men" (488-489). Wright's liberal turn reflects the blunt anti-associationism of mass culture c. 1940, whether in populist caricatures of Babbitt and boosterism (W.S. Van Dyke's Powell-Loy I Love You Again [1940]) or explicitly anti-fascist war propaganda, such as the Tracy-Hepburn Keeper of the Flame (1942).

These films and others like them disseminated the liberal consensus Bercovitch describes, yielding contemporary melodramatic man who shares the sense of Wright's Outsider:

At some point in his past life, while living the normal ritual of days allotted to us all, he had come to a consciousness of having somehow fallen into a vast web of pledges and promises which he had not intended to make and whose implied obligations had been slowly smothering his spirit; and, by a stroke of freakish good luck, he had been able to rip the viscous strands of that web and fling them behind him." (503)

Wright in particular was attentive to the organization of group life, the ways that organizational life can help to constellate groups as social agents, and the sort of cultural production that assists or retards that emergence into agency.

This relationship between literary naturalism, utopian socialism, city-mysteries fiction, social science, and the other-than-nationalist imagination

is genealogical, historically obscured but recoverable in the human relations that inspired Albert Brisbane to call his Fourierist circular The Phalanx a "Journal of Social Science"—and in the engagement with the Chicago School of sociology that inspired Wright to attempt a novel that would have the ritual function of sustaining group solidarity ("the task of creating with words a scheme of images and symbols whose direction could enlist the sympathies, loyalties, and yearnings of the millions of Bigger Thomases...")—and in the related structure of thought and feeling that led George Lippard to ask every one of the initiates to his labor fraternity to project themselves into the socially-constructed subjectivity of a murderer.

Lippard's ritual prompts initiates to identify with a collectivized violent rage, through "the skull of a laborer [whose] case is case of ten thousand—ayes of millions," rather similar to Wright's plan for Bigger Thomas:

[The Lord of Land]. Why do you place your hand upon that skull?

[The Lord of Law]. Listen Brothers. It is the skull of a laborer.

As a boy he was thrust friendless and orphaned upon the world. Society denied him the means of education, for he was forced to work—work—work sixteen hours out of twenty-four, for the barest sustenance. He grew to manhood, a mere working machine—a brute, with the form of a man but without the soul. To save himself from starvation, he robbed. Then, the Law which had no care for him in friendless childhood, took good care of him, by thrusting him into the cell of a Jail. When he came forth, he came with hatred against society planted in his heart. In a

fit of frenzy he committed a Murder. Then the Law which had denied him education--which had cheated him of land--which overworked him in the Factory--which had in fact crushed his immortal soul, in his living body-- then, I say, this Law took care of him, upon the Gallows. . . .

(G.B.C. 40-41)

Bigger Thomas and the skull of Lippard's laborer offer themselves as the locations of other cultures, cultures tenacious of group life and refusing to be mobilized under nationality by liberal capitalism. The ritual explicitly aims itself at assisting participants to emerge into connection, into an emotional, violent, illiberal --revolutionary--consciousness. Lippard intends to create an instrument that will nurture a radical alterity, even to the point of bloodshed.

The Mysteries of Association

Many strands of antebellum culture dedicated themselves to the explosion of mystery, sometimes explicitly reflecting the fetishization of vigilance current in elite proponents of social control (as parodied by Cornelius Mathews):

"If I was a member of a vigilance committee," said Mr. Fishblatt, regarding Puffer Hopkins with great gravity and steadiness, "I should consider it my duty to have immense telescopes constructed; and I would plant them, sir, where I could look into the interior of every domicil in the ward, and know what was in every man's pot for dinner six days in the

week. This may not be your view of duty, sir, but I should feel bound to have great ledgers kept, with leaves that opened like doors, and there write down every man's name in large letters; and I'd have a full length of him drawn in the margin, and colored to the life. I'd give his dress, sir, down to the vest buttons, and if there was a mote in his eye, I'd have it there to be cross-examined, when he came up to vote. . . . Keep the city well lighted, and you keep it virtuous, sir.

(Puffer Hopkins [1843], 72)

More often and more saliently, this vigilance was implicit in the conventions of the genres associable with the spread of liberal democracy. Journalism, the melodrama, most public discourse, and various prose realisms subscribed to the instrumental values of clarity, reproducibility, and universality (consistent with the invention of the term "demystification" c. 1815).

The city-mysteries novel is often taken as a primary—even originary—instance of this spectacular economy, at once "demystifying" and also fascinating, circulating structures of exposure, policality, gross anatomy, fetish and absorptive theatricality. George Foster's urban sketches emblemize this economy: New York in Slices: By An Experienced Carver (1849); New York By Gaslight (1850); Fifteen Minutes Around New York (1853); and New York Naked (1854). As Stuart Blumin and Michael Denning have noted, however, the city-mysteries novel and the urban sketch are far from identical. Denning observes that, generally speaking, "modern readers are often disappointed" that—unlike Foster's gaslit urban autopsies—the "most powerful mysteries of the city offer very little in the way of urban topography" (93). Picking up on this observation by Denning,

Blumin points out that the city-mysteries novelists "did not explain the city or create a satisfying means of discourse about urban problems, even on a popular level" (emphasis Blumin). Deeply indebted to journalistic realism and the city-country sketches of Pierce Egan (*Tom & Jerry*), Foster supplies a "much more satisfying method for addressing the concerns that made the city sensationalist romances popular," delivering "a city that is far more real, and far more complete, than any found in the pages of Lippard, Judson, Ingraham, and the other romancers" (Blumin 27). The greater realism that Blumin notes is inseparable from the greater "satisfaction" the sketches offer to today's readers, who, having internalized the values of instrumental communication, expect the sort of explanation or cartography that the sketch offers. Equally interesting, however, is the very different appeal to antebellum readers framed by the unreal, incomplete—perhaps actively mystifying—city-mysteries genre. The differences between the genres highlight the very different cultural work accomplished by them. Where the urban sketch—like the melodrama—satisfies because it fascinates-through-exposure, the mysteries novel appealed because it added as much mystery as it dispelled.

This forcible generalization of light provoked a reaction. The consequent explosion in invented-tradition ritual life (resulting in the invention of the term "mysteriosophy" circa 1894) represents an alternative to the economy of exposure accompanying the melodramatized public culture of liberal democracy. The city mysteries novel, like the naturalist and urban realist novels that succeeded it, records, analyzes, and advocates a "highly ritualized and symbolized" subcultural performance life. Moreover, like Richard Wright, many city mysteries novelists expected their writing to be an agent and catalyst of group life. This was as true of

American activists like Augustine Duganne, E. Z. C. Judson, and George Lippard as it was of German mysteries novelists and the genre's progenitor Eugene Sue. While Christopher Looby's compelling ideological critique of the related genre of sensation fiction (1993) convincingly demonstrates that the titillating exposures (especially of the pornographic variety) do not serve the ends of radical democracy—following Bataille in noting that enacting transgression reinforces taboos, "slavishly affirming" bourgeois domestic ideology precisely where it appears to negate it—this criticism is probably better aimed at the broader economy of exposure represented by the melodrama and public discourse generally (in much the same way that Naomi Wolf names advertising the true "beauty porn").

By laying more emphasis on the role of practical, organizational mystery in supporting the sharply resurgent republicanism of what Shelley Streeby calls "the republican gothic," we begin to see some of the historical structures supporting David Reynolds's discussion of the radically democratic influence of the genre. That is: insofar as a given city-mysteries text pursues the aims of demystification, Looby's ideological critique obtains. Where, on the other hand, the text supports a republican-artisanal mysteriosophy, it becomes an instrument of radical democracy. In the hands of political operatives like Lippard, Sue, and Judson, the genre sustained rather than "penetrated" the mysteries of artisanal resistance and republican counter-reaction.⁵² Lippard's labor ritual is worth excerpting at length:

⁵² While Streeby is inclined to read Lippard as ideological critique (exploding myth and exposing injustice, etc) the 1996 article shares this project's concerns to identify Bercovitch's project with Hawthorne's containment of utopian energies (456) and show some of the ways Lippard

CHIEF JEFFERSON. My Friend: You stand upon the threshold of our Order, free to recede or advance. Will you advance? Do you desire to know the Holy mystery of Brotherhood, and be joined with us forever in the solemn Circle of the H.F.?

If you would penetrate our mysteries, learn first to be silent--to be obedient--to meet each scene of our ritual with that reverence which we demand from you as a Man of Honor. Learn also, that the holiest things are the most easily ridiculed . . . we cannot lightly open our mysteries, and will not open them, unless to Men of Honor.

CHIEF WASHINGTON. Around this altar . . . With this sword . . . I thus describe the holy Circle which binds our many hearts into ONE.

Let us no rash word, or unkind act, with envy and dissension enter here: WITHOUT this circle lies the world in wickedness and wrong--WITHIN, a band of brothers dwell, whose only faith is Truth and Hope and Love. Shame and woe to the wretch who bears beyond this Circle, the mysteries of the H.F. or to the world our solemn ceremonies doth reveal. . . . Honor to him who keeps our secrets--taught within this Circle--sacred within his heart. . . Again; it is an easy task, for the oppressor, to degrade and crush a solitary Son of Labor, but when the Sons of Labor are joined together, in the Circle of our Brotherhood, they

attempts to "construct working class identifications among his readers that are antagonistic to 'the goals of free enterprise'" (457).

can defend themselves against all forms of wrong—against all tyrants of the social world. . . . From this you learn that next to BROTHERHOOD, the holiest word in our Gospel is—COMBINATION. (Lippard, "The G.B.C.")

Recent criticism has begun to touch upon the significance of "city mysteries" as agents of collective life. Gary Ashwill tries to reconcile the economy of exposure with the ritual function of working class cultural production, pointing most interestingly to an other-than-enlightenment epistemology that undoes binarism in a gesture he compares to contemporary deconstructive critical practice, producing even "a new form of reason itself" (305-310). Michael Denning and Anne Humpherys locate this alternative epistemology more historically in the generic appropriation by the city mysteries novel of gothic conventions: of particular utility is Humpherys's observation that the mysteries novel, in appropriating the gothic de-individualizes it, reimagining the location of power—formerly, "the obsessed energies of an individual man or woman"—as the "new urban institutions" (657). This insight helps us to understand that resistance to power is also de-individualized in the mysteries novel. Only an ahistorical approach to the genre allows us to assume that mystery is the thing to be dispelled by the agent of the narrative, as is true in melodrama. As Humpherys observes, these novels engage melodramatic themes and technologies only to frustrate the expectations of a melodramatized public for clear resolution and simplistic binary epistemology. Mystery is not the object-to-be-dispelled but instead the agent of the narrative. The reason that the city mysteries novels did not produce a proletarian hero (as Michael Denning and others have wondered) is because the novel's hero is the spirit of subculture, of collectivity, "the mystery of odd fellowship" that Brook

Farm's Charles A. Dana observed "exists in the midst of a world whose spirit and institutions are of a character quite opposite to its own" (Harbinger I: 74-75). Remarking that "providence has always more agencies than one at its service," the Unitarian Dana reluctantly defended the ritual life, badges and regalia of these societies as an instrument of a "beautiful corporate friendship," and "special brotherhood" necessary to the protection of Friendship, Love, and Truth in "the present condition of society."

The city mysteries novel that most absorbed the Associationist movement in the United States was Eugene Sue's The Wandering Jew (1843-1845). While the preceding Mysteries of Paris had also been inspired by contemporary French Fourierist thought, The Wandering Jew explicitly develops associationist propaganda and was taken as such by contemporary readers: two rival translations were offered in the U.S. simultaneous with the French serial publication: the Harper edition was offered expurgated of sexual matter and Associationist observations.⁵³ Through more than thirteen hundred pages of serial publication, Sue instantiates the crimes of a reputed Jesuit conspiracy (replete with footnotes) in order to document the power of associational life. All of the crimes and horrors described in the novel's first half lead to the climactic observation of the first volume:

If a perverse association [i.e., the Society of Jesus] based upon the degradation of humanity, upon fear and despotism, and

⁵³Albert Brisbane: "In literature... one of [Associationism's] noblest champions is Eugene Sue. It was under the inspiration of this new social idea that he wrote the Mysteries of Paris, his first effort in this direction, and its success, as well as that of the Wandering Jew, in which the ideas of Association, the organization of labor, and a social reform are more fully developed, show how broad a field the grand conceptions of [a more just order] throws open to literature" (Harbinger I: 20--21).

followed by the maledictions of the people, has survived for centuries, and often governed the world by craft and terror – how would it be with an association, which, taking fraternity and evangelic love for its means, had for its end to deliver man and woman from all degrading slavery, to invite to the enjoyment of terrestrial happiness those who have hitherto known nothing of life but its sorrows and miseries, and to glorify and enrich the labor that feeds the state? (655)

During the first two hundred pages of the second volume, Sue goes on to describe a small-scale model of Fourierist association in the factory cooperative created by a benevolent industrialist. This harbinger of a projected future Associationism features communal dwellings, general education, an extensive festival life, progressive sanitary practice, profit-sharing, just wages, and attention to self-culture. The plot turns around the Jesuits' struggle to steal an immense fortune (in the hundreds of millions of francs) designated by a seventeenth-century testator for the establishment of practical Associationism by his heirs in the nineteenth century.

The purpose of this benevolent association was not to "expose" the evils of the Jesuits but to create a just life for the working man. Indeed Sue's elaboration of "the abuse of the spirit of association" in venues as diverse as the Indian Thuggee sect (of assassins, or "thugs"), the gang-like rival unions of unemployed quarrymen, and the crowd psychology of the cholera, is to instantiate the social utility of the principle of human combination even when it appears to go awry: "There is something so fruitful and divine in this principle, that it sometimes forces to good the worst and most dangerous combinations" (655). In a social and juridical climate that was actively oppressive of working-class economic organization, Sue's novel

asks its mass readership to accept the virtues of combination as an article of faith—or mystery—of the human condition.

The conceptual tectonics of the novel postulate association as a necessary response to the experience of modernity, thematized for the working class by the cruel perpetual mobility inflicted upon the title figure. The legendary wandering Jew was supposed to have been a bystander who refused compassion to Christ on the route to Golgotha. In the German version of the legend upon which Sue relies, Christ is said to have replied, "I stand and rest, but you will go on." In the novel, this "you will go on" sentences the spectator to eternal restlessness, perpetual mortal life unrelieved by death. In Sue's novel, the Jew self-identifies as a laborer, and the constant reaffirmation of his two-thousand-year-old punishment by an unappeasable God ("GO ON! GO ON!") becomes an allegory of the spiritual alienation and physical dislocation of work under modernity: "through me -- the laborer or Jerusalem, cursed by the Lord, who in my person cursed the race of laborers -- a race always suffering, always disinherited, always slaves, who, like me, go on, on, on without rest or intermission, without recompense or hope" (233). The wanderer's desire for death is likewise allegorized as the modern subject's desire for the small death of collectivity: much is made, in this connection, of the symmetrical deaths produced by evil association, the spiritual death of the will demanded of the Jesuit, and the physical death produced by the sect of thug assassins. The wanderer's redemption (following his "Transgression" and "Chastisement") transpires when he shifts his desire for rest to the associationist collective. He prays: "At least O Lord, permit me to stay until I shall have finished my task! Onward! A few days, for mercy's sake, only a few days! Onward! . . . Wilt Thou punish me in them?" The wanderer constitutes himself as the genius

of association: "Do not permit [the Jesuits] to crush the germ of a mighty and fruitful association, which, under Thy protection, may take its place among the records of happiness of mankind. Suffer me, O Lord! to unite those whom they are endeavoring to divide" (235).

Sue's illiberal mistrust of the mobilization of the subject under modernity leads him to celebrate the conversion of this spectatorial self (fascinated by yet remote from the suffering of others) to a participant-observership, ritually affirming the elaboration of others in self and the elaboration of self in others. The long lists of financial and sanitary calculations accompanying the lengthy description of the industrial Association in Sue's novel substitute collective life for the individual in a revision of Robinson Crusoe's story, insisting upon a connection (and not merely an analogy) between material condition and spiritual accountancy.

Developing the associationist imaginary, Sue sees noneconomic and economic action as intimately intertwined: "Why do we not see in France, a single workman wearing a medal as a reward for his courageous industry, his long and laborious career? The token and the little pension attached to it, would be to him a double recompense" (I, 490-491). Sue simultaneously demands labor's full partnership in workplace agency and the equal representation of labor "in our pompous festivals of commerce." This attention to festival is part of an elaborate commitment to achieving justice for an embodied subject, emphasizing the unity of economic and non-economic rewards—an idea expressing a favorite Brook Farm aphorism: "If it is not spiritual, it's not material!" (Codman 179) The difference between this standpoint and historical materialism is evident in Marx's critique of Sue and Engel's critique of Lippard (both reviewed by Denning), a difference which was widely contemporaneously lampooned by the frequent

repetition by one of Fourier's more extreme illustrations, that a more just social order would see the saline of the oceans replaced with lemonade (e.g. Hawthorne, *Blithedale* 61). But the ocean of lemonade aptly suits the festival imaginary in which all men would participate in (and not just helplessly observe) the elaboration of their fate and experience a harmonic unity of physical and mental exertion—as all Associationists insisted—on this earth.

When Sue represents a benevolent capitalist withdrawing from the speculative economy to catalyze association, he simultaneously represents the substitution of ritual and festival life for the spectacular economy. Carefully instantiating the spontaneous dialogism of carnival and the gang subculture of workingmen (in a series of chapters on the Bacchanal Queen and the artisanal rivalry between "Wolves" and "Devourers"), Sue elaborates the ritual inventions of Fourierist festival as an alternative, performative space of mutual invention, expressing the revolutionary-carnival and rough-fraternal spirit as an alternative to the policial theatricality purveyed by Jesuit administrative structures. Attributing carnival and gang-subcultural excesses to "the Inorganization of Labor," Sue pursued an elaborate theory of festival culture, elaborating its tendency to organize labor as a political agent.

The second half of the text is largely concerned with the social psychology of group life. After the model Association is destroyed by gangs of 'inorganized labor' (at Jesuit provocation), Sue shows a series of horrible murders and attempted murders by crowds fearing the cholera, so that the square of Notre Dame "was almost very day the theatre of dreadful scenes" (350). However, Sue again quickly blames these blood spectacles on Jesuit provocation. In five successive chapters, he illustrates an alternative in the

Parisian carnival spirit, which organizes to ward off epidemic in the famous "Cholera Masquerade." The masquers defy death by mocking it. "Here is all the mystery," one of them remarks, "only laugh in the face of the plague, and it will run away from you" (362). The narrator remains cautiously approving of this spirit: "We hardly know," he editorializes, "if this daring bravado was deserving of praise or blame" (360). Although the masquerade ends in the death by alcohol poisoning of the unemployed laborer Sleep-naked (the foil and unharnessed festal spirit of Agricola the worker-poet), this death, too, is directly blamed on a Jesuit provocateur. The Cholera Masquerade is to Sue the expression of a vital popular collectivity that tends toward festival health and utility when unperturbed by jesuitical intervention, or disrupted by the system of industry.

Under the mantra of what Sue's worker-poet Agricola Baudoin describes as "three cabbalistic words: ASSOCIATION -- COMMUNITY -- FRATERNITY" (217), Fourierist association directs the festival spirit to the ends of justice. Importantly, the redemption of Sue's artisan Wandering Jew is accompanied by the redemption of his sister, the Wandering Jewess, with whom he shares the symbolic gift of collective mind, the power "to see and hear him through the vastness of intervening space" (II, 562). This sister, Sue finally reveals, bears the identity of Herodias, who had demanded the murder of John the Baptist "in the cruel intoxication of a pagan festival" (II, 561): this redemption allegorically redeems festival itself, and in such a way that the idea of the festival redemption is symbolized by the death of the individual and subsequent identification with "impenetrable mystery." While not unqualified in his approval of ritual life, Sue saw in it a powerful response to supervisory structures.

These scenes were deeply influential of city mysteries fiction generally. The fourth section of George Lippard's first contribution to the genre, The Quaker City, or, The Monks of Monk Hall (1845) features a highly eclectic version of Sue's title figure in the sorcerer Ravoni, who complains that "common Tradition has combined in one form, and called a thousand mighty Souls, by one paltry name, the Wandering Jew! " (424). The thousand mighty souls are each "gifted with powers that made men worship them as Gods. . . Saviours, Prophets, Reformers" (447). Identifying himself as one of these great figures of will ("I believe in a God, but my God is the Power of of a Giant Will") he exclaims, "I will build me up a Religion!" His "Beautiful System," supported by the "Festival of Ravoni," combines Fourierist--fraternal elements with anti-associationist propaganda, a benevolent socialism with a Napoleonic fetish of the will. Like Sue, Lippard points to organized religion as an agent of oppression; enumerating the horrors of religious genocide, including the atrocities visited upon the indigenous population of the Americas, Ravoni compellingly addresses his cult with the observation, "There has been too much of God. . . these crimes were done in the name of God! Now! . . . Now! Aye, now the time has come, when something for man should be done in the name of MAN!" ⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Emphasis Lippard, ellipses mine (445). Ravoni's address to his cult appeals and appals simultaneously, investing 'brotherhood' with all the revolutionary deism and secular usurpations of the imperial self: "As ye all may be Gods, so am I a God! As ye all may look into the bosom of the Universe, and make the secrets of nature your own, train the lightnings to your will, and sweep the souls of men in adoration at your feet, so have I done! And you my chosen priests will I bind together in a high and solemn Brotherhood, as the first ministers at the altars of the Faith! In silence and mystery will we compass the wide land, selecting our converts from the mass, as we shall know them worthy of our mysteries, and adding them one

Yet Lippard's multivalent narrative doesn't model Ravoni's deistic anti-religion as an agent of utopia. Unlike Sue, the American mysteries novelist declines to represent utopia to his readers, reproducing millenarian urgency with a complex and even fluid content: as Reynolds, Streeby, and Ashwill have observed, the contradictory claims and trajectories of Lippard's work--nowhere more evident than in his first and most successful effort-- have tremendous import precisely for their ambiguity and multiplicity, both recording and intervening in a complex social reality with immanent, ethically-implicated instruments: pursuing suggestions by Denning and Reynolds, Ashwill observes that Lippard's fiction promotes "what might be called 'conflict consciousness,' achieved by modeling conflict in the novels' structure, motifs, and sensationalism"(313).⁵⁵

As in The Wandering Jew, the principle of association in The Monks of Monk Hall simultaneously indicates both elite oppression and the collective agency of the oppressed. The difference is that Lippard figures these values in a single character, who bears these conflicting imperatives under almost unbearable strain (indicating a genealogy closer to the gothic). While elaborating a similarly complex plot line defying clarification, Sue's characters are at least in their binarism closer to the melodrama, dedicated to either good or evil Association. Lippard instead attempts a kind of ideological realism, so that the contested social structure of personality is worn visibly by his characters.⁵⁶ In this connection, Ravoni's appeal to ritual

by one to our holy brotherhood! No loud prayers in a tinselled church, no vapid trumpetings of our godliness fro street to corners, but slowly and silently and in power will we work for the New Faith, built in the name of MAN for the good of MAN!" (447-448)

⁵⁵ See also Humpherys on the alternate narrative logic of the city mystery

⁵⁶ Polysignificance is politics here: where the values of clarity and economy have reactionary ideological import, the cultural work of

is tellingly polysignificant: "In order to acquire an influence over the minds of men, I will appeal to a principle rooted deep in every human heart. I will evoke the love of Mystery! I will awe and terrify by Miracles and Pageants and Shadows!" (425). The term "mystery" signifies three things at once: 1) the ritual signified above; 2) the collective, "magnetic" experience of "universal sympathy" through which "all men. . . are connected with each other" and 3) a radical Jacksonian individualism, so that "we shape our own destinies. . . by developing the mysteries planted in our bosoms" (447). If anything, this first version of Lippard's mystery-supported Brotherhood resembles the personality cult surrounding the charismatic individualism of the quintessential melodramatic hero, Edwin Forrest. But subsequent versions of Lippard's Fourierism became substantially more consistent and socialist, emphasizing fraternity, solidarity, and ritual practice over the radical liberation of the individual will. In New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million (1853), the mechanic hero Arthur Dermoyne leaves the metropolis to establish a socialist utopia.

It is impossible to deny that city-mysteries fiction was implicated deeply in the melodramatic-spectacular economy of exposure. But nearly all city-mysteries fictions and their makers did more to sustain than explode mystery. George Foster's one city-mysteries effort, Celio (1850), concludes with a removal of all of the characters to a Fourierist utopia on the Connecticut River. Like Lippard, Foster's relationship to antebellum associational life was complex and multivalent. Lippard began his journalistic career covering the invented traditions and ritual performance of Philadelphia's vast antebellum volunteer-militia culture (cf. Davis) for Spirit of the Times and Citizen Soldier (Reynolds, "Introduction" xi).

multiplicity and complication has liberatory potential.

Foster's assignment at Greeley's (then-still-Fourierist) Tribune similarly consisted largely of what could have been described as the associationist beat, covering, he recalled in New-York Naked, "masonic funerals and odd-fellow processions which embellished the week" and the parades of the b'hoy volunteer fire companies. As Blumin notes, he found in these processions a metaphor for the "grand parade" of his own work (1990: 35). He was in all of these activities no mere observer, but also (as Blumin emphasizes) a participant, attached not only to various seamy informal associations (leading eventually to his imprisonment on forgery charges) but also to numerous organized instances of associational life, including, variously, the producers of imagined community in the (chauvinist literary) Young America group headed by Cornelius Mathews, Brook Farm, and nativist societies.

The participant-observer relation is not just an accident of Foster's career: like Eugene Sue, who became a Socialist deputy in connection with his fiction's reception, many city-mysteries novelists constituted themselves and the reading community of their work as political agents. In turn, the reading community "wrote" the writers, creating them as political operatives—as Denning speculates with respect to Lippard who, he observes, opposed strikes by workers as late as 1844.⁵⁷ This agency did not ipso facto tend toward universal brotherhood: E.Z.C. Judson ("Ned Buntline"), the author of "The Mysteries and Miseries of New York," numerous nautical tales, sensation stories, and scores of dime novels, created a nativist

⁵⁷This standpoint was however common in the early years of the Associationist movement which imagined itself as a partnership between capital and labor

workingman's secret society, masterminded the Astor Place riots, and was jailed for a year as a result of his fraternal-political activities. Indeed, the nativist dimension of the labor fraternities is particularly significant, emblemizing the operation of these groups to locate the subjects of their association, through mystery to make them the "natives" of a place, exchanging the mobilities of displacement-masquerading-as-liberty for the responsibilities of the indigene. Even where the social energies supporting this desire for location went awry, as in Buntine's nativism, they testify--in their sad and violent contributions--to the intensity of the antebellum subject's desire for demobilization. It is unsurprising, from this perspective, to observe that John Howard Payne's "Home, Sweet, Home" virtually provided an anthem for the antebellum era.

One agent of antebellum demobilization was carefully created and sustained mystery, invented ritual relations. The ritual of Lippard's labor fraternity acknowledges the fragility of mystery ("the holiest things are most easily ridiculed" ["B.G.C." 21]). It implicates the members of the group in active relations, of care within its borders, and collective action without, in defense of that fragility. Ritual preserves an area of "Truth" which must remain shrouded and veiled, and can't stand the violent exposures of melodramatic ways of knowing. The strong relation of speculation to spectatorship is evident throughout the ritual book, and the members are repeatedly enjoined to abandon the financial system implicated in the social construction of unitary perspective. In the initiation rite, for instance, the Chief Washington ritually chastises the candidate for bringing "within our Circle, the craft and cruelty which the oppressions of the tyrant have taught to him," identifying "cruelty" with "curiosity": "He comes perchance from a vague and idle curiosity; he would learn our mysteries," the Washington

concludes, "and publish them to the ears of wretches as base, as faithless as himself. No—No! I cannot receive him" (27). The genres disseminating liberal-enlightenment ideology, such as journalism and melodrama, seek to appropriate the ritual function to their own purposes (exactly as Bercovitch argues), but Lippard's ritual seeks, in its turn, to re-appropriate the ascendant spectacular economy to ritual purpose.

This appropriation of melodrama transpires in a series of dramatic episodes interleaved within the (extremely elaborate) degree work of the fraternity. Through these playlets, Lippard thematizes the mobilization of the subject under a system of political, juridical, and economic oppression. The longest of these episodes represents a cabal of oppressive Lords: of Law, Land, and Labor. These emblems of corruption and the industrial order drink and cheerfully swap stories of the crimes that enable them, as they congratulate themselves, "TO OWN THE LABOR OF THE MILLIONS" (39). Each contributes in his own way to the mobilization of the working man. The first rhetorically calls up the figure of the artisan as wanderer: "What is the object of our traffic? Is it not to make the few rich, while the Many are left to drag their chains over the world, in misery and blindness, seeking the shelter of a grave?" (37) The second Lord elaborates the theme of homelessness into an explicit strategy of capital: to continue our traffic, he suggests to his own associates, "In the first place, we must deprive man of a Home. . ."⁵⁸ The third concretely relates the wandering of persons to

⁵⁸ The character and rhetoric of the Lord of Land also represent a strictly contemporary response to the rent disturbances. In this connection, see Charles A. Dana's impassioned socialist literary criticism in The Harbinger, especially his comments on Cooper's The Chainbearer: "He defends the 'rights of property' with so much ingenuity and good sense, that

financial circulation, establishing through the analogy of perpetual motion the death-in-life of industrial mobilization. Raising up a banknote, he gloats, "By this strip I set the Factory in motion--the Factory which supplies me with comfort and luxury, and crushes men and women--aye, and little children--to death, beneath its Juggernaut wheels" (39). All three mockingly toast "the landless laborer," in their own way, one wishing him a home "in six feet of earth," another wishing him "nothing but work--work--hopeless, homeless, work!"

Against this thematization of the artisan as wanderer, the subjects of the speculative economy ("our traffic") are asked to accept stillness, silence, and restraint--but a very different stillness than that of the silently-fascinated theatergoer. The ritual offers the candidate the restraint of an alternate discipline ("learn first to be silent--to be obedient--to meet each scene of our ritual with that reverence which we demand" [21]), preparatory to accepting the Brotherhood as "a shelter" and "a home in this world, and hope for the next" (24). This demobilizing discipline--Sit here. Be Silent. Obey. --offers no boisterous transgressiveness, but it does permit the group to reimagine the liberal-democratic taboo against "party," "faction," and "combination." In symbolic refusal of the liberties of the industrial order, the group creates a tactical "communion" with the ambition of establishing a concrete labor utopia on this earth.

even his pompous manner cannot destroy the force of his reasoning. But if we look in his pages for any defence of the rights of Man, we shall be disappointed. They do not lie in his province; as far as the rights of himself and his friends are concerned, they must be provided for" and Melville's Typee: "the great secret of the whole matter is that in Typee there is abundance for every person. . . . we must in society create the material conditions which there are created by nature") (Harbinger I, 411 and Harbinger II, 265)

While the more transcendentially-inclined Associationists with Charles Dana "look[ed] forward to a period" when the protection of a "special brotherhood" was not necessary, the practice of a tactical collective withdrawal into a conspiratorial fraternity with designs upon reforming the social whole was virtually the defining social action of the years 1840-1940. In ritualized collective withdrawal, neither the mechanics nor the utopian socialists tended to their "own" interests, individual or group, but to the welfare of all, in a society experiencing "a state of universal dislocation."⁵⁹ Even where the object of reform was more personal, as in the temperance movement, Channing described the "new era" of "positive movements" ("the Pledge was negative, after all, in its action"):

we now begin to see on all sides, mutual obligations of assistance among those reclaimed from intemperance. The Washington Societies, the Orders of Sons of Intemperance, of the Rechabites &c. ... a new sentiment of brotherhood is spreading. The winter of barren individualism [gives way to] a springtime of social sympathy.

(Harbinger I, 91, emphasis original)

⁵⁹An unsigned Harbinger editorial, perhaps responding to Emerson, defends the intersubjective tactics to reforming a society in a state of general "dislocation" : "It is contended that the only way to reform society is to reform individuals; let them be regenerated and set right and society will come right as a necessary consequence. That is the same as if a surgeon when called to treat a man most of whose joints were dislocated, should attempt to cure him by merely rubbing and bandaging them [i.e., the limbs only, and not the joints] into a healthy state, they would fall back into their places. Society is like such an injured man; the first thing to be done is to get its members into their proper places, to set its joints, to bring its relations into the true order, and not suppose that men and women can be made good while they live in a state of universal dislocation" (II, 336).

Supported by Fourierist festival theory, the republican recovery of guild mystery in artisanal associational life travels alongside the similarly-supported theory and practice of invented tradition in utopian-socialist communities. From funerals to parlor theatricals, occasional poetry and hymns, the presence of a vivid, inventive performance culture appears in communities organized on quite different principles, including Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands, Adin Ballou's Hopedale, Brook Farm, the Oneida community, the Icarian settlements and nearly all of the Fourierist installations (P. Noyes 140-144; Ballou, Memoir: 124-125, 195). The theatricality of Associationism, Channing suggests, is completely other than that sustaining, the "bragging, advertising, placarding, circular-scattering, auctioneering, humbuging [sic] world," and completely unable to address the "Satan of selfishness" which demands revelation, certainty, proof:

To the scattered band who, few and weak, are here and there withdrawn from the thoroughfares of life, to commune together and cooperate in the grand movement of the age, the world comes with a scarce dissembled sneer, and ironically says, 'If Association is really this Messiah to the ages, this pledge of universal prosperity, of overflowing wealth, then let it make these barren fields into gardens, these thick growing woods into palaces, these stones into bread.

(qtd. in Codman 320)

Asserting that "Association is the divine form of humanity" (consistent with most religious utopians and Henry James, Sr.'s observation that the associated form of life was the "only moral" form), Channing at once recognizes the spectacular challenge that accompanies the utopians' claim that Associationism represents the "messiah to the ages," but insists both

upon the tenability of the claim and the necessity of responding to the challenge—as had Christ when faced with a similar challenge—by resisting the temptation to rationalize (and thereby denature) its constitutive mystery.

The Mysteries and Miseries of Blithedale

The ages have presented man in a two-fold aspect, as man, as not man. Human things, constitutions, politics, laws, religions, all have gone, either on the fact, rather we might say, have grown out of the intrinsic reality of man's individual worth, or else, and contrary to this, on the tacit assumption of man's individual worthlessness. With the one, man, the living soul, the individual in his sole being, is more than king, noble, hierarch, church, or state; not he theirs or for them, but they nothing save for him; with the other, state, church, hierarch, noble, king, each is more than man; he theirs and for them, he little or nothing save as a fraction of the general order, a part and instrument of the whole. "S.," "Man in the Ages," Dial 1, no.3 (January 1841)

Ponds have presented turtles in two aspects—either as turtles or as not turtles. In the one, turtle, the living, breathing, air-cased creature, the individual in his pneumatic being, sitting on a rock, pond-centred, is might, supernal, vastly infinite—more than frogdom at bottom, blind-eel or muscle-life. Not he theirs or for them, but they nothing, save for him. Outward world—to them mud-encompassed—otherwise dead as a doornail. In the other, slidden from pond-centred rock down to the depths of the unsearchable, frogdom, blind-eel, and muscle life—each more than turtle. He theirs, being thick-headed, obfuscated by lack of light, and doltish; —and for them, he little or nothing save a black lump, part of the general pond-bottom, pavement, chips, wind, gas, snake-grass and bulrushes. —Cornelius Mathews, Puffer Hopkins

It has been generally observed that Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance is about the failure of community and a fair amount of energy has been spent upon speculations regarding the degree to which it accurately portrays the historical failure of the Brook Farm community. Our concern

here however is not with the success or failure of particular associations but with the success or failure more broadly of associational practices. It is true that by 1852 the utopian socialist movement was stagnant. However, the small-a associationis" of parlors, lyceum halls, and public squares was rapidly expanding and supported by a culture of invented tradition and performance practices similar to the "fragmentary bits of theatrical performance" (106) described in Hawthorne's novel. As at the historical Brook Farm and other utopian socialist communities, Hawthorne's "Blithedale" attempted to manufacture community with invented tradition of all sorts, from funeral ceremonies to parlor theatrical, including traditional and contemporary variations of rustic festival. What is most interesting about Hawthorne's version of utopian socialist invented tradition and its efforts to perform community is his extremely jaundiced tone: he appears almost jealous of the homelier authorship of the inventors of socialist performance and is at great pains to show the failure of those performances to sustain community—even as his own narrative is made up of little more than a vivid record of utopian socialist performance life.

Early in the text Hawthorne pits "true poetry" against life in an Associationist community: Zenobia in her first exchange with the narrator Coverdale assures him that she would rather give him up "as an associate, than that the world should lose one of its true poets!" (14). This opposition between Associationism and true poetry sets up the vast cultural production of associational life as false poetry. The key plot points of the story transpire during moments of this false poetry — the May-Day "moveable festival," Zenobia's allegory of the Veiled Lady, the impromptu lectures at Eliot's Pulpit, the mesmeric performance in the village hall, and the woodland

masquerade. Upon Zenobia's death, Hawthorne has Coverdale relate the Blithedalers' final rejection of socialist invented performance:

In anticipation of a death, we Blithedale colonists had sometimes set our fancies at work to arrange a funereal ceremony, which should be the proper symbolic expression of our spritual faith and eternal hopes; and this we meant to substitute for those customary rites, which were moulded originally out of the Gothic gloom, and, by long use like an old velvet-pall, have so much more than their first death-smell in them. But, when the occasion came, we found it the simplest and truest thing, after all, to content ourselves with the old fashion . . . (238-239)

And yet--this renunciation by a utopian community of their inventions to the contrary--if the members of failed experimental communities took anything with them out of their utopian experiment, it was the practice of inventing performance.

In fact, so far from being "fragmentary," the utopian socialist approach to performance was highly theorized. Numerous essays in Brook Farm's Harbinger addressed the importance of reinventing tradition, specifically imagining an alternative festival space to those sustaining the national imaginary, especially the fourth of July. At Brook Farm, the creation of a performance life involving all of the residents (and the apparently generally-eager "outsiders") was the province of a particular "Amusement Group" (Codman 91-93; 139-141), as was the case at Fourierist installations generally. These groups created what Guarneri calls a "utopian socialist counterculture poking at the boundaries of Victorian America" (215; see especially "Creating a Communitarian Culture" 211-218). Including both

invented ritual and amateur theatricals, the anti-spectacular emphasis of this performance was explicit: not "for show, or to display handsome clothes, but simply for the love of it, its harmony and love of one another's society and companionship" (Codman 92).

Both George Ripley and John S. Dwight contributed scathing critiques of nationalist spectacle to The Harbinger. Ripley takes a particularly sardonic tone: "Our high holiday the Fourth of July is close at hand. How many unfledged orators will make it an occasion to try their wings! What lofty flights into the empyrean! What a quantity of senseless babble about liberty, progress, the rights of man, and this great country. 'Words,' friend; 'words, words.'" Dwight's article is similarly sardonic and more elaborately critical of the idea of a nationalist festival: "'These are my brothers,' one might exclaim," he writes:

They are all dressed up in festal garments, and go out into one another's presence, as if for some sort of communion; and what one thing do they have in common? The 'Glorious Fourth?'—free institutions—a day's leisure to meditate upon them and dress up on the strength of it? processions and fireworks and brotherhood of man and Independence? The independent ones are hardly seen out on this people's day; they have their own private pleasures, on this day, and on every other day;... and the people may talk glory and have their fireworks once a year.

(Harbinger I, 77-78; emphasis original)

Ripley notes with approval that the workingmen's associations are boycotting the spectacle and "fulsome panegyrics on liberty" in favor of separate celebrations (like the "independent ones" Dwight instantiates). He

urges his readers to imitate these separate celebrations and their dialogic emphasis, and use the day to "come together for the interchange of sentiments and views."

The event appears to Dwight more in the character of spectacle than ritual:

On the Fourth of July, one half of Boston parades up and down in processions, for the other half to look at. It is a would-be-merry spectacle, and that is all. Not much enthusiasm of any kind, but a great expression of a desire that there might be some; a great putting of themselves in the way of it... The city tries too hard to look glad. Each great or littly party, company, society, by dint of music and marches, would make it out that it has something to celebrate. There is great stir, but little warmth; and hardly any thing that looks or sounds or acts like an all-pervading, all-uniting sentiment. The whole looks unmeaning enough. (77)

This account is dense and irreducible. In it a swarming actual associational life is visible ("each great or little party, company, society. . . would make it out that it has something to celebrate), but equally apparent is the Associationist's desire for something larger ("an all-pervading, all-uniting sentiment") ascribed by him to the population ("not much enthusiasm of any kind, but a great expression of a desire that there might be some"). Dwight's ascription of a desire for an all-uniting collectivity establishes a position for him to compare nationalist with socialist unification. Dwight represents patriotic spectacle as betrayal of the festival spirit, the desire for what "keeps the live coals together, which otherwise would smolder away in isolation. Hence these efforts to multiply festivals and beautiful occasions."

In failing as festival ("would-be-merry"), the nationalist celebration succeeds as fascination ("spectacle"): "Here were the denizens of the common-place paths of life, the children of the poor, the plain, the toil-worn parading up and down, as an exhibition, while the gentle and the refined and the beautiful sat at the lordly windows to behold them." Under socialism, however, Dwight suggests, the aesthetics of festival depend upon a correspondence of representation with "all the social relations, and all the facts of life," and not upon a spectatorial economy. He projects a vision of the festival life of "Collective Man":

when badges and emblems, and marshalled ranks, shall express true facts of every-day character; when corporate enthusiasm shall perform its marches and its dances, not in the midst of a gaping, foreign, unsympathizing crowd of a city, which is the marketplace of selfish competition, but around and beneath the architectural splendors of the Unitary home, where every thing inspires a unitary thought, and every looker on is part of the festival. . . (78)

Where there are neither speculators nor spectators but only participants, "the outward life of man shall all be allegorical of the inward," and the festival spirist will "continually burst forth, or rather flow forth, in a religion of the Fine Arts, in festivals as earnest as the duties which fit for them, in processions which shall be nothing less than worship." Similar theorizations of festival culture as an alternative to the spectacular economy pervade the records of the performance life of associations from 1845 onward.

Consistent with Fourierist theory, most American phalanxes established a festival pleasure principle, and this contemporary impression of Brook Farm is no more than typical: "Enjoyment was from the first a serious pursuit of

the community. It formed a part of the curriculum and was a daily habit of life" (Swift 53).

Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance consistently misapplies the poetics of spectacle to the utopian socialist performances. Indeed, his strong misprision is identical with Bercovitch's own appropriation of ritual for liberal democracy--basing his appropriation of the participant-observer ethos for liberalism upon a prior (mis)identification of ritual with spectacle. This attribution of the economy of the stage to Blithedale's performance life is emblemized by Coverdale's presentation of Zenobia (and his elision of the complexly-associated life of reform culture into her desire to make a spectacle of herself): "The image of her form and face should have been multiplied all over the earth. It was wronging the rest of mankind, to retain her as the spectacle of only a few.. The stage would have been her proper sphere"(44). An "enchantress," in Coverdale's estimation "a sister of the Veiled Lady" (an analogy literalized by the melodramatic revelations of the plot), Zenobia's performance has only the spectacular function of sustaining a subjectivity based on celebrity (properly, of course, a liberal invention). This frequently-observed scapegoating of Zenobia drives her tableaux-vivant out of the ritual function that such activities historically provided for utopian communities into the spectacular realm, of gross anatomy and nature morte: Coverdale's wish that she should sit especially to sculptors "because the cold decorum of the marble would consist with the utmost scantiness of drapery" is fulfilled by her death by drowning: " she was the marble image of a death agony" (235). While there is room to credit Hawthorne with ironic intent regarding the creation of Coverdale and his liberal-libidinal implication in the specular economy (as in Dale Bauer's

reading), all evidence—textual and extratextual—implicates Hawthorne in this hostility toward ritualized communion.

The misrepresentation of Zenobian performance as spectacular supports Hawthorne's contribution to the struggle over the meaning of "mystery". Scapegoating Zenobia for the link between the culture of celebrity and the cult of personality, just as he bizarrely scapegoats social reformers for "masculine egotism," Hawthorne's novel seeks to explode the mystery of associational life and locate mystery in the individual. The "Veiled Lady" legend recounted by Zenobia and the Veiled Lady performance together negatively value "the realm of Mystery," in which individuals are incarcerated ("thou canst lift this mysterious veil, beneath which I am a sad and lonely prisoner in a bondage which to me is worse than death" [113]). The performance is more direct, identifying the Veiled Lady's "communion: with the spirit world with her availability to (barely) symbolic sexual assault:

. . . several deep-lunged country-fellows, who looked as if they might have blown the apparition away with a breath, ascended the platform. Mutually encouraging one another, they shouted so close to her ear, that the veil stirred like a wreath of vanishing mist; they smote upon the floor with bludgeons. . . (202)

Implicating the collective spirit of mutual encouragement with rude country apings and shoutings, and adumbrating this collectivity with the idea of rape, this scene invites the reader to sympathize, like Coverdale, with the Veiled Lady, and to fear for his beset manhood.

By driving mystery out of the communal and into the personal, the novel accomplishes the ideological work of which it accuses Hollingsworth

and Zenobia. Hawthorne's misprision of utopian socialist theatrical conceals the melodramatic economy of his own novel. It is the Blithedale Romance that runs on a simplistic binary moral epistemology, an economy of spectacle and exposure, expressive individualism, and recovery of the paternal. It is an explicit retelling of the Robinson Crusoe story (especially evident in the symbolic pressure exerted by Coverdale's bower), an allegory of the Romantic selfhood described by Charles Taylor in which the self emerges out of webs of interlocution -- most dramatically when Hawthorne shows the Blithedale masquers chasing an ontologically panicked Coverdale through the darkening woods.

More interesting than Priscilla's role as the Veiled Lady is her role as a seamstress, an occupation which to contemporaries would have immediately connoted either sexual availability or penurious spinsterdom--values she does in fact embody in her bizarre dual secret history. In this she plays both of the roles assigned to the working-class sisters at the center of The Wandering Jew, the hump-backed Mother Bunch, in love with the Associationist worker-poet hero Agricola, and her sexually promiscuous sister, the Bacchanal Queen. Throughout the text, Hawthorne repeatedly alienates the festival spirit into Priscilla; the indictment of Hollingsworth's masculinism unsuccessfully attempts to scapegoat the social reformer for liberal Coverdale's desire to possess Priscilla both as woman and as allegory of intersubjective experience.

Eugene Sue's Mysteries of Paris and The Wandering Jew are virtually palimpsestically active beneath Hawthorne's text. Sue's novels provided a significant literary preoccupation for the American utopian socialist movement, including Brook Farm. The Brook Farm newspapers advertised, eulogized, and defended Sue from anti-associationist detractors. Indeed,

during the middle and late 1840's, much of the anti-associationist discourse took the form of attacks upon Eugene Sue's novels (and at least one 1845 Brook Farm editorial tried to separate their aims from the controversy surrounding Sue's "immoral" work). Hawthorne's extended discussion of the Blithedale library and literary influences neglects other figures besides Eugene Sue, but this is an omission that bears particular notice.

Hawthorne's romance offers counterpropaganda to Sue's mystery of the city, explicitly attempting to usurp the form and function of the city-mysteries novel to ridicule the Associationist experiment (in which, after all, he had participated while Sue theorized it en route to global literary celebrity). But Hawthorne misreads the genre of city-mysteries fiction in exactly the same way that he misreads the invented tradition of utopian socialism--as contained by and wholly sustaining a spectacular economy, and his attempt at a reply to Sue devolves into little more than a would-be expose of the follies of Brook Farm.

Versions of Zenobia: Alcott's "Pleasure Room"

In the gothic thrillers that she penned between 1862 and 1869, Louisa May Alcott took shelter beneath anonymity while creating often-irresistible antiheroines which, taken as a group, can be fairly characterized as versions of Zenobia: expressing a melodramatic, transgressive theatricality, the characters were frequently actresses and artist's models who translated their

duplicitous representational talents into the drawing-room with stunning effect. But in the first novel that she published under her own name, Moods (1864, first drafted 1860), Alcott alienates most of this overt, melodramatic theatricality into the character of a fallen temptress ("Can I not learn to be the woman I have seemed?") and strives to distinguish between it and the domestic heroine's tomboyism and dramatic "moods"(11). In Work (begun 1861, unpublished until 1873), she gives the heroine a brief success on the public stage, but compels her to "renounce the profession which she could not follow without self-injury and self-reproach"(58). By the series of works that begins with Little Women (1868-69), the performance impulse which Alcott so consistently represents in her characters finds expression in what had become for the reading public the relatively legitimate venue of domestic theatricals: that the author still expected some resistance from her readers to performances even in this venue is evident in her narrator's supervening defense of the March theatricals as pedagogical practice: "It was excellent drill for their memories, a harmless amusement," the narrator insists, "and employed many hours which otherwise would have been, idle, lonely, or spent in less profitable society"(17). When Alcott revised and republished Moods in 1882, such a defense no longer appears necessary: tellingly, Alcott's extensive emendations include the complete excision of the melodramatic, scheming temptress, and the insertion of an episode which features the domestic heroine in a sequence of "dramatic pictures and pieces"(243). Alcott's 1882 revisions locate the heroine's performance at a campfire scene on an overnight boating trip, so that amateur theatricals, so far from requiring apologies for threatening the home, are clearly by this time seen as constitutive of domesticity.

Alcott's long career of benefit theatricals asks to be imagined as a negotiation with antitheatrical social discipline of the sort reinforced by Hawthorne in his portrait of Zenobia: the penalties of pursuing a career on the public stage were too high for her and even for her most remarkably progressive family. Not surprisingly, her fictional representations of domestic theater in the Little Women series reproduce some of her frustrations in this connection. The second theatricality eventually embraced by bourgeois American culture was to an extent denatured by its domestication. Even while her immensely popular books contributed to the legitimization of domestic theatricals, Alcott only ambivalently acceded to this containment: while she does reproduce the emergent cultural distinction between theatricalities, she appears to do so unwillingly. For example, the narrator of Little Women somewhat bemusedly distances Jo March's production from the public stage: Jo's favorite stage properties, a pair of men's boots, she notes, were "given her by a friend, who knew a lady who knew an actor"(17). Of course, in marking and elaborating this attenuated connection between Jo's performance and the public stage, the comic emphasis on the attenuation reveals Alcott's conception of the connection. Alcott only reluctantly gave up what was for her the transgressive component of melodramatic theatricality; she openly hungered for the melodramatic stage, and the vigorous expression of an autonomous, atomized, Jacksonian individualism. And many critics, most prominently Haltunnen, accept Alcott's desires in this connection, equating melodramatic theatricality with John Higham's "boundlessness" and the domestic drama for which she settled as symptomatic of "consolidation" ("Domestic Drama" 250).

From the standpoint of ideological critique, of course, these values can be reversed: as argued above, melodrama tends to substitute the sense of agency for its substance, and the schoolroom theatricals which Haltunnen instantiates as disciplinary can provide large space for negotiation.⁶⁰ The space between subjective experience and ideological critique is filled with numerous mediating alternatives—just as the space between public (theater) and private (theatricals) is mediated by the complex sphere of the social, and numerous intermediate genres of performance. In following Alcott's hint of the connection between the pleasures of acting out in public and the compromises represented by domestic performance, we turn to the theater which she and many thousands of American women performed to raise funds for hospitals and sanitary supplies during the Civil War, and to Alcott's thinly-fictionalized record of her experiences in a Sanitary Commission hospital.

Throughout Hospital Sketches (1863), Alcott's "Nurse Tribulation Periwinkle" expresses an explicitly-gendered warlike desire (Schultz, *passim*) to emerge out of her domestic ties into a "manly" and "military" posture of the republican, Roman soldier (3-4). This wish resonates with her self-dramatization and sensationalist desires ("Having a taste for 'ghastliness,' I had rather longed for the wounded to arrive, for rheumatism wasn't heroic" [21]) and takes her to the spectacular culture of the capital:

⁶⁰See in this connection Looby's observation in passing that "Recent critical attention to Alcott's sensation fiction has found [the "blood and thunder novellas"] incorrectly I believe, to be radically subversive of the norms of sentimental femininity; in truth, Little Women mounts a much more powerful critique of those norms than Behind a Mask does. The latter... powerfully restores sentimental domestic ideology even as it provides a fantasy of escape from it" (655).

The men did the picturesque, and did it so well that Washington looked like a mammoth masquerade. Spanish hats, scarlet lined riding cloaks, swords and sashes, high boots and bright spurs, beards and mustaches, which made plain faces comely and comely faces heroic; these vanities of the flesh transformed out butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers into gallant riders of gaily comparisoned horses, much handsomer than themselves... (56)

Including a lengthy meditation on a mule or "melodramatic quadruped" that shirked his work by playing dead ("apparently dying a la Forrest: a gasp—a squirm—a flop" [56-57]), Alcott records both fascination with and distance from the melodramatic and spectacular economy, and her heroine Nurse Periwinkle both succeeds in sharing into a soldierly fierceness (unapologetically snubbing a Confederate patient, and confessing to a thrill in accepting earrings that had been plundered from a rebel household as a gift from one of her patients) while also repeatedly experiencing a domesticating discipline by the administration of the war machine.

This tension between continuing efforts at social control and the war's mobilization of voluntary female labor as an opportunity for feminist gains runs through the whole history of the hospitals effort. On the one hand, the history of the U.S. Sanitary Commission is one of elite Northern intellectuals, many of whom (like the James family and Frederick Law Olmsted, the Commission's head through 1864) were veterans of utopian socialism, who had acceded to nationalism as a means of strengthening a socially-activist central government. This story, as particularly well told by Attie, emphasizes the imposition of a central administrative structure by male elites upon a feminine, localist benevolent structure--and is probably

best adumbrated by Olmsted's description of non-centralized relief efforts as "bad and dangerous" (qtd. in Attie 140). But inside this tale of social control (in which "urban nationalists" seized upon the war as an opportunity to "challenge locally-based republicanism"), there is another struggle, for feminist gains: in this second struggle, the women's networks (organized on a "relatively non-authoritative" basis) resisted administrative cooptation (Attie 64, 102).

This resistance to administration transpired in large part through the women's benefit-performance culture. Because the wartime benefit performances mobilized homefront support, cash and supplies--and because support, cash, and supplies represented the currency of power in the competition between administrative structures in the relief effort-- wartime benefits located actual resistance and gains, particularly on the vector of gender. The administrative and performance history of the war relief effort run parallel. For instance, the early localism of the relief effort was accompanied by the organization, in some communities, of small-scale benefit theatricals--in Concord, Massachusetts, as early as 1861 (handbill, Concord Free Public Library). By November 1863, even Sanitary Commission propaganda interspersed with Christian tract-distribution accounts actively encouraged "getting up" tableaux and concerts as a fundraising practice (3rd Semi-Annual, 23), and the venues for these productions ranged from homes and schoolhouses to the great halls of the city-wide Sanitary Commission Fairs (Dutchess 10; Northwestern 36-38). Alcott's extensive benefit-performance schedule after 1863 makes quite clear that the progress of the war saw a steadily increasing valuation of the real work of these performances: Sanitary Commission propaganda emphasized the "collection of funds" over all "other labor" (such as needlework),

singling out benefit performance as a tactic employed by aid societies "particularly 'on the alert'" (3rd Semi-Annual 23). The hundreds of chiefly feminine collectives which organized themselves in affiliation with the Sanitary Commission provided a site of alternate identification and often effective resistance to structures of dominance embodied in surgeons and Army administrators, community leaders and church officials--both during the war and after, in hospitals and in communities far from the front lines (Schultz *passim*). Jean Strouse's account of Alice James's Cambridge women's amateur dramatic circle persuasively emphasizes that the group, first formed on behalf of the sanitary effort, functioned most importantly for its members as a site of affiliation (134).

As these relief efforts became more centralized, however, so did the performances, flowering out into the phenomenon of the "Sanitary Fairs" that each presented dozens of amateur performances, and inspired hundreds more (as local groups held performances to raise funds to support their participation in the larger carnival). The first fair, established by one of the women's regional efforts over the explicit opposition of the central (male-dominated) Sanitary administration. "The first Sanitary Fair was an experiment," wrote a contemporary chronicler. "It was pre-eminently a woman-enterprise, and received no assistance from the other sex in its earlier stages" (Henshaw 210). When the Chicago fair netted nearly four times its organizers' most optimistic estimate, or about a hundred thousand dollars, the Sanitary Commission rapidly took over the administration of fairs, creating in Henshaw's words an "immense machinery" (287). Subsequent contemporary chroniclers of subsequent fairs, especially the massive New-York and Philadelphia events, netting half a million dollars each and running for weeks at a time, emphasize the masculinization of the

process and development of a benefit-performance bureaucracy far more elaborate than any of Fourier's "Amusement Groups." The anonymous but evidently male author of the the History of the Great Western Sanitary Fair (Cincinnati, 1864), for example, describes the new approach:

To Chicago belongs the praise of originating the germ-idea, out of which the grand movement throughout the land has sprung. . . . Still, it was with them a partial conception; it was merely an approximation to the the true idea; it was little more than a ladies' Church festival, such as were common, only on a grander scale. . . . It was not a general movement, but restricted to the ladies so far as management was concerned (565)

The Cincinnati and subsequent fairs no longer left the management to the ladies: the rosters of their committees are generally male, and increasingly reflect masculine occupational organization, featuring committees by trade and profession. Towards the end of the war, however, the central Sanitary administration was again losing control of local auxiliaries (Attie 305): the largest legacy of the massive Fairs was the legitimization and massive dissemination of a vast performance culture throughout the union, which local women's groups used to legitimate their own performances, diverting resources to their own ends, returning, i.e., to the ladies' church festival as a means of evading administration. (Nor were the women the only ones to break away: ethnic, religious, sport and amusement groups frequently declined to submit to festival discipline, or used the threat of division to negotiate special recognition from the central organizing authorities.)

Emblematically, that first Sanitary Fair in Chicago ended with carnival inversion. Observing that "a Sanitary Fair was a species of sanitary revival," Henshaw offers a vivid account:

The dinner, the last act in the Fair, was over, and 'the boys' had left the hall. But the excitement still lacked adequate expression. As a finale, came a sort of saturnalia. The ladies, who had, for a triumphal fortnight, throughout all departments, given heed to the wants of others, were to have a concluding dinner together. Gentlemen offered for the nonce to become waiters, and arraying themselves in the badges, aprons, and uniform caps of the ladies, discharged the office with infinite fun and awkwardness. (286; 218-19)

The spirit of this inversion informs all of Alcott's post-war fiction. Through the civil-war performance culture, she developed the ability to negotiate administrative pressures, creating a performance space within disciplinary space, a kind of fully-functional alternate administration within the hospital. Rejecting the violative specularity of the operating-table--dubbing the doctor, inversively, a "surgical seamstress"-- Alcott's Nurse Periwinkle divides her ward into three rooms: one for duty, one for mourning, and one that she calls her "pleasure room," a space where private theatricals created a space friendly to alterity and to a sharing of subjectivity across gender.

The most repeated opening of an American novel, "Call me Ishmael," is evidently a performance of identity, of self against society. The opening of Alcott's war memoir, "I want something to do," initiates a performance of agency, not identity. "Turn actress," offers her sister. "I won't," replies the nurse: "Go nurse the soldiers," offers the brother. "I will!" (7-8) The narrator's thumping "I will!" emerges within a mutual acting-out:

An hour's conversation on the subject set the whole family in a blaze of enthusiasm. A model hospital was erected, and each member had accepted an honorable post therein. The paternal P. was chaplain, the maternal P. was matron, and all the youthful P.s filled the pod of futurity with achievements whose brilliancy eclipsed the glory of the present and the past. Arriving at this satisfactory conclusion, the meeting adjourned, and the fact that Miss Tribulation was available as an army nurse went abroad on the wings of the wind. (9)

This mutual acting out is play that makes "the fact," the assertion of strong personal will in collective fantasy. Where the lines of agency are obscure, they are nonetheless tangible: the family has succeeded in making a nurse of her. The contiguity between these representations and the real is not a function of Alcott's imagination but of the historical opportunity of the war. In "doing their part" by playing a part in the wartime benefit theatricals, Alcott and tens of thousands of other women established a utopian, festival self that was assertive, accomplished, and consistent with interlocution--emerging into connections, not out of them.

Chapter 6

Intersubjective Epistemologies:

Private Theater and Henry James

Everything in a picture, it must be added, depends on the composition; if it be the subject that makes the interest, it is the composition that makes, or at any rate expresses, the subject. By that law, accordingly, our boxful of ghosts 'compose,' hang together, consent to mutual relation, confess, in fact, to a mutual dependence. If it is a question of living again, they can live but by being each other's help, so that they close in, join hands, press together for warmth and contact. —Henry James, William Wetmore Story

From birth to mourning after death, law 'takes hold of' bodies in order to make them its text. Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc.) it transforms them into tables of the law, into living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organized by a social order. —Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life

Reading Henry James and the theatricality that so often structures his scenes challenges the reader to shed expectations generated by today's moribund high-culture theater (that quaint, creaky thing springing from a proscenium stage to expensive seats acquired at a discount by savvy consumers). The most successful readings, such as Peter Brooks's The Melodramatic Imagination, take that structuring theatricality generically and historically, with reference to the practices, conventions, and conditions

of the nineteenth-century melodrama.⁶¹ Generic readings pursuing the melodramatic strain have taken us quite far and provide a location for phenomenological and Foucauldian standpoints in the James conversation. Yet alongside the melodrama another, competing strain is discernible, grounded in the vogue for private theatricals which began in James's boyhood and continued nearly unabated until the turn of the century. Structures of this private theatricality operate on a distinctly countersurveillant trajectory in the late career and support a non-Cartesian epistemology based on intersubjectivity (rather than monadic subjectivity), helping to get past that now-familiar image of James as inevitably the (re)producer of techniques of mastery and control.⁶²

Broadly speaking, the present effort associates a melodramatic theatricality in James's oeuvre with the scenes of knowing that feature a traditional Cartesian epistemology, of isolated knowing subject, and object universally knowable and situated within a general body of knowledge. The solo "discoveries" of the Cartesian epistemological adventurer are takable exactly as the "discovery scenes" of the public stage; the cry of Eureka! that attends $E=MC^2$ also accompanies the exposure of Miranda and Ferdinand playing at chess. Considered as an epistemological structure, the

⁶¹Brooks extends the melodramatic into James's late prose, where previously it had been seen as characteristic only of the earlier (Barzun) and middle (Levy) phase.

⁶²What might be called the strong-Foucauldian readers are very often exactly right to observe that "the techniques of representation in James's works express a complicity and a rigorous continuity with the larger social regimes of mastery and control which traverse those works" (Seltzer 13). But the strong Foucauldians are certainly exaggerating with the further claim that James always, and inevitably, "reinvents" the technologies of supervision (Seltzer 16). John Carlos Rowe surveys this line of criticism (147-187).

melodrama enforces the chasm between the subject and object of knowledge—the fourth wall perpetually separating the spectator as subject-only-subject, the actor as object-only-object. Private theater, by contrast, complicates the relationship between spectation and performance. As in the masque, the spectator belongs to the scene, no longer gazes unseen, becomes knowable by the performer. The performers become equally spectators, the spectators equally performers. By imbricating in a field of shared experience the subject-also-object and object-also-subject of knowledge, private theater has at least the potential to establish an alternative, intersubjective scene of knowing. Not so much a scene of “knowing the other” as a scene of knowing with others, this epistemology which proceeds between subjects is predicated on the understanding that knowledge is produced and not “discovered,” that this production is neither individual nor impersonal (neither objective nor wholly determined by society, culture, or dominant ethnos), but rather collectively agented in a scene of shared, overlapping subjectivity. This second scene is not a market. Not a scene of transaction but of manufacture, it enables mutually constitutive and interpellated subjects to renegotiate the borders of tabulated knowledge-space.

Privacy in this sense does not, of course, mean the individual or the personal. It is a limit-condition of publicity and implies a network of relations.⁶³ The many other-than-public theater genres (masque,

⁶³ While viewing “the inclination to theatricality” a little narrowly as a structure of publicity and an effect of market society, Jean-Christophe Agnew characterizes Jamesian privacy as “the indispensable condition of familiarity upon which the fragile structure of human community is formed” (76). Ian Bell points out that James’s distaste for publicity emerges exactly from its tendency to collapse an important distinction between the personal and the private: “it is

procession, cavalcade, court function, parlor theatrical, benefit production) structuring James's alternate scenes of knowing can be understood together as "private theater" insofar as they negotiate the limits of a subcommunity. Approachable as versions of George Herbert Mead's "social worlds," these communities constitute themselves not with persons but through them: knowing features in the subcommunity as an activity dependent upon relations.⁶⁴ The subcommunity becomes the primary epistemic agent: as the feminist philosopher Lynn Hankinson Nelson describes it, "your knowing or mine depends on our knowing, for some 'we'" (124, emphasis original). An individual knower—such as Maggie Verver—will participate in multiple, overlapping, and often conflicting epistemological subcommunities (she and Adam; she and Amerigo; she and Fanny and Amerigo; she and Charlotte and Amerigo). These subcommunities are often no more than tactical functioning groups; they belong to Erving Goffman's sociology of occasions: they "evolve, dissolve, and recombine," as Nelson observes, and the individual's knowing becomes ethical in negotiating the competing claims of different relations. While the elitist separatism frequently motivating James's turn to private theater-structures may seem at odds with the discourse of subalternity and feminist philosophy, there is a joint illiberalism to them, an effort—in acknowledgement of the excess to the scene through which the subjects are interpellated—to associate agency with

precisely the effect of publicity to render 'private and personal' interchangeable, and hence impoverished in their relation to 'public'"(132).

⁶⁴ Anselm Strauss usefully discusses Mead's vision as elaborated by the subsequent sociological study of functioning groups: "They can be rooted in or transcend space. They can be tiny or enormous in membership. They can have relatively discernible, 'tight' boundaries or permeable, 'fluid' boundaries. . . . the members of different sub-worlds are always joining forces so that there is an alliancing, merging, coalescing, which processes may lead sub-worlds to dissolve, disappear, or at least pull out from the original world" (Mead xix-xx).

limit-negotiations expressive of multiple, partial, and often evasive relations.⁶⁵ There is on the one hand an "Elizabethan" Henry James who repeatedly invokes the structures of an historical, aristocratic, collectively-produced court theatricality to characterize the resistance of a contemporary elite subculture to the dominant liberal theatricality of egoistic self-display. But it is through this illiberal foray into the Elizabethan that the "cyborg" Henry James understands with Homi Bhabha that even the most individuated agency is "an after-effect of the intersubjective" (188).

While the vogue for private theater--sometimes accurately described as domestic theater--in the United States after 1850 has generally been seen as contributing to the domestication of the subject, the genre is both historically and formally associable with subaltern resistance. (I am typing this after returning from a talk by a South African playwright who recalled that under the apartheid regime a typical Soweto weekend saw the production of over one hundred private theater productions, in homes and carports: the language of these plays had no overt political content--entirely prescribed melodramas such as "the Taximan and the Schoolgirl"-- but the performances nonetheless provided the location for affiliation, combination, resistance [Peterson].)⁶⁶ Stemming from the association of gender with

⁶⁵Homi Bhaba, for example, is eloquent: "the moment of the subject's individuation emerges as an effect of the intersubjective--as the return of the subject as agent. This means that those elements of social 'consciousness' imperative for agency--deliberative, individuated action and specificity in analysis--can now be thought outside that epistemology that insists on the subject as always prior to the social. . . The iterative and contingent that marks this intersubjective relation can never be libertarian or free-floating, as Eagleton claims, because the agent, constituted in the subject's return, is in the dialogic position of calculation, negotiation, interrogation: Che vuoi? " (185).

⁶⁶ It does seem to make more sense to associate agency and resistance with, for example, the melodramatic heroics of an Edwin Forrest, the democratic-imperial individual. But enacting a subversive posture does not

genre—masculinity with melodrama, femininity with private theater—the assumed correlation between private theater and the domestication of the subject obscures the almost inescapable conclusion that the practice by nineteenth-century women of producing other-than-public theatricals in war benefits, amateur clubs, political meetings and private homes represents resistance to domestication and not compliance. At minimum, theatricalizing a panoptic space produces mimesis with a difference: if the nineteenth century home is already "like" a theater in reproducing the specular relations characteristic of the public stage, altering its organization by practicing an other theatricality in it needs to be understood as at least a potentially resistant tactic (as the fiction and various performances of Louisa May Alcott surely suggest.)⁶⁷

The class of performance here described as private theater relaxes the fourth wall, dismantling monadological relations within the scene, while stiffening the four walls round about, articulating the limits of the combination and the dominance to be resisted. This is much less a question of political theater than it is of a "politics of place." Despite de Certeau's well-known and trenchant objection that the desire for an "own place" is in itself a "Cartesian attitude" and a "panoptic practice" (Practice 36), a kind of politics of place (or at least of location) appears often to support successful

necessarily produce effective resistance: quite the contrary, in fact, as recent studies of sensation fiction (Looby) and rock posturing (Frith) have concluded.

⁶⁷ Nonetheless the sense that domestic theater inevitably perpetuates domestication continues to exert paradigmatic influence almost universally in Alcott criticism, in whose novels instances of parlor theater are frequent. For example, Karen Haltunnen when writing of an ungendered, national subject, characterizes parlor theatricals in the 1850s as a liberatingly antisentimental practice (1983: 174-190). Writing later about Alcott, however, Haltunnen describes the Cambridge novelist's association with domestic theater very differently, as "emblematic" of a perceived failure to retain an agency associable with her passion for melodrama (1988: 234).

acts of resistance.⁶⁸ (Of the many genres of other-than-public theatricals emergent in the nineteenth-century U.S., the union theatricals scripted in the 1840s by activists and sensational novelists like the radical reformer George Lippard and the opportunist E.Z.C. Judson, for example, were among the earliest, most explicitly political, and most successful at producing around them a resistant collective. They belonged to a vast class of theatricals which, like the schoolroom theatricals helping to shape what might be termed Bronson Alcott's "opposition pedagogy," resisted the coercions and discursive formations of the national, liberal public.⁶⁹ The desire of the group for an "own place" (really a discursive space but discursively comfortable, like a dwelling) does not reproduce possessive individualism so much as it helps—as in Spivak's call for the resistant intellectual to elaborate a relation to collectivity by way of a "strategic essentialism" ("Subaltern" 205) —to locate the group for the group in a site of resistance, enabling its affiliates to enact an agency proceeding from the border-negotiations of the collective.

⁶⁸Of course it is de Certeau's own theorization of interstitial spaces of resistance that leads to heterological epistemology which relies on "the lived experience of the other," as Wlad Godzich notes ("Introduction," de Certeau 1986: xvi). But de Certeau's emphasis on practices of evasive mobility don't address the difficulties of the relation of the individual agent's resistance by means of structures of collectivity.

⁶⁹The provincial theater similarly appears to support a negotiation of resistance by subcommunities. In Davenport, Iowa, for example, the minority German community began an active amateur theater in the 1850s, performing in beer gardens and giving Sunday performances, incurring the displeasure of the dominant anglophone community on both counts—but succeeded in obtaining the repeal of antitheatrical ordinances, even as the anglophone theater opportunities were largely restricted to temperance dramas: at the death of John Brown, the German company draped their new theater space in black, defying the anglophone community's vocal anti-abolition sentiments (Schick, 87ff).

The present effort supports Ross Posnock's conclusion that a "politics of non-identity" drives late Jamesian epistemology, especially insofar as that politics seeks to evade identification with the tabulating structures of the public. Nonetheless non-identification, that gesture of dislocation, functions chiefly as a prologue to an alternate identification and re-location: mobility for its own sake is not for James the marker of successful resistance. In evading identification with the regime of the "ledger page" which Spenser Brydon experiences on his return to New York, ("Jolly Corner" 163), the Jamesian subject generally turns to an alternative order such as that supported by "the law of Gloriani" and "the really great ease of really great ladies" ("Velvet Glove" 198, 211). Already in the 1870 pair of essays contrasting the hotel-driven specular regime of "dense, vulgar, democratic" Saratoga to something understandable as the discipline of Newport, James describes the alternative to the dominant hotel-civilization of The American Scene: "At Newport, life is public, if you will; at Saratoga it is absolutely common. The difference, in a word, is the difference between a group of indiscriminating hotels and a series of organized homes" ("Newport" [1870], 67).

The product of that alternative Newport discipline, a social drama "which should depend more on smiles than tears," cannot be extricated from James's lifelong fascination with the bordered communities of his experience such as Newport and Chester, England, places insulated by sea and wall, collectives marked by otherness, and yet more open to those admitted beyond the barrier. The walls of the English city, James observes, enable "the good Chestrians" to "know their city more intimately than their unbuckled neighbors" ("Chester" 104). But the wall is not the only architectural peculiarity which excites James's admiration: "Next after its

wall—possibly even before it—Chester values its Rows," James writes approvingly, "a running public passage tunnelled through the second story of the houses" ("Travel" 107). Not separately, but together, these architectural peculiarities of Chester—the stiffened border surrounding the collective and the perforated domiciles within—offer a representation of James's sense of the rich intersubjective possibilities of private enactment: within the wall, that is, a deepened "civic consciousness" has seen fit to render borders osmotic. The effect of this twofold discipline is to interrupt the dominant relations obtaining "outside" the scene, while achieving "multiplied relations" between those within, producing in James's view a nonviolent and an ethical scene—something more like a village phenomenology ("Happy villegianti of Newport!") than the flaneury of urban modernity—even in an urban setting, whether turn of the century New York, or William Wetmore Story's Rome ("Newport" [1870] 68, 73).

Throughout James's career, resistance to the discursive formations of the liberal public is not an individual project. It is always a group effort, as his approving quotation of Story's 1855 invitation to Lowell makes evident: "Let us . . . all go to Newport and live there—or go somewhere and live together" (December 30th, qtd. Story 1: 303; ellipsis James). The epigraphs at the head of this essay mark the distinction between the public discipline characterized by contemporary francophone theorists and the alternate Newport discipline. The administrative structures which today's thinkers describe as isolating the subject in "living tableaux of rules and customs" are associable with James's horrified descriptions at the turn of the century of Ellis Island and the Bowery melodrama—or Saratoga in 1870, which created a liberal public of "splendid social isolation. . . people who know no one, who have money and finery and possessions, only no friends" ("Saratoga"

59). By contrast, the alternative composition and its law, which also might be said to express the subject, does so in a field of "consent to mutual relation, confess[ion] to a mutual dependence." Once persuasively described as "a subjectless biography" which instead reconstructs "an extinct sub-culture" (Redford 215, 219), James's account of the Story subculture is less subjectless than intersubjective. It is not a question of dissolving the subject, but of bordering the field of its relations so that in a tactile knowing relation, the collective's subject-positions overlap and interpellate: "they can live but by being each other's help, so that they close in, join hands, press together for warmth and contact." Despite the evident elitism and the inescapable operation of wealth in these conceits in evading the "emphasised rule of the mob" (Story 1: 165), James's ethical valuation of the scene features something very much like a returning democracy, albeit one predicated on the depression of egoism and the deconstruction of the Columbian imperial self: his five-page meditation on the alternative regime represented by Story's remarkable circle of expatriates concludes, "we were equally great and happy, or still more, perhaps, equally nothing and nobody" (Story 2: 208; emphasis James).

It is perhaps, then, no accident that James's recorded experiences of private theater unfold in relation to Story (who dedicated one of the rooms in his apartment at the Palazzo Barberini to private theater production [Stempel 236]) and Newport, the city "most perfectly guarded by a sense of margin and mystery"--not the summer Newport of the later years ("these blank days in which margin has been consumed"), but the winter Newport in which a "handful" of like-minded souls "hibernated" apart from the "hard American world," playing bridge and producing private theater (American Scene 221-24). James's own recollection of private theatricals begins in his

New-York boyhood—the topic of his earliest surviving letter is an amateur dramatic club, and his first literary productions were short dramatic sketches— but takes on a special emphasis during the peripatetic years when the family most often resided in Newport. During this period, William, Henry, and Alice James all left traces of their participation in private theater.⁷⁰ Henry's most vivid associations among the spectacles characterizing the "round of pleasure" in Newport during the war were of "performances, dramatic and musical, at ever so much a ticket, under the advantage of rare amateur talent, in aid of the great Sanitary Commission, that walked in the footsteps and renewed various forms the example of Florence Nightingale" (Notes 484).

The fact of the war looms large in any effort to understand private theater in the United States as an historical phenomenon. Benefit theatricals performed in support of the Union hospital efforts appear to have been decisive in shifting civic opinion from a Romantic suspicion that private theater was the same thing as public theater—theatricality invading the home—to the conviction that private theater was another thing altogether.⁷¹ In 1914, James's still-vivid recollections of the Newport benefits document the twin vectors of the emerging acceptance of an other theatricality,

⁷⁰At this time William begins his friendship with Newport native Jim McKay, later a successful playwright, actor, and producer of civic pageantry; a page from one of William's 1864 playlets survives in his papers (Lewis 103; reproduction 234c). Alice writes of participating in a play in 1860 and charades in 1865; she joins an amateur dramatic club immediately after the war, later serving as its president: in October 1867, her correspondence features a family episode as a dramatic sketch starring Henry (Strouse 56, 95, 133-134, 114).

⁷¹Harvard's Hasty Pudding first substituted a play for the traditional mock trial in December 1844, giving only very occasional performances in "private houses in Cambridge, Brookline, and Chickering's in Boston" chiefly during the 1854-55 season, "but it was not until after the war that such performances became customary" (*Illustrated History*, *passim*).

recording both the "noble scorn" of the elder Mary Temple for the benefits as "one of the forms of ancient piety lost to us," and the contrary conviction that by her performances, and as hostess of performances in her Lawton's Valley residence, Julia Ward Howe had "served the State" (Notes 484, 486). The war theatricals, as James's account emphasizes, were something much more than entertainment. The women's amateur theatrical company which Alice James joined in 1868 (later serving as its president) originally formed as a sewing circle on behalf of the Union war effort (Strouse 79).

From James's noncombatant standpoint, the association of gender and genre in the wartime theatricals produces a sense of agency on a vector contrary to domestication. By their association with these performances, or an aid society sponsoring them, women were able to represent a participation in the war which was also real. Highly visible in communities across the Union, the women's work of the Sanitary Commission (its leading figures of both sexes deeply associated with the Newport circle) had a tremendous effect on the war experience of soldiers and their families, not excluding the wounded Wilky James (Lewis 144). If the noncombatant William fondly patronized Alice James in this period "as an idle and useless young female" (qtd. Strouse 78) this diminishment must in part have proceeded from his own awareness that her bandage-rolling and like activities placed her in a direct and useful relation to the war effort, in a way that the entire society and the local community recognized but was unavailable to himself and Henry. The women of the James family appear to have participated in the war effort much more visibly and actively than has been previously acknowledged: all of the adult women in the James home played founding roles in the Newport Women's Union Aid Society, which made its first public appeal in the Newport Daily News a few days

after Henry James, Sr.'s patriotic oration for the Independence Day celebrations of 1861.⁷²

James's own anxiety regarding his nonparticipation has been much remarked upon; here his own gestures to similarly represent a participation are tinged with embarrassment: the gift of money to a soldier in the Portsmouth Grove hospital camp, the price of a benefit ticket. The prominence of money-transactions in these recollections probably marks an association in James's mind with the practice of wealthy draftees paying a substitute to soldier for them. The small sums in question perhaps can be contrasted with Alcott's satisfied notation of the thousands of dollars raised by her performances; certainly we know from the memoirs that James the aspiring author did not fail to note that--despite the restricted scope of her early entertainments and the anonymity of her initial publication of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"-- these performances eventually made Julia Ward Howe famous. Nor can he have viewed with anything but an equal pang the success enjoyed by family friends Katherine Wormeley and Louisa May Alcott in the immediate publication of their accounts of their activities in Washington hospitals.⁷³

⁷² The published roster of the Executive and Finance Committees (NDN July 29, 1861) included Henry's mother, Mary Walsh James, and his aunt Kate, his cousin Mrs. Edmund Tweedy, his friend Katherine Prescott Wormeley, later prominent as a translator of Balzac, and Miss Wormeley's mother. (It seems likely that James's acquaintance with Wormeley, later recognized as a translator of Daudet, Balzac, and other contemporary French literary figures, begins at this time, rather than two decades later as has been previously assumed.)

⁷³ Henry Sr. praised Alcott's popular 1863 *Hospital Sketches*; Wormeley's anonymous dispatches in the *Newport Daily News* were followed by a commissioned pamphlet history of the Sanitary Commission and a signed memoir, *The Other Side of the War*.

Struggling even decades later to shape his relation to those "battle-haunted seasons," James found that, marked by femininity and collectivity, the Newport theatricals and other Sanitary Commission activities provided an alternative to the ideology of personal heroism from which he found himself painfully alienated. His rendition of the Newport benefit performances emphasizes the enactment through them of a localized collective consciousness. He insists that Julia Ward Howe served the state "scarce better" by her eventual personal fame than by her Newport activities; sponsoring Christmas theatricals in the Newport set as early as 1855, the "mistress of the Valley" in ways much like her namesake "mistress of the revels" Julia Dallow of The Tragic Muse, Howe in James's view undermined the various other affiliations of her guests, creating in them a new, collective Newport awareness; "the infancy of a finer self-consciousness seemed cradled there" (Notes 485-486). Unable to enact an unmediated citizen-soldier's individualist, heroic relation to the state, he turned to the alternate means of identification emphasizing a collective relation.⁷⁴ The "finer self-consciousness" emerges only in a restricted field of relations, corresponding to James's enthusiasm for architectural enclosures (the "defensive verandah") that "by not taking the whole world into their confidence, have not the whole world's confidence to take in return" (American Scene 168). It is not a separatism for its own sake which he endorses, but a tactical separatism that enables the group to shape its relation to "public stress." Just

⁷⁴ Jean Strouse's account of Alice James's Cambridge women's amateur dramatic circle persuasively emphasizes that the group, despite its continuing aid activities, functioned most importantly for its members as a site of affiliation (134). Just as structures of private theater enabled Alcott's patients and their nurses to know one another in ways unavailable to the surgeons; the women of Alice's "Bee" became knowable to each other in a theater that excluded men and in ways otherwise impossible.

as Foucauldian structures of publicity elaborate themselves in private space, Jamesian structures of private theater unfold in the field of publicity, mediating and meliorating the conditions of that field.

James's sense of the intersubjective as a field of consciousness producing subjectivity needs to be understood not just as emotional affiliation, but as an episteme. Enabling the subject to evade being framed by the public, the field of collectivity emphasizes local, intersubjective knowledge over the ideology of the Cartesian adventurer: the special character of James's remembered Newporters was that "they all could make discoveries from within the frame itself" (*American Scene* 220). Of course, knowing in this sense, knowing between persons—the sense that chiefly mattered for James—cannot be "only" an epistemology, for the same reasons that Luce Irigaray scoffed at the claim that the psychiatric session could be "only" a scene of analysis (133-146; Schutte 65-69). As Paul Armstrong has well demonstrated, Jamesian knowing is experiential and relational, so that "the epistemological and the moral are. . . systematically related to one another" (5). By insisting that the analyst can't transcend the session and must be recognized as performing toward the analysand (just as she performs toward him), Irigaray did more than dismiss the simple binarism of subject and object which had previously organized the psychiatric scene: she opened that scene to ontological and enlarged ethical consideration. Where James's scenes of knowing can similarly be described as mutual performance, they likewise portray the knowers as enacting an ethical relation. In fact, it's this last emphasis which is primary: nowhere is it evident that Henry James "intended" to distinguish between public and private theatrical. His intentions were to distinguish between ethical and unethical scenes of knowing.

James and the Dramatic Tableau

As early as the international novellas of the 1880s James articulates a revulsion from oppressive spectator structures; vividly, for example, Littlemore in "The Siege of London" (1883) refuses the opera glass: "I don't mean that I want to stare at her with that beastly thing. I mean--to see her -- as I used to see her. . . . [o]n the back piazza, at San Diego" (230). Now, it is largely through such gestures of renunciation that this alternate way of knowing appears throughout the early and middle periods of James's fiction, as the absent term of an ethical posture. In "The Siege of London," it is presumably just this alternate scene of knowing Mrs. Headway--the "piazza view"-- that drives Littlemore, despite the fact that he finds her "not respectable," to insist that "she at least is somebody. She's a person," the subject and not the object of his gaze (304). And yet James never actually represents this alternate scene of knowing in this or the other novellas of this period. This piazza view remains a kind of negative ideal: Bessie Alden, we learn, is not to know her suitor Lord Lambeth from the waxworks at Madame Tussaud's ("An International Episode," 1878).⁷⁵ But the accompanying question, how she is successfully to know him, or how the Lady Barberina (1884) and her husband were ever to have known one another, is left unanswered.

⁷⁵This "negative ideal" might also be expressed as an ideal of negativity: Auchard develops the link between "structural silences" (such as the tableaux discussed here) and various iterations of Jamesian negativity.

In these novellas James might be said to be dramatizing the failings of the prevailing ocular-theatrical metaphors for the scene of knowing. But in order to develop an alternate knowledge technology--as he will in 1898 with the The Turn of the Screw representing a community whose bonds were "music and love and. . . private theatricals" (58)--he needs to restructure the Enlightenment's featured scene of knowing, the discovery scene or tableau that had grown into the dominant display technology for the "tabulated space" that Foucault calls the "centre of knowledge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Order: 75). (Consistent with the grid spreading over the "discovered space" of in the nineteenth-century United States, which were imagining themselves as a community in the persona of "Columbia"--the discoverer [Sale 338-40]). When Foucault speaks of tableau, he is eliding the sense of a table, the favored representation of statistical or taxinomial analysis, and also the dramatic or curtain tableau, which began to appear on the French classical stage in the late eighteenth century as a painterly effect in answer to Diderot's vigorous criticisms--a moment something like freeze frame, in which actors ceased declaiming to the audience and struck a naturalistic pose, counterfeiting absorption in the scene (see Barthes, Fried 71-105, and Meisel 38-51).

Lasting a second or two, the stage tableau grew into the most recognizable feature of melodramatic narrative. Many of these dramatic tableaux functioned allusively, referring to an actual picture, but they increasingly performed technological functions, especially as the vehicle of melodramatic teleology: through tableaux the melodramatic scene in climax and closure reliably drove toward stasis and immobility. The appeal of the dramatic tableau was its suppression of dramatic action in favor of a painterly image which would interpret everything that came before it. The

tableau crystallized gesture into alphabet, serving up in picture-text a clear, readable, summing-up of the scene with the force and function of epiphany: sudden, complete illumination. These techniques functioned not only formally, but culturally, in ways obvious from the form's degraded and degrading cultural corollaries, particularly (but not exclusively) as they concerned women: the New Orleans slave mart, the fetish tableaux of the Parisian bordello, and the statuesque ideal of feminine grace. As Edith Wharton's narration of Lily Bart's performance suggests to most readers, the realization tended toward reification: the performer playing an art object submits to commodification. The spectator was similarly affected: the tableau functioned pedagogically, producing the effects that Laura Mulvey speaks of as "structures of fascination" (18) that more subtly but with equal effect straitened the bearer of the look. The melodrama seized upon the tableau because it amplified the pedagogical possibilities of theatrical presentation. The seconds spent by the actors in tableau posture have no duration for the characters, only for the spectators, so that the scene served metathreatically as the technology through which the drama was compressed by the corps into dramatic significance, and through which that significance—as the play's "meaning"—most efficiently circulated to the spectator. "A tableau was visible, it could be said to exist," Michael Fried notes, "only from the beholder's point of view" (96).

Aping the dramatic tableaux, Victorian novelists repeatedly threw their characters into attitudes of mute immobility, made a living picture out of them, for much the same purposes that the theatre cast its troupe into waxworks: for emphasis and effect, to highlight reversals of fortune and show unspoken relations, to portray reaction and discovery, to establish or to end a scene. The instructive potential of the narrative tableau has

attracted attention from the critical perspective of reader response: the reader reacts to these "pictures on the wall of the text," Mary Ann Caws observes, as bearing greater authority than the rest of the narrative, as the agents or operators of the narrative text, "the bearers of meaning and intensity," heuristic markers for the work as a whole (7-8). This insight has obvious implications for novelists like Dickens, Balzac, and Thackeray--and also Henry James, who remembered composing his juvenile literary efforts only on quarto sheets, "specially purchased for the purpose," so that each work consisted of precisely three pages of story and dialogue which drove headlong ("I panted toward the canvas") to the fourth page, upon which he would sketch an "explanatory picture" (Small Boy 148).

From the earliest published stories to The Aspern Papers, many of James's scenic effects can be understood by reference to the dramatic tableau--and most of them, like similar effects in Dickens and the sensation novelists, share the teleological emphasis James ascribes to the fourth-page picture capping his juvenilia. One of the best instances is the famous climax of the latter story, in which the full malignance of the narrator's venality is revealed in the lamplight glare of Juliana Bordereau's gaze. It's night--the narrator rifling the cabinet for Jeffrey Aspern's private papers--he turns to look over his shoulder:

Juliana stood there in her nightdress, by the doorway to her room, watching me; her hands were raised, she had lifted the everlasting curtain that covered half her face, and for the first, the last, the only time I beheld her extraordinary eyes. They glared at me; they were like the sudden drench, for a caught burglar, of a flood of gaslight; they made me horribly ashamed. (546-47)

Miss Bordereau's gaze has the effect of headlamps on a deer: freeze-frame; snapshot—she makes the narrator into a picture. Bordereau becomes bordereur: her stare, overwhelming the narrator's privilege of bordering the action, closes the frame around him.

A handful of sophisticated critics have recently worked with scenes like this to develop persuasive accounts of a kind of homeopathic feminist voyeurism, in which James's female characters become the bearers of the gaze which just previously had held them as objects (Rowe, Smith, Torsney). It also suggests the line of criticism recently developed by Litvak in which "making a scene" interrupts the larger hegemonies of realistic narrative and the gender regime (this is the subversive performativity which it seems to me might be characterized as saying, "You are not spying on me. I am showing myself to you"). While James is playing profitably with structures of melodramatic vision in scenes of this sort—the investigator exposed—it remains pointedly the "gaslight" beyond the raised "curtain" of the public stage which luridly illuminates them. The scene still belongs to that category of effect which demarcates a genre shift on the Diderovian model; drama stops, picture begins. Rather than organizing alternatively meliorative structures, scenes of this sort depend on an absorptive aesthetic and in the service of a kind of retributive justice, reproduce oppressive spectator structures in a different class of subjects.

The Dynamic Tableau: Toward A Conversation of Gestures

Shaped by the performance conditions of the drawing-room tableau-vivant, these alternative speculative structures do eventually appear in James's

prose and radically reform the economies of time and gaze. On the public stage, the pressure of the spectator's gaze, like the gaslight beams from Juliana Bordereau's eyes, holds the object of the glare in mute immobility, a paralysis so extreme that it can be assuaged only by the curtain's fall. Anonymity helps to enforce the epistemological relation of subject and object so that the end result of this sort of stare is tableaux as pornographic performance (e.g. the tavern back-room displays of "model-artists" realizing various iterations of "Venus Rising From the Sea" which provided a staple scene of city-mysteries and sensation fiction.) In the drawing room, however, the gaze of the tableau model returns to the spectator, with whom she is generally acquainted, and who has at least the opportunity (not always exercised) to recognize her as a person. The muteness of the scene is relieved by mutuality. The epistemological condition of acquaintance expresses a kind of local, experiential dynamic from a scene otherwise generalized, anonymous, and static. The drawing-room performance does not present an exclusively semiotic scene; it creates a location for what sociologists describe as face-to-face interaction, "that class of events which occurs during co-presence and by virtue of co-presence" (Goffman "Interaction" 1). Conditioned by "the fact that so much in our communicating depends on the assumption of extraordinarily close relationships," the small behaviors of "habitual gestures, expressions of the eyes [and] face" in a scene of co-presence render communication a function of local knowledge—of small groups knit by shared experience (Hoggart 14-15). As gazing gives way to intergazing, representation gives way to a dramatic economy, creating the possibility of a significant interplay, however mute, with the epistemological value of speech or more.

By the late 1880s, this principled insistence on an intersubjective specularity has brought out a tendency in James to reconceive the public stage in the terms of private theatrical. On the very brink of his own dramatic endeavors, he writes a scene for the actress Miriam Rooth in which she analogizes herself to Lady Hamilton, the notorious progenitor of the nineteenth-century vogue for tableaux-vivant, subsequently comparing Nick Dormer to the painter who captured Hamilton's tableaux, George Romney (Tragic Muse 444). A few pages later, she points out to a startled Peter Sherringham that while it's true she displays her body to the audience, they equally offer themselves as a spectacle for her:

you should see some of the creatures who have the face to plant themselves in the stalls, before one, for three mortal hours! I dare say it would be simpler to have no bodies, but we're all in the same box. . . we're all showing ourselves all the while, only some of us are not worth paying. (474)

Miriam takes down the fourth wall: in the theatrical moment, Miriam claims, the spectacle and the spectator share a space illuminated by the footlights but not divided by them. Everybody performs—though James might disagree with the promiscuity of Miriam's claim: while it's true for him that almost everybody performs for some other people, only a professional actor or a character likewise constituted and equally suspect performs for all other people. It's important that James doesn't imagine a theater without walls, an unlimited, universal scene of knowing. He just re-draws the frame of the scene, insisting that the relevant four walls aren't those around the object of knowledge, but those which mark the location of the subject and object of knowledge.

Balking at the idea of a universally legible body of knowledge (that "simpler" scene of knowing which Miriam dismissively postulates, where knowledge circulates independently of knowers and their bodies) James here articulates the central ethical principle of his late epistemology. Ethical Jamesian knowers recognize that the others in the scene are the subjects of knowledge. They recognize in the eyes of the other the mark of a subject looking back. Unethical Jamesian knowers share the habit of the social butterfly Lady Castledean in The Golden Bowl: "She didn't distinguish the little protuberant eyes of smaller social insects, often endowed with such a range, from the other decorative spots on their bodies and wings" (360). The realization of the contrary principle marks Maggie's ethical development. At Lady Castledean's dinner party she for the first time understands that, even while she had been engaged in surveilling the others, she equally "had become with them an object of intimate study"; that "she was something for their queer experience, just as they were something for hers" (355, 357; emphasis James). Shortly after Miriam's speech, it's a scene of private theatricals at the Dallow estate which affords Nick and Julia (and their respective families) the opportunity of reconciliation, in a theatrical environment shaped just as Miriam insists, in which Julia shows as the observer-also-participant, and Nick, complementarily, in his appreciation of her as "splendid" in her directorial role, as the participant-also-observer (513-514). Much more like Maggie Verver than her father, Julia in her role of revels-mistress can no more be considered outside the play than a Queen outside her masque.

A fully-fledged private theatricality emerges in the late prose, marked by the consistent deployment of the mutually held stare. The simultaneous gaze announces the mutual legibility and radical, though

contingent, accessibility of subjects constituting themselves as performer-spectators in conformance with the scenic principles articulated by Miriam Rooth. In Dickens, Balzac, and the early Henry James, glances meet and then jitter away from one another. In the late prose, glances meet and hold, pressuring and probing, establishing a "community of vision" as James terms it in the preface to The Wings of the Dove (11). Nearly all of the fiction produced after the disastrous opening of "Guy Domville" in 1895 employs this technique, but it is in The Turn of the Screw that we see its earliest, clearest, most pervasive application: nearly everything that "happens" in the short novel occurs when the characters are "doing" nothing but holding each other's gaze. The story discards the one-way stare and announces the new, engaged, two-way stare at its outset, in the framing narrative. "He continued to fix me," writes the narrator of the acquaintance who possesses the manuscript; "I fixed him too." (3) However melodramatic its substance, The Turn of the Screw unfolds in a theatrical space distinguishable from the public stage, "a cloud of music and love and success and private theatricals." (58) The chief scenes of the story proceed as a series of tableaux in which the governess is fixed by the stare of the ghostly butler and Miss Jessel, and fixes them in return. Neither moves; neither speaks. Nothing happens between them except the exchange of "their straight mutual stare" (25). The governess insists on the parity of their gazes; to her astonishment, the apparition's gaze has the identical note of "scrutiny" as her own. If the apparition has for the governess the fascination, as she says, of "spectacle" (25), she's compelled to admit that she's equally spectacle for him. The ghost has an animated gaze, a "bold hard stare;" with which he "look[ed] at me hard all the while," and who "even as he turned away still markedly fixed me" (27, 25). Shattering the

fourth wall, these tableaux do not merely reiterate but fully realize the actress's startling claim, "we're all in the same box."

Under the pressure of the returning gaze, the drawing-room tableau does not merely represent an event. It is an event. It has duration, and unfolds in time. Throughout, the governess remains sensitive to duration: "We were confronted quite long enough," the governess writes, to ask herself how long these situations lasted. "Well," she continues, "it lasted while I caught at a dozen possibilities. . . . It lasted while I bridled a little. . . . It lasted while this visitant. . . seemed to fix me" (24-25). The tableaux preserve all the features of picture—they are for the reader visually realizable as static compositions (the tale's first edition was in fact illustrated, by John LaFarge). But they also present a dramatic transaction; however mutely, the ghost and the governess communicate, in moments the governess terms "intercourse" (30), as "hideous and as human as a real interview" (60). The melodramatist, employing the term Tableau as a stage direction, meant simply, freeze frame. The similarly Diderovian tableaux in Dickens, Balzac, and Thackeray, or in James's earlier fiction—such as the moments of "mutual absorbed gaze" between Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle that "left them more closely face to face than either ever was with anyone else" (Portrait 259)—take no more than a few lines of text. In the late fiction these episodes go on for pages (just as they do in the remarkable Turn of the Screw tableaux, but now between characters who can't be read as hysterical or apparitional). Taking the moment of mutual absorption and opening it out, entering into it, James no longer represents merely the fact of absorption, but the events, limits, and negotiations of its duration—which is to say, he represents what happens between persons who are, as it is said, "absorbed in one another." Characteristically, these scenes proceed without

speech or motion on the part of the characters, in a silence rich in experience, "neither awkward nor empty nor harsh, but on the contrary quite charged and brimming," as James writes of one such instance in "The Velvet Glove" (1909). These moments have two values. On the one hand, they elaborate the semiotic conceit that the novelist-hero of "The Velvet Glove" articulates, "they could communicate. . . by the mere light of their eyes" (205). On the other, this communicative function is interchangeably understood experientially, as "deep communion," both expressing the wish, and acting upon it, "to use together every instant of the hour" (205).

In Diderovian terms, the late tableaux, despite the apparent stillness of the occasion, are also coups de theatre: they happen between the characters and contribute to the plot. The point can be illustrated by reference to contemporary film practices. In his film version of The Age of Innocence, Martin Scorsese made use of allusive, stop-action tableau. A New York Times reporter was on the set:

The day the ballroom scene was being filmed, Mr. Scorsese was instructing the cameraman—for the 11th time—exactly how to pan past the dancers and pause 'for a beat' before a group of three women draped over a couch. The resulting tableau vivant [sic] of gauzily-dressed extras was positioned to exactly mimic Sargent's portrait 'The Wyndham Sisters.' The director held a photograph of the original in his lap. (June 28, 1992)

Like the melodramatic tableaux, Scorsese's allusive film beats (a "tableau" of a sort but not a "tableau vivant") belong to the metanarrative. They are experienced by the spectator, but not by the characters. The "extras" on the set pretend unconsciousness of their arrangement and function iconographically between Scorsese and his audience just as the tableau of

Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond operates between James and his reader. Though mediated by the subjective realization of Isabel, the Merle-Osmond tableau still largely functions within the economy of exposure: its significance is as it symbolically exposes the whole character of their relation to Isabel and the reader—not as an event between the lovers. It has no interior economy, no special significance for Merle and Osmond—only for the observers of the scene. James's late tableaux are much more akin to the three-way gunfight at the climax of Sergio Leone's The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. Once the gunfighters have backed into position around three points of a circle, nobody moves; nobody speaks. Yet through montage Leone elaborates the duration of the picture so that the moments preceding the gunplay are packed with event, in fact are the event: every nuance of the composition (glance, gesture, attitude) has vital significance for the characters inside the scene. Their composition, however static, has narrative duration: they're reading each other; their lives depend on it. The climactic scene of Maggie Verver's story plays similarly to Sergio Leone's camera study of Lee Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, and Clint Eastwood armed on the alkali flat. It is not the shattering of the golden bowl that bears the significance of the scene, but the surrounding moments in which the motionless trio (Maggie, Amerigo, Fanny Assingham) become "communicants" --mutely intergazing, exchanging glances in "the rapid play of suppressed appeal and disguised response" (Golden Bowl 422). In describing the dynamic interplay of this climactic scene the narrator explicitly refers back to the first narrated tableau of the novel, between the Prince and Mrs. Assingham, in which the similarly "portentous stillness" through which the pair conducts their silent "interchange" is analogized to "enacting a tableau-vivant" (50).

Featuring a similar triadic specularity, a scene early in the novel represents the operations of visual semiosis as (shared) experience. When Maggie and others enter upon her father's *tete-a-tete* with Mrs. Rance, Adam enjoys a "mute passage with Maggie," in which he sees her, with some of the others, read "exactly what had taken place in her absence"--but also sees her noticing his awareness of her realization. Nor was this yet his "intensest perception," the narrator confides, because he subsequently notices that Fanny Assingham had seen "what they were both seeing" (147-149). (Just as the comic Eli Wallach anxiously eyes each of the better gunmen in the circle, not as a voyeur, but as an earnestly interested participant.) It is not a question of Fanny performing voyeuristically: she belongs to the scene and the field of relations (as the Lutches, for example, do not, or only faintly), and her observation is inextricable from her participation in that field of relations. Gayatri Spivak remarks that "only a native can know the scene" (*Outside* 9) and Fanny's shared experience with Maggie and Adam constitutes her as a native, not spectatorially knowing, but participating in the production of knowledge in the scene, so that this activity of "seeing with" (not "seeing into") asks to be understood experientially, as extending the shared field. In the late prose, it is evident that picture serves to discriminate the occasion, but a montage of intersubjective specularity functions to elaborate the picture into events for the characters.

Although James generally relates the visual rather than the gestural component, these scenes originate in the topos of gesture. Marked by the extreme contingency of gesture, bounded by time and presence, they come into being and pass away. They are an achieved and a fragile relational thing, and it is exactly this experiential contingency that distinguishes

between the dynamic gestural relation of James's late tableaux and the semiotic relation established in Diderovian tableaux. George Herbert Mead protested any reduction of the "conversation of gestures" to an exchange of signs. Drawing an analogy to boxing, fencing and a dogfight (cf. James's references to boxing and wrestling in "The Velvet Glove" and Leone's gunfight), Mead describes his "conversation" as a scene of elaborate activity in a field of shared experience, not a freemasonry of private language (154-162). Criticizing what he calls Darwin's "philological" reading of gesture as the sign of an emotion (128), Mead insists that what he calls "gestural conduct" does not communicate a pre-existing consciousness (as a language); it helps to produce that consciousness. This is not of course to suggest that signs aren't experienced, or that there is an experience unmediated by signs—only that there is an excess to the scene not properly thinkable as "reality," yet knowable as experience. Seen in a dynamic field of attention and response, Mead notes that the emergent gesture of one participant in the field is itself changed by the emergent response of another, so that the earlier is altered by the former and the latter by the alteration in the former, and so on: neither gesture is complete, discrete, or isolatable as a unit on the model of language. Meaning is elaborated not in "gesture itself" but in "this interplay between the gestures" (158). So far as Mead would concede that something that might be called "the gesture itself" could be isolated, he describes it as "the beginning of an act," the act itself imbricated in larger social acts, the conduct of the individual imbricated in social schemes of conduct. Gestural conduct relaxes individual volition and intention: the scene marks the borders of the epistemological community, but not the limits of the signs or the persons within. If surveillance operates to mark the borders between subject and object, between subject and subject,

and the four walls around the stage, the countersurveillant operation of Jamesian "privacy" unmarks those borders while barring the theater door.

These scenes consistently represent consciousness overspreading the limits of the individual. Ruth Yeazell has already noted, in a leading study of late-Jamesian epistemology, the way conversation functions as a "satisfying exchange of thoughts." This "joint image-making" and "mutual creation of metaphors" often tends to create in the reader the "solipsistic" impression of the "private meditations" of a "single mind" (52-57; 70-71). This picture of characters being, as it were, of one mind--mutually producing a joint consciousness--seems, often, to be an intended effect of the topos of gesture, "the community of vision" creating what James describes in the preface to The Wings of the Dove as "a practical fusion of consciousness" (11).⁷⁶

The ontological status of knowing highlights the importance of selecting an appropriate epistemological partner. To one degree or another, all of James's characters participate in both public and private theater-structures in the manner of Kate Croy (who performs as the object of Mrs.

⁷⁶In two of the most accomplished James studies of recent years, Sharon Cameron and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have exhaustively anatomized the exteriority of consciousness in James. Frequently both critics attribute to the intersubjective consciousness a largely dominative or violative quality. Sedgwick argues that the coincidence of thoughts, understood genealogically as a development in the homoerotics of the romantic and Gothic knowing double, is both desired and feared. Cameron's Husserlian and convincingly anti-psychological study sometimes portrays consciousness as a kind of totalizing Hegelian spirit and at other times as a kind of freely circulating Foucauldian administrative structure. In both studies, the personal consciousness tends to retain a kind of privilege, as if requiring and deserving protection from collective structures. But--at least in the dynamic tableaux featuring an intersubjective specularity which are the topic of the present effort--these fusions of consciousness are almost never represented by James as the dominant, or dominative, mode of knowing.

Lowder's surveillance while trying to shelter her relation to Merton Densher beneath that performance). Yet most characters seem to favor one epistemology or another, in a way that makes ethical sense of the late prose. While permitting the Ververs to collect him, for example, the Prince himself is generally the agent of, and agent through, the alternative private gestural scenes described here (successively with Fanny Assingham, Charlotte, and Maggie). Similarly, despite the occasional participation in an interspecular scene, Adam Verver generally tends to create himself as the viewing subject of a Cartesian pairing, even with Maggie, who by a "trick. . . mainly of his own mind," the narrator tells us, he sees statuesque, "impersonal," "generalized," and with "blurred absent eyes" (172). This generalized standpoint is Adam's most characteristic posture, consistent with his final perception of Charlotte and Amerigo as "human furniture," compliantly striking attitudes for his appraisal, "a pair of effigies of the contemporary great on one of the platforms of Madame Tussaud" (574). Sharing into her father's museum view, Maggie notes wonderingly by contrast his "so marked peculiarity of seeming on no occasion to have an attitude" (572; emphasis James). Adam's lack of a gestural posture, and the disembodiment implied by evading localization in an attitude, pairs him neatly with Charlotte, whose talent, at stairways, balconies, and so on is exactly the striking of an attitude for his consumption. Like the specimen-gaze of Lady Castledean, Adam's vision creates its object as waxwork, completing a thematic contrast to the interspecular structure of the living tableaux. The novel's final epistemological pairings leave Maggie and the Prince mutely gesturing at one another in hopeful prospects while Adam and Charlotte enact a bleak future as the crippled Cartesian couple.

There is so much going on in the three late novels that the epistemological significance of the pairings and groupings is easy to overlook. But the short fiction takes up the question as a central preoccupation. White-Mason, the old New-York hero of the late story "Crapy Cornelia" (1909) enacts these alternatives in his relations with his intended, a Mrs. Worthingham, and with Cornelia Rasch of the title. A painful publicity characterizes his relations with the former; a refreshing privacy is evident in his experience of the latter. As the story opens, White-Mason entertains the rather fatuous hope of imposing a painterly "wash of privacy" on his relations with the widow Worthingham (228). On this hope he founds his expectations of marriage, but his subsequent revived connection with Cornelia Rasch, an acquaintance of his youth, makes evident to White-Mason that Mrs. Worthingham's complete lack of shared experience made it impossible for her to know him: she "has no data," he realizes, "'She doesn't know anything that we know'" (243, emphasis James). What separates White-Mason and Mrs. Worthingham is not only the different data; it is their modes of knowing. White-Mason describes her way as a version of being "in the know," a semiotic mode which assumes a general body of knowledge in which all participate to a greater or lesser degree, the degree of ability to read the signs of that knowledge producing in those enjoying the greater quantity "an amused ironic view" by contrast to what White-Mason takes as his own more gentle and affiliative mode (232). As the story opens, the narrator throws White-Mason into a version of the Aspern tableau, painting his reaction of anguish--as if he "had been 'snap-shotted' on the spot" -- to the panoply of blindingly brilliant objets d'art with which Mrs. Worthingham has furnished her house to signify her taste, wealth, and position (224). Mrs. Worthingham's home is a scene

where the experience of symbols is substituted for experience mediated by symbols, one of those locations of which James complains in The American Scene that the tiara must give rise to the occasion, and not the occasion to the tiara: "In worlds otherwise arranged. . . the occasion itself, with its character fully turned on, produces the tiara. In New York, this symbol has, by an arduous extension of its virtue, to produce the occasion" (165).

Cornelia's "small show" is instead a gestural scene (and one where the collaborative aspect is visible, by contrast to the contestant aspect displayed in the dogfight/ gunfight analogies). As the narrator portrays Cornelia understanding White-Mason to be wordlessly describing it ("This was the kind of thing that was in the air whether he said it or not"), their encounter is characterized as "help[ing] each other" through "a finer economy" than "the comparatively clumsy method of sound and statement" (241-2).

White-Mason rejects Mrs. Worthingham solely for her unsuitability as an epistemological partner. With Cornelia he understands that the "certitude" and "absolute" knowing characteristic of the brilliantly-lit Worthingham symbology sounds for him "through several thicknesses of some wrong medium" (240). The widow's Enlightenment epistemology obliterates Jamesian vagueness, the "rich gloom" characterizing his relations with Cornelia. "With you," White-Mason says to Cornelia, "I haven't to wear a green shade" (245). In the enabling dimness White-Mason and Rasch turn their eyes more fully upon one another: knowing, even knowing-as-seeing, becomes tactile (his impatience to see her is so that "he might touch her"), so that the eyes of each engage the other gropingly, in a rich vague tactility. This gestural conduct is not a reaching after a new or better language at all, but the late ripe blossoming of an alternative knowledge technology in which epistemic agency is collective: "One wants a woman," White-Mason

finally declares to Cornelia Rasch, "to know for one, to know with one. That's what you do now" (244, emphasis James).

Even those stories most often read with a psychological emphasis reveal the usefulness of an intersubjective heuristic. For example, in "The Jolly Corner," Spencer Brydon's "vain egoism" is collectively produced, in the "communities of knowledge" he shares with Alice Staverton (169, 164). Of course the collective production of narcissistic self-representation is a general feature of the American scene, but "The Jolly Corner" (1908) is quite definite regarding the dependence of Brydon's egotistical scene of knowing upon Alice Staverton's collaboration—" 'their' knowledge (this discriminating possessive was always on her lips)" (164). When Brydon shyly confesses his fantasy of an "other self," she admits to having shared the identical fantasy for weeks. "I believe in the flower," she says encouragingly, "I feel it would have been quite splendid" (171). Much more than it ever could be grounded in either "America" or Brydon's "individual" mental state, the alter ego is a product of their shared experience, including their past, the time apart, and the present rencontre. They produce local knowledge with the explicit aim of resisting "the mere gross generalization of wealth and force and success." The pair's "communities of knowledge" unfold in the "small still scene" of Alice Staverton's garden, understood as an alternative to the tabulated space of the city: "the dreadful multiplied numberings which seemed to him to reduce the whole place to some vast ledger-page" (164, 163).

The collective character of epistemic agency is not a general collective, a "society at large," or even the marginally smaller liberal "ethnos" valorized by recent neopragmatisms. Instead, it is a highly particular, mobile, and tactical collectivity, constituted in a field of overlapping and

contradictory relations. The circle around which Jamesian relations famously "appear to [stop]" is in this way tactical and contingent (Prefaces 1041; emphasis James). Characters in the late prose choose their epistemic fellows carefully and lavish their energies on the development of epistemic protocols. In choosing Cornelia over Mrs. Worthingham, White-Mason makes a happy epistemological decision, in sharp contrast, for example, to John Marcher's perverse adherence to the discovery scene in "The Beast In the Jungle" (1903): by denying experience and insisting that knowledge consists only in the sudden, sharply defined clarity of revelation, Marcher misses his epistemological partner. The knowledge technology to which he adheres creates him as a monad. Marcher gets his revelation, and he gets it as he always insisted he must, in the clarity of tableau: "turning, he had before him in sharper incision than ever the open page of his story. The name on the table smote him... and what it said to him, full in the face, was that she was what he had missed" (106, emphasis James). The medium of the gravestone is here brilliantly, of course, the message: "this was knowledge" (107, emphasis James). But even the sudden realization--the discovery--literally chiseled in stone has duration ("the pieces fitted and fitted"), and despite Marcher's desperate efforts to the contrary ("he tried to fix it and hold it") even the knowledge of the stone tableau won't hold still (106-107).

The recognition of the collective production of knowledge and its contingent, experiential character has formidable ethical force in the late prose, and it is in the context of this principle that Maggie's relation to power asks to be read. In the well-known scene of the bridge game at Fawns, Maggie watches the play of the others and is struck by the fantasy that "they might have been figures rehearsing some play of which she

herself was the author" (488). Maggie's authority does traverse this scene: she knows that she can create Marcher's stone tableau, "that she might sound out their doom in a single sentence" (487). As a kind of Queen, she can with a word substitute antimasque for masque: the game is "a scene she might people, by the press of a spring, either with serenities and dignities and decencies, or with terrors and shams, and ruins, things as ugly as the formless fragrants of her golden bowl" (488).⁷⁷ But this fleeting perception does not accurately reflect Maggie's ethical posture, or her sense of the right exercise of her power and the epistemological status of the scene. She understands that—as James once wrote approvingly of the "clever, cynical, democratic multitude" shaping the scene of French theater—"The director is not an absolute but a constitutional ruler; for he shares his powers with the society itself, which has always had a large deliberative vote" ("Theatre" 101; 71-72). Just as James deprecates Napoleon's efforts to reform the theater autocratically, Maggie declines to shape the scene by fiat. When joined by Charlotte at the window, Maggie faces the temptation to handle the occasion semiotically, and show her the tableau as moral instruction ("in righteous irony, in reproach too stern for anything but silence"), but abandons the ironic stance, instead permitting Charlotte to show it to her. Charlotte then indicates the group as just such a moral tableau—policing not Maggie's behavior, but her own.

In evading the discipline of this standpoint, just as she later evades her father's museum view, Maggie both rejects the tablet theory of knowing and articulates an alternative which is contingent, hermeneutic, and relational. On the one hand, she muses, "the full significance" of the picture

⁷⁷It's useful in this connection to remember that the grotesque antimasque was generally performed by professional actors (Orgel 40).

Charlotte is trying to show her "could be no more than a matter of interpretation, differing always for a different interpreter" (493). Determining her sense of the scene is "the sharp-edged fact of the relation of the whole group, individually and collectively, to herself" (486). The scene is not knowable from the spectatorial standpoint, but only in the group's "rare complexity of relations." So far from recirculating supervisory structures of gridded Cartesian space, Maggie's relation to power appears to be that of guaranteeing epistemological multiplicity. Her queenliness is undeniable, but it is the queenliness of a masque in which the social order is understood not as "reflected" by the masque and its evident symbolic order, but negotiated in the interstices between. The Diderovian epistemological regime adhered to by Adam and Charlotte is a theatricality which denies itself; "this is not representation," claims their performance, "this is real." But the epistemological protocols established between Maggie and her husband admit the theatricality of real relations. In the aftermath of the shattering of the golden bowl, Maggie's willingness to permit Amerigo to "compose his face" announces a shift in their protocol. She decisively abandons the American epistemology of discovery with this decision, embracing instead the European social epistemology which has always been characteristic of the Prince, marked by what Goffman describes as "co-operation in face-work": "The person not only defends his own face and protects the face of others, but also acts so as to make it possible and even easy for the others to employ face-work for themselves and him. He helps them to help themselves and him" ("Interaction" 27).

What had previously appeared as a largely adversarial character in their mute scenes—"the high fight"—becomes collaborative, in mutual recognition of the theatricality of the scene. By permitting him to arrange

his face, the narrator says, Maggie has "fairly got into the labyrinth with him," inviting him to "work with" her: "She had done for him, that is, what her instinct had enjoined; had laid a basis not merely momentary on which he could meet her." The result: "there occurred between them a kind of unprecedented moral exchange over which her superior lucidity presided" (455). Maggie does not, in thus "presiding," impose a moral order as Charlotte attempts to impose on her—it is an "exchange"—nor does she, like Adam, seek to view disembodied and invulnerable: she reflects later that she too had performed in the scene of Amerigo's face-work, "as some panting dancer of a difficult step [in] an empty theater, to a spectator lounging in a box" (479). In providing the basis of their meeting—like her father having a relationship to the scene conditioned by power—Maggie scruples also to take the risk of performance. In the field of their mature relations, neither Maggie nor the Prince have a dominative connection to power. In the epistemological regime of this accomplished partnership, it is no longer a question of knowing the other, of a single investigative consciousness or of exposing the truth about oneself, but of a shared seeking how to live with the knowable. Together in their dynamic tableaux, Maggie and the Prince enact a precarious ontology predicated on intersubjectivity. In their earnest mutual inventiveness, the couple are not progressing toward exposure or revelation, but simply toward an understanding: their gesturings at one another are not true in themselves, but only a component of making truth.

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AAE American Annals of Education

Dial The Dial

Hb The Harbinger

NDN Newport Daily News

NYM New-York Mirror

NYS New-York Spirit of the Times

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