XENOTOPIA: DEATH AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE LANDSCAPE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN AUTHORSHIP

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This dissertation is an examination of the interiority of American authorship from 1815–1866, an era of political, social, and economic instability in the United States. Without a well-defined historical narrative or an established literary lineage, writers drew upon death and the American landscape as tropes of unity and identification in an effort to define the nation and its literary future. Instead of representing nationalism or collectivism, however, the authors in this study drew on landscapes and death to mediate the crises of authorial displacement through what I term "xenotopia," strange places wherein a venerated American landscape has been disrupted or defamiliarized and inscribed with death or mourning. As opposed to the idealized settings of utopia or the environmental degradation of dystopia, which reflect the positive or negative social currents of a writer's milieu, xenotopia record the contingencies and potential problems that have not yet played out in a nation in the process of self-definition. Beyond this, however, xenotopia register as an assertion of agency and literary definition, a way to record each writer's individual and psychological experience of authorship while answering the call for a new definition of American literature in an indeterminate and undefined space.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In “The Custom-House,” Nathaniel Hawthorne’s fictional introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), a nameless narrator contemplates the profession of authorship in antebellum America. From his position atop an illustrious family tree with “venerable moss upon it,” Hawthorne’s narrator imagines his ancestors’ humiliation at the ignominy of such a nascent, unstable profession: “‘What is he?’ murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. ‘A writer of story-books! What kind of business in life…may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!’” (13). Scholars often employ this episode as evidence of Hawthorne’s engagement with the literary marketplace. For Michael T. Gilmore, this passage is affirmation of Hawthorne’s attempt to court readers and advertise himself to the public (5), while Michael Newbury views it as Hawthorne’s self-deprecatory anxiety over professional legitimacy and satisfying the demands of commercially-oriented publishers (3). But “The Custom-House” also records Hawthorne’s notion of authorship as an interior space of private reflection and self-definition. Analogizing the act of publication to “throw[ing]” a printed text “at large on the wide world,” the narrator imagines that external engagement with the literary marketplace reflecting back to the author “the divided segment of the writer’s own nature” that, in the best of circumstances, “[brings] him into communion with it” (7). Drawing a powerful line between author and public sphere, Hawthorne’s narrator guards the interiority of authorship, expressing his desire to “keep the inmost Me behind its veil” (7). While *The Scarlet Letter* is otherwise a work largely oriented toward social and religious criticism, this part of the novel captures the authorial displacement at work in antebellum American literary culture: the self-alienation of the writer and his experience of authorship as its own private, interior mode.

Literary history scholars have thoroughly explored the ways in which authors participated in the debate over the indeterminate state of literature in the new nation. As the Hawthorne anecdote suggests, however, nineteenth-century American authors were not just attempting to answer the call for a cohesive American literature but to define a coherent model of American authorship as well. After the revolution, writers were beginning to consider authorship a career and social station, but as they wrote and published in a literary marketplace that reflected the volatility of the expanding political and social climates, they also registered the interiority of American authorship: the personal, psychological space from which a writer recorded the values of his or her definition of American literature and the anxieties inherent to the task.

Hawthorne's episode reveals a pervasive approach within American Studies that gauges authorship's external qualities without duly considering authorial interiority. Literary historians and authorship scholars consistently define authorship as nineteenth-century writers' engagement with the literary marketplace. From William Charvat's seminal *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800–1870* (1968) to recent studies by David Dowling and Leon Jackson,[1] Americanist scholarship tends to historicize, impersonalize, totalize, and/or abstract authorship via its external engagement with market conditions and a rapidly developing climate of modernity. Such studies obscure or only peripherally cover the psychological interiority of authorship as an individual pursuit or the epistemological orientation of authorship as its own mode of development. My project endeavors to bring this interiority of authorship to light as a central focus of study.

This dissertation is an examination of the interiority of American authorship from 1815–1866, an era of political, social, and economic instability in the United States. Authorship—the material fact of writing a text, the occupation of writing, and the psychological consideration of oneself as an author—manifested in post-Revolution America as a matter of national interest. The idea of American authorship was not explored until after Franklin's *Autobiography*, states Kenneth Dauber, presenting as a problem within a new country with only a nascent sense of itself (10). Whereas a more cohesive definition of America emerged after the Civil War, Paul Giles advises that it is anachronistic to think of American geography, identity, and nationhood beforehand as absolute or uncontested, as "the country's sense of national identity was as uncertain, as provisional, as its cartography" (*Global* 43). An expanding, erratic antebellum America should thus be considered under what Giles calls the "rubric of deterritorialization" as a "socially constructed, historically variable and experientially edgy phenomenon, whose valence lies in the tantalizing dialectic between an illusion of presence and the continual prospect of displacement" (*Global* 25). My project seeks to expand the notion of deterritorialization to the psychology of authorship: I propose to reframe antebellum American authorship through the concept of authorial displacement. My particular focus is authorial interiority and the individual writer's psychological reckoning of the state of authorship in his or her writing milieu. In this way, authorship is a mental and emotional consideration of oneself as a writer—entailing moral responsibilities, an individual code of ethics, and personal rewards and sacrifices—and a unique definition of what comprises an ideal national literature and the proper authorial role therein.

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[1] See Dowling's Capital Letters: Authorship in the Antebellum Literary Market (2009) and Jackson's The Business of Letters: Authorial Economies in Antebellum America (2008).

For the first half of the nineteenth century, American writers had limited cultural capital. Without a well-defined historical narrative or an established literary lineage to amplify, respond to, or challenge, they were left to negotiate the uncertainties of American society while also attempting to exert a determinate presence in the burgeoning but tenuous literary sphere. Amidst the uncertainty of the pre-Reconstruction era, Americans strove to define themselves as both a nation (“America”) and as individuals (“Americans”) through two key means: the physical landscape of North America and the social mourning rituals necessitated by the ubiquity of death. From James Fenimore Cooper’s idealized vision of pre-Revolution New York to Walt Whitman’s celebration of an expanded antebellum landscape, the vast American land provided rich metaphorical currency for imagining American identity. Similarly, death offered common ground for an otherwise disparate collection of people to unify communally and invest politically, as seen in the private losses elegized by Lydia Sigourney or Sarah Piatt’s lamentation of the heroic sacrifices of Civil War soldiers. Many writers drew upon death and the American landscape as tropes of unity and identification, often employed simultaneously in a single text.

But a closer look at some of these tropes utilizing the American landscape and death reveals an inversion of purpose. Instead of representing nationalism and collectivism, these authors’ works draw on death and the landscape to mediate the epistemological crises of authorial displacement within an unstable literary milieu: displacement from readers, other writers, publishers, editors, and critics. These authors recorded their authorial displacement through what I term “xenotopia,” literally strange places (xeno–“strange” + topos–“place”) wherein a venerated American landscape has been disrupted or defamiliarized and inscribed with death or mourning. As opposed to the idealized settings of utopia or the environmental degradation of dystopia, which reflect the positive or negative social currents of a writer’s milieu, xenotopia record the contingencies, disruptions, and potential problems that have not yet played out in a nation in the process of self-definition.

For example, in Cooper’s depiction of the French attack on Fort William Henry in *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), the formerly “humid and congenial atmosphere” and “verdure” of the American landscape is distorted into a xenotopic setting “stricken…by the relentless arm of death," not dystopic but rather strange and *dis*-placed, "like some pictured allegory of life, in which objects were arrayed in their harshest but truest colors, and without the relief of any shadowing" (205–06). Strangely acontextualized, a personified, mournful land grows "fearfully perceptible" and "too distinct" with nothing left to be "conjectured by the eye, or fashioned by the fancy"; xenotopic change displaces the powers of both interpretation and imagination, suggesting that European violence disrupts the process by which the American (i.e. the author) inscribes the land with meaning (205). In a later example, Herman Melville—greatly frustrated by the literary marketplace—turned to poetry to express his anxiety over the violence done to history, futurity, and authorship by modernity and war. Opening *Battle-Pieces* (1866), "The Portent" contains a xenotopic scene of the parenthetical shadow of "(Weird John Brown)" (13), whose hung corpse uncannily distorts the verdant Shenandoah. The "meteor of the war" (14), Brown's disruption of the land heralds the coming destruction and challenges the prospect of a literally united state–or a stable literary marketplace–upon a land from which the "future veils its face" (10). Brown is a martyr/Christ-figure through whom Melville figures an authorship of principled sacrifice and noble displacement. Because of the land's importance in constructing American identity, defamiliarization of the landscape was a productive trope for representing the problems and paradoxes of the unique era in which authors were writing.

In each primary text considered in this study, a xenotopic landscape operates as a conduit through which the narrator or speaker meditates on a literal scene of mourning, opening further outward into a space of contemplation for a larger unresolved epistemological problem haunting his or her distinct writing environment and moment of authorship. By interrogating these authors' xenotopia, I intend to demonstrate that the tensions informing authorial representations of literal displacement (death and strange space) similarly inform authorial concerns over the figurative displacement of antebellum American authorship. For the eight writers in this study, xenotopia act as the repositories of authorial anxieties and individual experiences of a culture and nation itself in the process of invention. Beyond this, however, xenotopia register as an assertion of agency and literary definition, a way to record each writer's individual and psychological experience of authorship while answering the call for a new definition of American literature.

This dissertation interrogates four related but distinct forms of American authorship. In the early national period, at the same time that Americans were redefining their relationship to Great Britain, there was also an ideological shift occurring from the republicanism of the revolutionary period to a new era of Jeffersonian democracy. From a space of white male privilege, Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant recorded the impact of the era's volatility and postcolonial fragmentation on authorship that they attempted to frame in both democratic and hemispheric terms. At the same time that Bryant was penning "The Prairies" (1833), two black authors, Mary Prince and Nat Turner, navigated an entirely different set of constraints, such as editorial intervention and racialized alienation from readers. As these authors sought to communicate the constraints of black authorship—one as an ex-slave isolated in England, the other from a Virginia jailhouse—they both managed to articulate themselves as powerful authorial agents aware of their relationship to the literary marketplace, in spite of the extraordinary circumstances in which their texts were produced. As the 1830s evolved into the rapidly modernizing 1840s, Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow developed an ethic of anti-modernity that registers in their works of the latter part of the decade. Both began to think ecosystemically: viewing the American landscape through an ecoconscious perspective allowed each author to imagine the literary marketplace as an environment threatened by modernity and thus envision his own unique ecosystemic solution to the author's displacement.

As we well know, the 1850s saw an eruption of narrative fiction that was superseded in the 1860s by the Civil War, which bifurcated the literary marketplace and created unique strictures for writers. From opposing sides of the sectional line, Emily Dickinson and Margaret Junkin Preston nonetheless similarly conceived of authorship as asocial and self-effacing, recording their struggles to articulate the trauma of the war and define a space of authorship therein as women writers and individuals, while nonetheless retreating from public life. Each chapter examines the concept of authorial displacement and how it was consistently expressed—and continuously evolved—through xenotopia and mortality in nineteenth-century America.

The Culture of American Authorship: 1815-1866

Although subsequent literary historians have argued otherwise,[2] I agree with Charvat's claim that American authorship as a profession began in the 1820s when authors such as Irving and Cooper departed from the patrician model and entered the literary marketplace as producers of valued goods. Charvat maintains a heavy emphasis on the economic side of authorship: "The terms of professional writing are these: that it provides a living for the author, like any other job; that it is a main and prolonged, rather than intermittent or sporadic, resource for the writer; that it is produced with the hope of extended sale in the open market, like any article of commerce; and that it is written with reference to buyers' tastes and reading habits" (3). As Charvat's definition reveals, authorship was suddenly a viable career path, but also a new mode of entering the public sphere that accommodated and even acquiesced to publishers' and readers' expectations while mediating market economics and literary aesthetic value.

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[2] Just a few of the many critics who repudiate Charvat's authorship definition include: Jackson, The Business of Letters (2007); John Evelev, Tolerable Entertainment: Herman Melville and Professionalism in Antebellum New York (2006); and Matthew J. Bruccoli, "The Profession of Authorship in Twenty-First-Century America" (2005).

Monetarily, authorship was indeed expanding: Dowling calculates that Irving garnered over $200,000 from his writings alone (4), and Cathy N. Davidson figures that Cooper sold as many as forty thousand volumes a year amounting to $6,500 annually in the 1820s (75). When taken in isolation, however, such numbers can obscure the bigger picture. Recent scholarship suggests that we should look at the early national era as a time of authorial insecurity and apprehension. This requires challenging the dominant scholarly model of consensus and comprehensive literary nationalism after the War of 1812,[3] and, as Sam W. Haynes explains, viewing America in this formative period as a "developing nation," not the "virile, self-confident nation well on its way to establishing itself as a continental power" (1–2). While growing considerably in scope and function, the 1820s literary marketplace was still proportionately small, with only 109 fictional works being published by Americans from 1820–1830 (Gilmore 3). Non-fiction (i.e. essays, reviews, and critical responses) provided a steady opportunity for authors to establish a literary reputation, but publication still remained a difficult endeavor. Charvat concludes that the frequent bankruptcy of publishers forced many authors in the 1820s to self-publish in order to protect their profits, a burden that contemporary British authors did not have to bear (48). The sale and circulation of almost all American texts of the 1820s was problematized, as Charvat further indicates, by two matters: low demand and profit for "native" works and an underdeveloped infrastructure (poor roads and unreliable rivers) that impeded delivery of books in quantity and thus localized business (34–35). While the profession of American authorship was born, it was subject to the humble circumstances of the nascent nation.

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[3] See Robert S. Levine's outlining of the scholarly misconception of the era in Dislocating Race & Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism (2008).

The growing pains of the budding literary marketplace were largely due to a lack of cultural consensus. Describing early national literature as a “sprawling and amorphous field of discourse,” J. Gerald Kennedy declares, “The incipient culture lacked coherence, in part because American nationhood rested upon foundational conflicts not simply unresolved but indeed not yet even explicitly acknowledged” (“Inventing” 16). One unresolved conflict involved the new nation’s literary future. The commercialization of literature, Meredith McGill asserts, generated “considerable political struggle,” as the post-Revolution literary marketplace gave rise to fundamental questions debated in courts, Congress, and periodicals: “What kind of a thing is writing? What kind of labor is authorship, and how should it be remunerated? Is the trade in books compatible with the interests of a republic?” (13). Public figures called for an original literary tradition commensurate with American political achievement but ironically defined both in comparability and opposition to Great Britain. William Ellery Channing’s manifesto appealed to his countrymen for a national literature defined as “the expression of a nation’s mind in writing,”[4] but his implied ideological unanimity did not account for early national America’s heterogeneity nor adequately reconcile its relationship to Great Britain (3). Channing was one of many voices betraying self-consciousness about American cultural immaturity while vigorously attempting to control the direction of the national literature. A domestic power struggle erupted over what constituted literary value, what forms and themes a distinctly American literature should comprise, and who was qualified to define and create this new literature.

Authors thus found themselves at the center of that power struggle, attempting all at once to accommodate the call for a national literature commensurate with but separate from Britain; navigate the paradoxes between an old republican mentality and a new democratic ethos; and adapt to a newly commercialized literary marketplace. Prior to 1820, belles-lettres was an upper-class pursuit mostly in service of civic responsibility (Gilmore 3). But as middle-class values suffused the public sphere, a cultural shift redefined "authorship," "print," and "text," which had been interpreted for centuries in political terms as public actions and, as Grantland S. Rice discerns, were now being considered "in economic terms autonomously as private 'things,' or property" (155). Redefining the literary object as property necessitated a new way of conceiving of authorship as an occupation. With the Copyright Act of 1790 came the concept of what Philip Gould calls the "proprietary author—the individual who produced his own original work and therefore owned it" and a reimagining of how one could measure the value of literature as a commodity (106). Authors, publishers, reviewers, and readers often measured this value in conflicting terms, creating what James L. Machor calls the early national author's "double bind": "Write for the mass audience and be damned for addressing the wrong readership or write for the discriminating and be criticized for making their novels problematic for improperly educated readers" (46). Writers in the early national era were caught in an intermediary epoch between the tradition of civic authorship and what Rice identifies as the "dawning of the age of economic liberalism and mechanical reproduction"; between the demands and dictates of publishers, reviewers, and readers; between literature to serve moral purposes and literature as entertainment (154–55). With so many voices competing for supremacy, the early national era was a unique time in American literary history in which the metapolitics of speech was inordinately complicated by its cultural incoherence, and in which the author's voice was simply one among the polyphony attempting to define America's literary future.[5]

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[4] From The Importance and Means of a National Literature (1830).

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[5] Michael Warner defines the "metapolitics of speech" as the "power-laden but silent decisions" that form the "basis for deciding who speaks, to whom, with what constraints, and with what legitimacy" and are linked to "whatever passes for common sense about the medium in use" (xi–xii).

The literary marketplace continued to expand in the 1830s and 1840s, and yet was characterized, as McGill argues, by continued “unpredictability and unevenness” (12). Kennedy cites the “furious pace” at which print media exploded, pervading the marketplace with a sense of “cultural optimism” (Introduction 4). By 1840, America had almost twice the number of newspapers as less populous Great Britain, launching nearly five thousand periodicals from 1825–1850, and book production “more than doubled from $2.5 million in 1820 to $5.5 million in 1840, and again to $12.5 million in 1850” (Sellers 370–71). Not only were more texts being produced, they were being distributed on a wider scale, with over 700 publishing and printing houses by 1850 (Machor 18). Michael Davitt Bell stresses the importance of magazine culture to the development of the 1840s literary marketplace: “new native writers” were most likely to get their start in magazines with large circulations like *Graham’s* and *Godey’s,* and thus reach “a far broader public than Irving and Cooper could have dreamed of only two decades earlier” (118). This was the era, Gilmore declares, that America’s literary marketplace expanded into an “established, internationally-competitive space” (4). In spite of such cultural optimism, assures Bell, “the nature and future of American fiction were as unclear as they had been in 1830” (131). In 1845, James Russell Lowell proclaimed, “The situation of American literature is anomalous. It has no centre…” (5). Still no coherent or cohesive definition of American literature emerged.

Accordingly, authorship was equally problematic, as ill-defined as it had been in the previous generation. First and foremost were the obvious financial issues. Terence Whalen reminds us that a rash of economic problems reverberated outward from the Panic of 1837, causing uneven development of the publishing industry (7). As the price of books declined from one or two dollars to fifty cents throughout the 1830s and 1840s, magazine culture ascended and literary piracy grew, leading to an over-saturation of the market: the same names competed for the same national reading public and the same marginal pay (Bell 115–18).[6] Publishing houses also faced problems of competition and overcrowding, and those lacking the technology to compete quickly folded, leaving their authors holding the bag with unpublished works and empty pockets. To acclimate to such instability, authors like Longfellow and Hawthorne had to maintain other careers to survive. The marketplace was adapting to commodity culture, seemingly less concerned with literary value than with capitalist gain, and the excess of texts and authors actually worked against professionalization, as the glut of competition meant that few authors could sustain themselves solely by the pen.

With the expansion of the literary marketplace into a veritable industry, a new problem emerged for 1830s and 1840s authors: literary celebrity. The outward perception of the author was adapted to what Whalen calls the "fitful and momentous character of capitalist production" in this era (7). As Newbury observes, for the first time "successful authors became public figures in a mass market with all of the privileges and demands that accompany such status" (81). Beyond marketplace problems of over-saturation and low pay, authors now had to navigate the commodification of not only their texts but themselves, which, instead of bolstering their authority, engendered a loss of authorial control. Consequently, the chasm between authors and the other factions of the marketplace widened. The continued displacement of the author from the rest of American culture became more apparent as each of these factions (publishers, editors, critics, reviewers, and the mass readership) crystallized into more autonomous entities than in the 1820s and thus wielded more influence.

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[6] Bell elaborates on the "homogeneity of literary magazines," listing the commonly-published authors clogging the publishing sphere: William Cullen Bryant, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and, above all, Nathaniel Parker Willis and Lydia Sigourney, who claimed to have published herself in over three hundred American journals (117).

Authors began to conceive of their role in oppositional terms, portraying themselves as victims of or adversaries to the rest of the literary sphere. Whereas a more democratic spirit prevailed in the early national power struggle, the growth of the publishing industry emboldened publishers, editors, and critics and placed them at odds with the writers on whom they depended. An ethical debate erupted between authors and publishers, who espoused very different theories of each other's occupations: authors judged printers and publishers "a rogue's gallery peopled by career capitalists at best and by career thieves at worst" (Everton 6). Upon publication, authors had to then contend with reviewers and critics devaluing their work and negatively influencing sales and public opinion. The antebellum puffing system (paid reviews, self-reviews, and exchanges of favors), suggests Lara Langer Cohen, promoted the fortunes of various literary cliques without regard to merit (32–33). Authors were pitted against one another in a political game of vying for the favor of gatekeeping reviewers, themselves beholden to a publishing house, magazine, or journal, each with its own editor, stylistic character, and ideological flavor. Machor states that reviewers and editors thought of themselves as the moral authority, superior partners in a tutelary relationship to a middle-class audience and thus taking ownership of both the ethical and formal properties of American literature (37–38). A complicated web of interested parties influenced the content, dictated the taste, and prescribed the ideals for what "good literature" was—and "American literature" should be—a process from which the author him- or herself was often radically displaced.

At the other end of the literary marketplace dynamic was a formidable mass readership. Authors came into an unprecedented, increasingly impersonal relationship with an "expanded and anonymous" literate middle-class audience that wielded much power (Newbury 81–82). The reading revolution was a direct output of consumer culture. The middle-class phenomenon of literacy was both a bourgeois attitude and a civic right and responsibility, argues Scott E. Casper, "essential to American citizenship, economic success, and cultural achievement" (5). By 1840, 90 percent of white adults (both North and South) could read (Machor 21). The American readership had indeed grown so large that it could now be divided into classes, claims Bell, with two very different audiences for fiction: "a mostly urban, lower-class audience" (consumers of sensational pamphlet fiction) and the more important and powerful "national, middle-class audience, apparently consisting mainly of women, the principal readers of literary magazines" (133). As writing now necessitated a focus on what would publish and sell rather than what was artful or meritorious, authors began to consider this new commercial readership in antagonistic terms. As Newbury advises, antebellum writers often felt "radically victimized by and powerless before" an anonymous reading public's demands, intrusions, and changing expectations and thus defined the authorial role accordingly (81–83). A good example of this relationship would be Poe, who "adopted a calculating, aggressive stance toward his craft and toward the mass audience whose 'taste' would henceforth be measured by gross acts of purchase" (Whalen 8). Poe might represent an extreme case, but authorship in the 1840s continued to be a struggle for power and authority, in epistemological, ideological, economic, and political terms.

The 1850s saw what Richard H. Brodhead calls the "abrupt and quite extraordinary enlargement of the American literary market" (44). Production technologies improved and grew correspondingly cheaper, and the marketing and distribution of texts became more sophisticated and dynamic. The efficiency arising from technological progress led to the remarkable expansion of the novel as a genre, format, and commodity. Bell cites the "phenomenal growth in book sales in the 1850s," and in particular, he emphatically proclaims the unprecedented success of best-selling women novelists as "*the* crucial fact" of 1850s American literature: "Not only were most *readers* women…the most successful *writers*, especially of fiction, were also by and large women" (136, 142). This decade saw the emergence of what we now think of as the bestseller, largely dominated by female writers like Susan Warner, Maria Susanna Cummins, August Evans Wilson, and, of course, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Brodhead further reminds us that mass-market domestic novels were less a reflection on improved technologies and more indicative of "the historical creation of a new social *place* or *need* for literary entertainment to fill" (53). Middle-class domesticity and a new entertainment-centered ethos ruled the marketplace of the 1850s and fed the rising demand for prose fiction.

And, yet, this extraordinary growth and modernization brought further troubles and identity crises for writers. Dowling outlines the catch-22 of a democratized and entrepreneurial authorial identity operating within the open competition created midcentury by market diversification: that a "'man of genius'" could now acquire his wealth through the work of writing created "increasingly brutal competition among the cheap presses," and thus "the crisis of inner authorial self-definition" centered on "economic anxiety and professional concerns" (4, 15, 19). Newbury expounds on the "insecurities about the whole matrix of social change and alienation that accompanied industrialization and literary commercialization" in the 1850s (51). Many critics have pointed out that male authors who had enjoyed some success in the 1840s, like Hawthorne and Melville, began to resent the rise of domestic fiction and the "commercial success that they found themselves unable or unwilling to achieve" (Newbury 29). Conversely, Bell finds, the popular women novelists of the 1850s were not resting on their more successful laurels by writing for "worldly ambition" or "flaunting their success as a form of personal self-assertion" but rather simply writing to support their families and children in a market fraught with competition and narrowed by the rules of the old boys' club (143).

Entering the 1860s, the publishing climate reflected the divisiveness and instability of a disunited culture headed for war. In this era, the question of "What is America?" was refracted into more specific questions of "What is American literature in a divided America?", "Who is the American author?", and "How does the American literary marketplace survive?" As hostilities between North and South grew to a fever pitch, a figurative violence arose in the literary market. Consumers were now ideologically motivated, and many journals and magazines saw their subscriber lists nearly halved. The Panic of 1857 wiped out a great number of magazines, and the onset of war, while raising costs of ink and paper, saw proactive publishers like Ticknor and Fields "dramatically scaling back operations before anyone knew for sure what the effect of the war would be on the trade" (Everton 168). Longfellow quipped after a visit to Ticknor and Fields' "Old Corner" bookstore, "Nothing alive but the military. Bookselling dead," leading a chorus of authors who found themselves in a new literary no man's land (qtd. in Tryon 253).

Perhaps the greatest violence done to authorship in the Civil War era was the dramatic compression of authorial freedom resulting from one specific upsurge in the industry: the development of—and demand for—military writing. From the publisher's standpoint, war was good for business. In 1864, the *American Literary Gazette* optimistically declared that, contrary to belief that war would be a drain on the literary market, the book trade was prosperous: "…instead of a depression of the book business, we have a greatly increased activity" attributable to war having "added a new and imposing department to our literature, consisting of military treatises of all kinds" ("Notes" 406). Alice Fahs marks an outpouring of "popular" war-related literature—"war poetry, sentimental war stories, sensational war novels, war humor, war juveniles, war songs, collections of war-related anecdotes, and war histories" (1)—which, as Brodhead explains, relate to powerful new demographics of readers: "farmboys, soldiers, German and Irish immigrants, and men and women of a newly solidifying working class" (79). Newspapers assumed a prominent new role as Americans scanned the papers to follow the war's progress, paying particular interest, as Ellen Gruber Garvey notes, to the spiritual salvation of soldiers and whether they had died a "good death" of honor and spiritual renewal (160–61). But this shift toward newspaper production and consumption placed heightened expectations on authors of efficiency and prolificacy, elevating swift production over literary quality.

From an aerial view, the industry was surviving—perhaps even thriving—but it came at a cost to an author's ability to publish original works outside of prescribed formal conventions and/or unrelated to war. Speaking in 1865, Oliver Wendell Holmes summed up the prevailing critical opinion that "there has been no real poetry produced during the war," defensively countering, "there has been a great deal of good readable verse, and some genuine poetry written during the past four years," though he had to qualify that such "genuine poetry" was written "under the inspiration of the times through which we have passed" (qtd. in Fahs 1). In this statement, Holmes affirms that even the "best" authors were limited to the subject of war. As new genres and readerships were forming, there was a narrowing of forms and themes. In 1861, the *Southern Literary Messenger* summarized wartime reading tastes: "In times like the present, very little interest is felt in literature. Nothing that does not relate to the war itself is read" ("Editor's" 395). Charvat observes that authorship during the Civil War "suffered" (311). Readers had little patience or appetite for imaginative fiction irrelevant to war, which greatly inhibited the industry and delimited authors' perceptions of the nature and function of their role.

The phenomenon of military writing, Brodhead asserts, represents a "profound evolution in the cultural organization of American letters" and made literary writing a commercially viable career for those willing to capitalize on direct expressions of wartime suffering and patriotism

(77). The field of writing became stratified, and in an otherwise uncertain era, writers had several available modes of authorship: for example, Alcott could produce separately for different social publics and operate as both a “proto-high cultural author” and a “proto-low cultural author” simultaneously (Brodhead 80). However, this stratification brought with it fragmentation and restriction for authors. The marketplace dynamic required predicting editorial demands while pandering to the martial appetites of myriad splintered readerships, measuring the arbitrary tastes of high-literature gatekeepers against the formulaic and fast-moving demands of story papers within the narrow strictures of the subject of war. Moreover, part of the popular literature phenomenon was the sudden diversification and democratization of the industry, as Fahs concludes, “Much of this popular literature was published by obscure authors about whom little is known” (3–4). In a marketplace flooded with popular war-themed literature, the author–genius was displaced by the elevated everyman. Though there were more opportunities to publish, they were seemingly provided to anyone with a pen and something to say about the war. Even in the 1860s, Dowling insists, “the rules of the writer’s trade were not yet firmly established” (117).

Due to the increased influence of newspaper readers and their demand for war-related writing, authors found it necessary to evolve from the previous literary generation. Romantic literature’s sentimentalism and optimism grew increasingly discordant as the war ground on and the death toll rose. Authors struggled with 1850s’ forms that failed to capture the reality of such violence done not only to the people, but to the landscape and the mythology of a progressive, unified nation. The editor of *The New York Times* reiterated Civil War-era Americans’ earnest disapproval of imaginative works of fiction, stating in 1862: “It certainly requires considerable stoicism to sit down to a tale of imaginary woes and sorrows while one great wail is going up from the sick and wounded in the swamps and trenches before Richmond; an incredible amount of apathy to sit leisurely down to a book under the shade of a green tree while the nation is sending out a great heart-cry for reinforcements to her shattered legions" ("New Publications" 3). There was a general disinclination to indulge in literary fantasy while sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands were dying horrific deaths in battle. The stirrings of what we now identify as realism were thus produced by the discordance between 1850s romanticism and the austerity and scale of Civil War death. Authors had to recalibrate their approach to the acts of writing and publication: "Some established writers who could adapt to the new circumstances shifted to military subjects; others put their careers on hold; still others were forced to enter the popular literary market for the first time, providing humor, romance, and children's literature for the illustrated weeklies" (Showalter 130). Authorship was a prescribed and strategic endeavor, with both subject and form being dictated by readers' desires and publishers' demands.

The culture of authorship in the period covered by this dissertation is thus one of flux and unpredictability rather than an arc of technological and epistemological evolution that narrowed and cohered into a stable, developed sense of the author's role. From the early national period through the Civil War, each era entailed unique literary constraints that operated differently on individual authors based on the nineteenth century's complicated social dynamics. For instance, the problems faced by Mary Prince in 1831 were not identical to those of Harriet Jacobs in 1861, despite their shared experience of slavery and black female authorship. Broadly conceived, the anxieties of Bryant in the 1830s might be construed as the same as Poe's in the 1840s, but a closer look at each author's interior experience of authorship reveals different epistemological orientations toward the literary market. Amidst such cultural fluidity, authors tasked with defining American literature tended to seek out the same constants by which to anchor a stable sense of authorship: death and the landscape. Accordingly, my argument rests on three distinct but related phenomena: the flux and instability of the literary marketplace, the importance of the landscape to American identity, and the importance of mortality to the culture of authorship.

Land and Death in Antebellum American Authorship

Though authorship and the literary market were mercurial and rapidly changing from the early republic through the Civil War, Americans' continued reliance on the unique, bountiful North American landscape as an epistemic center and axis of national identity led authors to consistently employ it as a trope of both literal and figurative placement. In the absence of a clear concept of "Americanness," writers formed a sense of both individual and national identity in the physical land. Myra Jehlen insists, "the decisive factor shaping the founding conceptions of 'America' and of 'the American' was material rather than conceptual; rather than a set of abstract ideas, the physical fact of the continent" (3). The American land's spatial expansiveness, topographical diversity, and fertility provided a fruitful setting on which authors could inscribe identity, creating synergy between nation, nature, and the individual that engendered a series of metaphorical possibilities.

Each author in this study, however, short-circuited this synergy through xenotopic disruption of an ideal vision of the American landscape, and in so doing illuminated both the lack of cohesion in the literary marketplace and the vexed state of authorship in his or her particular writing moment. As Satya P. Mohanty reminds us, our interpretation of "place" is not value-neutral: while our location is an objective feature of the world in which we live, it is nonetheless "constituted precisely by various 'positions' of power and powerlessness" (110). The triumphalist vision of American land and its symbolic power could thus be inverted or disrupted as a metaphor for displacement; sometimes that displacement represented power differentials that were international in scope, while other times more local, as in the figurative literary landscape and the powerlessness felt by the author within it. When disrupting that sense of environmental placement, xenotopia equally establish the "causal significance" (to adapt Mohanty's phrase) of American land as much as tropes of nationalism (110). Xenotopia thus record a dimension of personal interiority often missing from exaltations of the American land, demonstrating that, for these authors, place was more than a benchmark for the state of the nation or an expression of American identity. Furthermore, while xenotopia register the powerlessness felt by authors, the very act of asserting that position in the public sphere was itself agentive.

In the following chapters, I explore the various ways xenotopia occur in these authors' texts and register their unique interpretation of the landscape specific to the time of writing. The democratic and hemispheric authorship of Irving and Bryant in the early republic depends upon viewing the landscape as *terra nova*, or "new land." For the black authorship of Prince and Turner, the land is conceived as *terra incognita,* or "unknown land." Poe and Longfellow, whose radically different methodologies extended into public debate, both viewed the land as *terra omnis*, defining it as one integrated and self-sustaining whole as a means for exemplifying their sustainable authorship. And the asocial authorship of Dickinson and Preston necessitated a view of the American landscape as *terra nullius*, or blank and empty space. These four paradigms operated as scenes of literal displacement through which to express these authors' personal anxieties and yet articulate a space of power within a unique moment of antebellum authorship.

Death and mourning provided authors with similar metaphorical potential as the land. Just as the landscape helped ground and define nineteenth-century American identity, society was also ordered by attitudes toward mortality and the social cohesion brought about by mourning and burial rituals that were localized to the community level and insulated within the domestic sphere. The pervasiveness of death, argues Mark S. Schantz, enculturated Americans to see it “not as something to be avoided, but as the inevitable destiny of humanity” (9). Emerson exemplified this in “Experience” (1844) when declaring, “Nothing is left now but death. We look to that with a grim satisfaction, saying there at least is reality that will not dodge us” (288). Up through the Civil War, American authors frequently engaged this intimacy with death, creating what Schantz argues were “social frames for death that made it not only comprehensible but instructive, redemptive, and glorious” (9). The certainty of death and the ritualization of mourning provided axes of stability much like that of the material landscape of North America.

Societies “reveal themselves in their treatment of death,” writes James J. Farrell, and the changing mores of American death practices reveal a modernizing, expanding nation struggling for self-definition amidst its flux and rapid transformation. Like their xenotopic disruption of the landscape, the authors in my study disrupted social norms of the “redemptive and glorious” death narrative, instead creating *deathscapes*: fictionalized and figurative spaces in which death and/or mourning occur but are defamiliarized in some capacity to communicate an anxiety or issue related to authorship. Avril Maddrell maintains that mourning is “an inherently spatial as well as temporal phenomenon, experienced in and expressed in/through corporeal and psychological spaces, virtual communities and physical sites of memorialisation” (123). Here deathscapes are intended to evoke at once the social, spatial, and personal dimensions of death in antebellum America. But they are also intended to capture the authorial agency involved in translating those dimensions into a textual process/product. In their work on death, mourning, and remembrance, Maddrell and James D. Sidaway define “deathscapes” as the places associated with death, fraught with emotion and meanings, that are also “frequently the subjects of social contest and power; whilst sometimes being deeply personal, they can also often be places where the personal and public intersect” (4–5). For my purposes, “deathscape” registers the necropolitical ordering of nineteenth century society that correspondingly hierarchized the literary marketplace. The act of drawing on standard tropes of death or the landscape and then upending them was an ironic act of subversion in the public service of defining American literature and privately establishing one’s authorship. It is on the intersection between public and private of these two axes—deathscapes and xenotopia—that this study focuses its attention.

Recentering the Author in Authorship Studies

This dissertation endeavors to *re*-center the author within the study of authorship, particularly focusing on his or her epistemological relationship to the authorial endeavor. In his work on authorship, Dauber takes for his starting point “the issue of the author’s authority,” asking the question, “How does a writer justify his presumption in intruding himself on our notice?” (xiii). This is a very productive yet complicated question when considering the rapid expansion and instability of the nineteenth century. I thus propose to read authorship as a multi-dimensional space that is simultaneously: 1) sociohistorical—a dynamic web of interactions between authors and publishers, editors, critics, and readers and the context provided by previous literary generations; 2) temporospatial—a situated yet fluid moment in American literary history that requires accepting that the literal landscape and the figurative landscape of the literary marketplace were complex and rapidly evolving from one writing moment to the next; and, most significantly, 3) psychopolitical—a personal interiority that records one individual’s displacement (in ecopolitical and necropolitical terms, among others) from the literary marketplace for which he or she was writing. Outlining his methodology in *American Elegy* (2007), Max Cavitch states, “I treat the nation not as a prescriptive idealization but as yet another sustainable fiction of difference and relationship…fundamentally concerned with death and immortality" (25). I aim to extend this idea to authorship, regarding it not as a "prescriptive idealization" but as one author's individualized, interpretive account of the unique geographical, temporal, and ideological components of his or her specific writing milieu.

Contemporary American Studies scholarship persistently enfolds authorship within the apparatuses of the literary market and public sphere, thus determining its nature by forces both anterior and exterior to the author. A consistently unreliable term, authorship has generally been exteriorly framed in three ways. The first method is the literary-historical model, which regards authorship as an impersonal historical phenomenon: the material, social, political, and/or cultural conditions in which a text was produced. Following Barthes' "Death of the Author" (1967) and Foucault's "What is an Author?" (1969), which problematize the author as a central figure of study, literary-historical methods decenter the author by focusing either on the phenomenon of literary nationalism or on changes in print and transportation technologies, copyright enactments, or political shifts that transformed the literary market into a space of economic viability for the author.[7] Often presented as an effort toward value-neutrality, literary-historical approaches toward authorship reflect *our* retrospective understanding of how a text came to be, risking what Valerie Rohy calls "anachronistic projection" (127). Furthermore, they unnecessarily efface the author, treating the act of writing as an abstracted, depersonalized phenomenon. Reading authorship as a mechanism for understanding broad cultural currents in social and/or literary history obscures the small, quiet expressions of the individuals within those currents and how they inform the wider epistemological tides influencing the development of American literature or the national ethos. As such, in Rice's view, we should remain "wary of claims about sudden historical developments," which I argue represent authorship in monolithic or static terms (2). "The challenge," insists Leland S. Person, "is to get as close as possible to understanding the past on its own terms, while acknowledging that what prompts the research in the first place are the contemporary issues, perspectives, and terms that make us want to do so" (145). I contend that focusing on individuals and interiority is a way to begin to address this challenge.

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[7] For studies of literary nationalism, see Robert Weisbuch's Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson (1986) and Warner's The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (1990). For studies of marketplace dynamics, see Charvat's The Profession of Authorship in America (1968), Dowling's Capital Letters (2009), and Newbury's Figuring Authorship in Antebellum America (1997).

The other two models arose after the New Historicist turn, as scholars began reframing authorship beyond the writing subject and to, as Scott Ellis advocates, an authorship "broadly considered to writers, readers, and critics alike" in an effort to reveal the "unstable relationship between the author and literary culture" (158–60). Within this paradigm, two camps emerged. First came what Sheila Post-Lauria terms the "subversion model of criticism" that frames the author-function as a contentious site of producing a text under the constraints placed upon him or her by the literary marketplace, publishers, readers, politicians, and critics (151). This mode interprets an author's relationship to the literary status quo as one of intolerance and even disdain: while reluctantly deferring to "literary economics, reader tastes, or publication necessities," and destabilizing their agency in the process, authors like Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville employed "deliberate strategies of subverting popular conventions" in their writing, tactics that somehow went unnoticed by publishers, editors, and readers (Post-Lauria 151, 175).[8] Such narratives of subversion portray authorship as an adversarial space of power politics in which the ownership of one's text as intellectual or economic property is the defining factor, often sharply delineating what McGill calls the "clear struggle between authorial desire and economic constraint" (18). As these scholars frame it, American authorship was defined, and the great works of American literature produced, not because of or in tandem with but in spite of the conditions in which they operated, often at the expense of the author's financial welfare. As the second model, Machor identifies an opposing "revisionist" trend within the last three decades that inverts the subversive model and argues that "the texts of canonical writers were often accommodationist" (33). These critical models of accommodationism represent nineteenth-century authors as strategists who were acquiescent to the often whimsical and mercurial standards set by publishers, editors, and readers in order to achieve publication.[9] Such studies triangulate authorship through its relationship to readers on the one hand and cultural authorities (like editors, reviewers, or publishers) on the other. In so doing, the author's agentive choices are considered only through the act of publication, prioritizing the ultimate goal of accessing the public sphere while subordinating his or her other engagements or interior conflicts.

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[8] For authorship studies following the subversion model, see Ellis's "'Reviewers Reviewed': John Davis and the Early American Literary Field" (2007), which interprets authorship through authors' relationships with reviewers, and Davidson's Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America (2004), which identifies the shift in power underlying authorship as readers replaced critics as the primary arbiters of nineteenth-century taste (119).

I agree with Machor's assessment that neither the subversive or accommodationist model adequately contextualizes the multiformity of authorship. The limitation with all three scholarly methods—literary-historical, subversive, and accommodationist—is that they delineate the enterprise of authorship, with its successes and failures, accomplishments and anxieties, through terms external to the author's subjectivity and personhood. As Machor explains, "No text can fully challenge its audience and still remain readable—that is, recognizable in some way within the reading formation into which it is inserted. Similarly, no text can be totally accommodating and still be considered new, offering its readers something they have never quite experienced before" (33). And while Machor locates his answer in a historical approach aligned with the literary-historical model, I find the externalization angle of authorship studies—the idea that authors were either acquiescent or resistant to market pressures, but authorship wholly affected and defined by the market dynamic—to be altogether problematic.

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[9] See Jackson's discussion of writers' navigation of the authorial economies of powerful social bonds in The Business of Letters (2007), and Susan M. Ryan's The Moral Economies of American Authorship: Reputation, Scandal, and the Nineteenth Century Literary Marketplace (2016), which looks at how the character of the author became a sort of capital that was strategically deployed by both authors and publishers.

The majority of scholarship participates in the ironic process of decentering the author from the term "authorship," instead invoking it as an abstract expression for triangulating the author-publisher-reader relationship or, more broadly, the culture-market-public relationship.[10] Decentering the author from authorship studies risks two critical issues. First, decentering threatens to prioritize publication as an essential and inherent component of a teleology of authorship when, in reality, the path to publication was far from self-evident or stable. Second, decentering renders the term authorship more of an action or practice than an attitude or epistemological orientation unique to one author's particular writing moment. Such critical practices obscure the personal, psychological dimension of authorship. Within the rapid changes of nineteenth-century America, authors were involved in a self-interpretive process vexed by the instability and flux of a new, expanding, and at times precarious nation. Ellis rightly argues that "authorial success was an embattled and fluid goal," but that claim is further complicated by the various ways an author defined "success" in the nineteenth century (159). From an uncodified and conditional subject-space, writers asked themselves "who am I as author, and what is my authority in this text?" while mediating their positions as national and global subjects, as citizens or non-citizens, as people with varying relationships to the geography in and about which they were writing, and as writers whose race, gender, and/or ideological commitments radically altered the scope of their pursuit of publication and potentially dictated the forms and themes of their texts. It is important to remember that, as Michael J. Everton contends, “American print culture at large was a contested ‘social space,’ an occupational sphere of objective realities and subjective beliefs in which the behavior and values of subjects mattered a great deal more than we have acknowledged” (8). With subjectivity in mind, I believe a methodology is called for that challenges our own retrospective definition of “authorial success,” acknowledges the external forces bearing down upon authorship, and yet more deeply examines the *internal* forces at work beyond the practices of writing and publishing: the author’s *experience* necessary to the act of authorial self-definition in the very specific and rapidly changing moments in American literary history. I propose to look at the ways in which authors interpreted the nature of authorship broadly, as a social institution, a profession, a nationalistic endeavor, and/or a coherent movement in relationship to other writers, and then specifically their interpretation and self-representation of themselves as unique authors within that broader sense.

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[10] See McGill's American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1853 (2003), which proposes an "author-decentered" methodology with two strong assertions: that "American literary history is particularly rich in studies of market culture from an authorial perspective" and that there exists within studies of the market revolution a "customary reliance on authors to frame and to organize its insights" (15).

For my purposes, David Saunders and Ian Hunter offer a useful baseline definition of authorship as a composite of multiple elements—the aesthetic, the ethical, the psychological, the political, and the legal—that do not necessarily develop uniformly or reflect the existence of a single underlying subject, an idea which is itself a historical contingency (483). I agree that it is important to distinguish the myriad moving parts at work as authors conceived of, developed, and then circulated a printed text; critical attention to authorship, therefore, aspires not just to describe a literary phenomenon but to “bring to light the conditions that make this phenomenon possible and thinkable,” placing authorship in a more nuanced context embedded with historical and social signification (Saunders and Hunter 479). But I depart from Saunders and Hunter in their efforts to subordinate the individual author—the “single underlying subject.” Critical of an approach toward authorship studies they term "formation of the subject," Saunders and Hunter submit an alternate model that distinguishes the individual who writes from "the attributes of the authorial persona—an ensemble of instituted virtues, rights, liabilities, capacities" made available by the "interactions between a limited number of cultural, legal, technological, economic, and ethical institutions" (479, 483). These "authorial personalities," they advise, are "positive forms of social being…governed not by the logic of subject formation but by the historical emergence of particular cultural techniques and social institutions," and thus obey no single logic (479). Rather than divide them, my interest remains in the synthesis of these two delineated modes—author*ship* and the author—and reconstructing authorial subjectivity from the texts they left.

I argue that removing subjectivity from authorship studies and effacing the individual experience risks perpetuating totalizing narratives of marketplace engagements that hierarchize or ignore the mercurial power politics at work. The nuances of Mary Prince's authorship, for example, cannot be confined within a broad reading of slavery, nor can her experience as a writing female be represented as any more or less significant than her experience as a black writer—or even separated from it. But it is most imperative that we not efface the potential for an agentive subjectivity. The fact that a black female slave not only could but *would* wield a pen, envision an audience, and seek publication reveals that nineteenth-century literary power was conceived of and distributed in surprising and complex ways. Such revelations require going beyond the sociocultural conditions that made her authorship possible and centralizing her individual experience, but also recognizing how that experience might align with other authors and thus represent a recognizable display of authorial innovation. The patterns I identify in this dissertation—patterns of engagement and disengagement, identification and dis-identification—

involve expressions of authorial displacement rendered in similar defamiliarized terms: xenotopia and deathscapes. Wherever a pattern can be found, it merits investigating both the cultural logic and the individual subjectivity at work that fosters its development. The patterns of authorial displacement situated in xenotopia and deathscapes reveal a nation contracting and expanding under the weight of its power dynamics—the vast and intricate hierarchies at work in issues specific to America, like slavery, geographical expansion, and democracy—and the differing ways individuals chose to navigate them.

Toward a more contextualized definition of authorship, scholars of literary history should continue asking the same questions: How did the individual author triangulate his position in the relationship between Old World and New World? What was the author's role in the literary market? How was literary property constituted and valued? And how did the author mediate the pressures of his social milieu and the marketplace? New questions need to be posed, however, asking not solely what authorship entailed, but how authorship was experienced by the very people undertaking to define, embody, and perpetuate it as they were tasked with originating a tradition of American literature. In Dowling's work on antebellum authorship, he advocates a scholarly position that "extends previous studies on the crisis of inner authorial self-definition—how these authors explicitly addressed or figuratively encoded their economic anxiety and professional concerns into their texts—toward authors' exuberant outward engagement with social issues raised by the commercialization of letters and the authorial role" (19). But it is precisely in the crossroads of these two modes of authorial expression—the "exuberant outward engagement" with the market balanced simultaneously with a withdrawal inward into a psychological space of authorial displacement—that a more comprehensive and resonant definition of nineteenth-century authorship can be found. These authors' views of authorship, while certainly inspired by what Dowling sees as economic and professional concerns, were equally informed by a particular plight of authorial anxiety specific to their writing moment that involved both interior/psychological and external/social dimensions. In recentering the author within the concept of nineteenth-century authorship studies and reconfiguring authorship as both an external encounter and an internal experience, I propose to look at the manner xenotopia and deathscapes articulate individual writers' notions of authorship. Each chapter in this dissertation considers two authors of the same approximate writing milieu who similarly navigate authorial concerns and/or contextualize the marketplace by way of xenotopia and deathscapes.

Four Models of Authorial Displacement

In Chapter 2, I examine the unique challenges of defining authorship faced by Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant in the nascent and unstable literary marketplace of the early republic. Contending with Americans' self-conscious ambivalence toward Great Britain (as both cultural progenitor and competitor) and internal division over the role of democracy in the new nation, Irving and Bryant were grappling with questions such as: How does one define a national literature representative of a national ethos bifurcated by competing ideologies? What is the function of democracy in this new nation and its literary culture? How does an author mediate the problematic relationship with Great Britain as cultural progenitor but political enemy? What is the author's role in the new literary marketplace, and how does he or she all at once define American literary values, exert authorial agency, and build a sustainable literary heritage that also extends the individual author's legacy? In addressing these questions, I argue that Irving and Bryant articulated a democratic and hemispheric vision of authorship: while ostensibly perpetuating nationalistic depictions of North America, these authors defamiliarized both death and the landscape as expressions of their anxieties over how to define authorship in an undefined national space, and, furthermore, how to establish a tradition of American literature and an individual legacy in a national sphere with such an uncertain future. These authors' xenotopia and deathscapes both exploited and critiqued the expansionist ethos of the 1810s and 1820s, which reoriented a westward-facing landscape as *terra nova* (new land) and depended upon effacing the Native American presence through the "vanishing Indian" trope.

In *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819–20), Irving's defamiliarized American landscapes and evocative deathscapes record his authorial displacement, the divided loyalties and conflicting identities between Old World allegiances and American democracy. Registering the same anxieties, Bryant's "The Prairies" (1833) depicts a vast and strange wasteland in which neither a race of men nor a race of artists (poets) can sustain a lasting legacy upon the American landscape, thus calling into question the ability to build an American literary heritage commensurate with the long traditions of European arts. I employ the frameworks of postcolonialism and transnationalism in order to read the 1810s and 1820s as a kind of postcolonial moment rife with challenges to American authorship: the challenge to define a vision of national literary identity that would subsume—but ultimately expressed—the unresolved issues over Britain's shadow and the rise of democracy. Such conflicts resonated with feelings of authorial loss and displacement, and both were articulated through xenotopia and mortality. A postcolonial reading of early national authorship represents a new contribution to American Studies; by framing Irving and Bryant in a postcolonial context, we see the nuances and disruptions to a totalizing narrative of democratic literary nationalism and begin taking into account the fractured postcolonial psyche in the early phases of "native" American authorship.

To read the authorship of Irving and Bryant as postcolonial is to acknowledge the access available to them as white male writers. Around the time Bryant was penning “The Prairies,” two black writers were also writing and attempting publication without that same privileged level of access. In Chapter 3, I explore the alienation inherent in the authorial experiences of Mary Prince and Nat Turner as they endeavored to navigate editorial constraints and the complexities of access to the literary marketplace. Here I propose a definition of “black authorship” as both a physical/material state of imposed circumstances upon the racialized bodies of writers, but equally a psychological expression of that black writer’s interpretation of his or her writing conditions and the agency involved in circumventing that authorial alienation. As they reimagine strange representations of both death and the landscape, Prince and Turner both exhibit an awareness of their unique black authorship and the strategic innovations necessary in order to move beyond their mediating editors and reach a readership while maintaining some control over their voices and agendas. In *The History of Mary Prince* (1831), Prince explores the contours of forced geographical displacement upon a black slave as a metaphor for her own authorial displacement through two mediating white editors. Nat Turner constructs biblically apocalyptic landscapes in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831) to metaphorize and substantiate his own self-fashioned characterization as an agentive prophet, allowing him an access point to circumvent white transcriptionist/editor Thomas Gray and his own agenda. As these two authors disrupt the American landscape and represent it as *terra incognita* (unknown land), they remind readers of the alienation from geographical knowledge imposed on black slaves by white society; furthermore, that authorial alienation symbolizes the unknown landscape of the literary marketplace, equally denied to black authors on the same grounds.

This chapter employs an interdisciplinary approach uniting African American studies and transatlantic studies with the field of authorship studies. To my knowledge, there is no sustained exploration of nineteenth-century black authorship before the Civil War, particularly as it relates to the ways in which black writers were defining American authorship for themselves, conceiving of (and strategically achieving) publication, and accessing and envisioning their readers. My reading of Prince and Turner as independent agents exerting their notions of black authorship despite such limiting and complex circumstances suggests that there is work to be done in the relatively vacant field of black authorship studies. To perceive Prince and Turner outside of the experience of slavery as authors and agents with even a modicum of control over their texts more deeply contextualizes the antebellum black writing experience and places these authors at the head of a transatlantic tradition of black writing of the Americas.

As 1830s America continued to modernize, technological innovations, infrastructure improvements, and middle-class development led to the dramatic expansion of the literary marketplace, and new authors and publications appeared at an unprecedented rate. Chapter 4 examines the way that Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow explore the ruinous potential of modernity through what I call "sustainable authorship": an ethos of ecoconsciousness toward both natural and cultural/literary environments expressed through xenotopia and deathscapes. In their shared anti-modernity, both Poe and Longfellow exhibit a proto-ecological perspective of nature as an idealized ecosystem—*terra omnis*—that operates as an integrated whole when unimpeded by the effects of modernity. But their anti-modernity also registers an ecological authorial interiority that records the threat of modernity to the author and a sustainable vision of American literature. The ecosystemic model of functioning, sustainable American land thus acts for Poe and Longfellow as a complex homology for American authorship, as both necessitate safeguarding from the excesses, wastefulness, and fragmentation of the 1840s milieu. Highly attuned to the vagaries of the market, Poe's xenotopic deathscapes of the later 1840s reveal his skepticism and weariness of a new spirit of commodification and profligacy gripping a rapidly industrializing America. Furthermore, his notion of a tradition of American literature built upon sustainable authorship reveals his acute ecoconsciousness that rarely receives critical notice. For his part, Longfellow's anti-modernity manifests in nostalgia for tradition and the inherited European forms that provided a model of sustainability for American literature that modernity threatened. Recording his anxieties about both environmental degradation and the author's relationship to his readers, Longfellow's sustainable authorship frames the ideal authorial ecosystem as one of transnational communion and exchange.

My examination of sustainable authorship operates at the juncture of ecocriticism and authorship studies, two fields rarely synthesized. Moreover, their shared ecoconsciousness places Poe and Longfellow in unexpected alliance at the forefront of a literary sustainability movement. Long before scholars identify a formal, cohesive ecological trend in American literature, these authors were asking the questions at the heart of current ecological conversations: What is excess, and when does it become wasteful or even harmful? When has nature surpassed what is necessary? How can we protect something not only from externally imposed harm, but also from itself and its own ruinous tendencies? Whether authentically ecological or merely metaphorical, these apprehensions nonetheless illuminated the problems of excess in the literary marketplace, raising comparable questions: When has American print culture fulfilled—and detrimentally exceeded—the call of literary nationalism? What is the role of the author in this new commodity culture, and how might renouncing an ethos of zealous productivity for a more preservationist spirit help to better define and manage sustainable American literature? For Poe and Longfellow, their solutions to the problems endemic to 1840s authorship were rooted in systems theory, viewing authorship a larger system—an ecosystem—of thinking akin to the natural ecosystem of the American environment and subject to the same pressures inflicted by modernity.

While the 1850s saw an effusion of narrative fiction and further expansion of the scope of the literary marketplace, it also began dividing along North–South lines as the nation moved closer to the Civil War. The outbreak of war profoundly affected both the landscape and the literary sphere. In Chapter 5, I consider this disruption through the authorial displacement of two poets, Emily Dickinson and Margaret Junkin Preston, who responded to the war's disorder and violence through what I call "asocial authorship." Instead of participating in the external rhetoric of nationalism so prevalent during the war, these authors withdrew into asociality, a self-effacing space of authorship that retreats from the literary community and is nonetheless generative and agentive. Drawing on the power of the elegy form, intended to unite the community through social mourning, Dickinson and Preston—writing from/for North and South, respectively—invert the elegy into a xenotopic deathscape that mourns the losses sustained by the female poet writing in a wartime atmosphere of commodification and effacement. A rare moment in which she attempted to publish, Dickinson's "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" (c. 1861) and its revision process record her authorial anxieties over the poet's perpetual rewriting of the war and her ultimate failure to transcend it. Preston, a lesser-known Southern poet with a complicated background spanning both North and South, articulated similar concerns over her ability to adequately represent the war, define a new national literature, and publish as a woman and a Confederate. Both poets' works depict an effaced American landscape, representing it as *terra nullius*, a blank space for reinscribing something new, be it a new nation, a new literature, or a new author; however, that rewriting process—the cycle of violently erasing or forgetting the past in order to write anew a future—has profound metaphorical import for the author attempting to articulate the trauma of war, herself under threat of erasure and rewriting in the unwritten and uncertain future.

By looking at these two female poets—one writing from the self-isolated safety of her father's home in Amherst and the other a successful author and mistress of an estate in the invaded and battle-scarred Shenandoah Valley—this chapter illuminates how gender affected the authorial situation in the 1860s, and yet how each woman's struggles were further interpreted through her nationality, her attitude toward the literary marketplace, and her unique notion of the poet's role during war. In so doing, this chapter contributes to two growing but still underrepresented areas of study: Civil War poetry studies and Confederate studies. Furthermore, it aims to bring Preston forward as an author worthy of further consideration on the merits of both her immense popularity and her poetry's illuminative power. Taken together, Dickinson and Preston represent a significant movement away from 1850s Romanticism toward Realism, an era in which the literary marketplace and the nation, though still greatly problematized by the nadir of race relations, would nonetheless formally consolidate and stabilize, and thus a more coherent understanding of American authorship would emerge.

In these four chapters, I intend to challenge existing criticism that reduces authorship to its external relationship to market conditions and social mores; instead, I offer an examination of how these writers employed xenotopia and deathscapes (often agentively) as expressions of both authorial anxieties and literary innovations. I further challenge a proleptic reading of American authorship, seeking to learn from the process rather than the ultimate product of authorial self-definition. In so doing, my methodology seeks to address several related issues within authorship studies: the continued demarcation and elevation of the 1850s as a principle, organizing era; an ironic narrative of “progress” that takes each subsequent literary era as an evolution in both practice (technological innovations, growth in publication opportunities) and form (texts more valued for their complexity and social awareness); and the decentering of the author from authorship studies and literary history. When taken as a whole, the four modes of authorship considered here provide a more nuanced and contextualized view of American literary history, revealing a disjointed and volatile antebellum literary marketplace as incoherent in 1865 as it was in 1815. Moreover, the theme of authorial displacement present in these four modes of authorship demonstrates that, for all the instability of the literary marketplace, antebellum American authors sought to answer the call for a national literature—and define and/or extend its tradition in their image—in ways that were equally socio-historically situated, dynamically innovative, agentively exploitive of the land and death, and subversively self-displaced. Simply put, I endeavor to recenter the author within authorship studies.

CHAPTER 2

THE ANXIETY OF BEQUEST: AUTHORIAL DISPLACEMENT AND POSTCOLONIALITY IN THE EARLY NATIONAL ERA

This chapter examines two authors, Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant, who together represent a standard for how authorship was conceived in the early national era. Without an established national heritage from which to draw, these authors forged culturally significant literary careers at a time when the marketplace was unpropitious, American authorship was undefined, and American literature was an indistinct concept. Marking the years between 1819 and 1833, the early part of these authors' careers reveal a kind of literary nationalism that is far more private and epistemologically complex than the professionalization narrative that has defined authorship studies. Built upon democratic and hemispheric values, the early works of Irving and Bryant tell an ironic story of expatriation and nationalism, Anglophilia and Anglophobia, triumphalism and diffidence, hegemony and subjugation, democratic ambivalence, and displacement from the very literary tradition they felt compelled to define and establish.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the defining issue within establishing early American authorship was postcolonial: the complicated navigation of America as both colonizer and colonized. Thinking beyond the immediate political facets of literary nationalism, Irving and Bryant exhibited concern for the American author's reception, control, and longevity that I call the "anxiety of bequest": the felt obligation to forge an important national literature, rooted in the American landscape and democracy, that would establish a lasting tradition for posterity. Reformulating Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence,"[11] which proposes that a "strong poet" self-consciously bears the weight of creating a new poetic innovation capable of surpassing his current culture's literature, the anxiety of bequest suggests that American authors in the early national period felt called to *be* the origin of influence in a complicated postcolonial society bifurcated by competing ideologies: Anglophilia/Anglophobia and demophilia/demophobia.

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[11] For more on the anxiety of influence, see Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (1973).

With the 1815 ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, Americans' feeling that they had won the War of 1812 unleashed what Kathleen Burk calls a "tide of frenzied nationalism" and a sense that the country, now entirely independent of Great Britain, required an independent literature (353). Yet cultural independence, we know, was not so simple. The British continued to exert a strong influence over the American literary marketplace. American authors struggled to find an authentic voice, argues Davidson, "despite the dominance of British and European traditions and against the demoralizing derision of Anglo–European arbiters of value and good taste" (3). Weisbuch affirms a general "British dismissal of all American writing," with which many American writers found themselves in "reluctant agreement" (*Atlantic* xiii). In 1820, Briton Sydney Smith best expressed this sneering elitism by dubbing Americans a "self-adulating race" and contemptuously questioning, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" (292).[12] His invective sent shockwaves through the public sphere and, as Haynes claims, became a rallying cry for American cultural independence, even among those not normally given to anti-British expression (30). A sense of Anglophobia pervaded the call for a new national literature that portrayed America as separate from and superior to monarchical England, spurned British literary models, and evoked that which was distinctly American.[13] Such a literature, Levine declares, "would draw on native materials (the landscape, Native Americans, colonial history, and so on), emphasize the nation's republican political culture, and bring a new sense of unity and pride to the postcolonial citizenry" (2).

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[12] From a review of American writer Adam Seybert's Statistical Annals of the United States of America (1818) written for the Edinburgh Review.

[13] For more on the effects of Smith's review on the American literary marketplace, see Burk, Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning (2007) and Haynes, Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World (2010).

As postcolonial Americans sought to emancipate themselves culturally from Britain, they conceived of their literature as hemispheric, comprising concentric rings of cisatlantic connections and literary value that grew more significant as they collapsed in upon the tripartite epicenter of literary activity in New England: New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. A hemispheric consciousness developed in the years leading up to the 1826 Congress of Panama, at which point the first internationally recognized American authors emerged; Anna Brickhouse describes "an initial burgeoning of hemispheric thought within the national imagination" that identified America's revolutionary history with the Latin American states fighting for independence from Spain (3). This hemispheric consciousness reveals a paradigm shift from transatlantic connectivity with Europe to hemispheric insularity, establishing an Old World/New World contestation and marking the margins of cisatlantic enclosure.

At the same time, a dispute erupted between Federalists and Republicans over the role of democracy in America. Robert Ivie contends that America was founded on the rhetoric of demophobia[14]—the fear of an unpredictable state beyond law and justice—that was conflated with the concepts of agrarianism, natural productivity, and republicanism (132).[15] According to Jeremy Engels, the discursive shift from demophobia to demophilia occurred in 1803 when Jeffersonian supporters began publishing formal defenses of democracy that elevated its status from ignominy to a fundamental component of the national ethos (133).[16] As the forum for civil public speech, the literary marketplace quickly adopted demophilic values; publishers, editors, and reviewers expressed their expectations that democracy be incorporated into the new national literature and pressured authors to respond accordingly. As early as 1807, we see Joel Barlow exhibiting what Charvat calls a "genuinely democratic psychology of authorship" (9).[17] A general consensus emerged that a distinctively American national literature should be commensurate with—but separate from—the political achievement of the revolutionary era.

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[14] During the revolutionary era, the framers opposed the concept of pure democracy because "they believed that it inevitably evolved into oligarchy, dictatorship, and tyranny" (Levinson and Balkin 748–49).

[15] The language of republicanism was closely associated with the agrarian myth, so many early national writers couched their demophobia in agrarian terms; for example, Federalist editor William Cobbett (Peter Porcupine) declared in 1799 that democracy "'is a weed that has poisoned the soil; to crop off the stalk will only enable it to spring up again and to send out a hundred shoots instead of one. It must be torn up by the root'" (qtd. in Engels 135).

The demophobia/demophilia debate divided the nation along the same lines as Anglophilia/Anglophobia, between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. For every self-congratulatory hailing of American democracy, like Elias Smith's 1809 rallying cry, "My Friends, let us never be ashamed of DEMOCRACY!" (14–15), there were British rejoinders indicting democracy for American shortcomings (i.e. boorishness and avarice) and portraying democracy and cultural achievement as mutually exclusive. By 1842, there was nothing provocative about John O'Sullivan's declaration, "The spirit of Literature and the spirit of Democracy are one" (196). But we cannot take for granted the innovation or audacity involved in doing so in the 1820s. Prior to Emerson's call for a literature of democracy in "The American Scholar" (1836), and before Melville and Whitman would exemplify democratic authorship in the 1850s, Irving and Bryant attempted to define American literature as both democratic and hemispheric: a “native” literary model representative of the American landscape and ethos that was culturally valuable, internationally regarded, westward-facing, and, above all, patrimonial: signaling an originary legacy of democratic literary values that could be handed down to future generations of American authors.

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[16] Demophiles engaged in revisionist history, adopting figures like Washington and Adams as martyrs for the cause of democracy, as these public figures were now passing into fabled territory wherein their images and endorsements were more abstract and capable of appropriation and reinterpretation. This new demophilic rhetoric supplanted a faith in aristocracy to suppress mob rule and lawless individualism with a celebration of "common folks" and their ability to self-govern. Demophilia valued civil speech and public conversation, as Engels states, "For the demophiles, the pen, not the sword, deliberation, not violence, was the instrument of democratic politics" (139).

[17] Charvat elaborates on Barlow as a transitionary figure in authorship: "[Barlow's] willingness to put his name on the title pages of his books, instead of resorting to the traditional anonymity of the gentleman author, and his early and unique determination to make literary work a way of life—independent of any of the established professions—were sure signs that he did not share all the patrician conceptions of the status and function of the writer" (10).

However, defining a representative literature for the new postcolonial nation presented difficulties to the author. There was no uniform sense of America—culturally, politically, socially, or geographically—and democracy was an emergent ideology in the process of being defined and nationally adopted. Furthermore, authors had to mediate the problematic issues of their fellow Americans’ (and their own) lingering Federalism, Anglophilia, and demophobia. A new literature had to be familiar enough to market to an audience that still largely identified with English heritage. In their attempts to create a democratic and hemispheric literature, both Irving and Bryant betrayed a dependence on British cultural models, thus plagued by accusations of unsophistication, European imitation, and pandering to the masses.[18] As a hermeneutic, the anxiety of bequest thus directs our attention to these writers’ displacement and their ambivalence about forging a democratic and hemispheric literary tradition in an unstable literary market.[19] Amidst such epistemological instability, each author’s anxiety of bequest over how to arrive at a coherent and viable national literature—and to individually establish his authorial legacy—is revealed in the way he represents the land as strange, uncertain, and haunted space upon which both colonizer and colonized are inscribed and, ultimately, displaced.

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[18] English weekly The Kaleidoscope upbraided Irving for his “confirmed spirit of imitation,” dubbing him an “American mocking-bird” (qtd. in Cairns 81–82). The Westminster Review indicted him for exhibiting “[n]othing vigorous or original, nothing that can require thought or excite dissent…a correct imitation of ancient models” (qtd. in Cairns 87). Often devalued as the “American Wordsworth,” Bryant was also called a “servile imitator of Lord Byron’s style” by the Monthly Review Enlarged (qtd. in Cairns 159). An American literary critic accused him of stealing “Thanatopsis” line for line from Spanish, and declared, “‘The fact is, that he never did anything but steal—as nothing he ever wrote is original’” (qtd. in Parks 175).

[19] “Bequest” signifies both the entity of a financial or propertied legacy but also the action of bequeathing, connoting more intention on the part of the grantor than with other terms like legacy, inheritance, or endowment. Moreover, the act of bequest conveys the legal implication of state sanctioning and regulation, an important point of contention when authorship is being cast as civic responsibility and literature defined in communal and democratic terms as literary property. Furthermore, there is a formal connotation to bequest—the act of writing down and capturing that which is to be passed on in textual form—that makes bequest a more accurate term than legacy; legacy is informed by how one is defined by others after death (or sometimes in life) and externally imposed, whereas bequest is internally formulated and externally projected agentively by the grantor/author.

I argue that at the core of their anxiety of bequest was the notion that the American landscape rejects that which is necessary for a lasting heritage. The colonizer/colonized paradox was central to both authors' expressions of authorial displacement, although each author drew conceptually from a different cultural issue relevant to early national America: for Irving this manifested in concerns over property ownership (the land's ability to be literally or figuratively owned), while for Bryant heritage was problematized by Native American displacement (the land's ability to sustain a race of men). In gamely answering the call for a new literature, Irving and Bryant appropriate the same common cultural tropes, casting a glorified American landscape as *terra nova*: a vast "new" continent with its seemingly limitless geography and "wild," sublime features befitting the new nation's potential. However, they ultimately defamiliarize those landscapes and unite them with themes of mortality, transforming their supposedly nationalistic portrayals of America into xenotopia and deathscapes as expressions of the vexed nature of authorship during this period. In so doing, each author reveals his apprehension, rooted in a postcolonial conundrum, over how an authorship that is both democratic and hemispheric should be defined or could be perpetuated upon the American landscape beyond the immediate moment of fragmentation between Anglophilia/Anglophobia and demophilia/demophobia.

After achieving moderate success with *Salmagundi* (1807–08) and *A History of New-York* (1809), it took Irving a decade to capitalize on his international literary renown by penning what critics consider his first assertion of American literary nationalism, *The Sketch Book of*

Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (1819–20).[20] Written and published during his European expatriation, *The Sketch Book* encodes Irving's deep-seated political and cultural ambivalence and the specters of the British past that haunt the author tasked with establishing a literary legacy that denies his own (colonizing) history. Irving's authorial anxiety revolves around issues of literary property, as he attempts to adopt new democratic values regarding property rights while clinging to Old World ideals. In spite of fading from modern scholarship, Bryant nonetheless registers one of the era's most palpable expressions of authorial self-consciousness in "The Prairies" (1833), written one year prior to his own European sojourn. Underneath his seemingly overt nationalism—advocacy of a national literature, complicity in extending the vanishing Native American trope, and pro-expansionist rhetoric—Bryant reveals a profound anxiety over the capacity of America (the nation, the continent, the culture, and the democracy) to sustain an independent literature or an individual authorial legacy built on democratic values and a hemispheric orientation.

Drawing on postcolonial and transnational studies, I propose to read the 1810s and 1820s as a postcolonial moment in American authorship, one that is transnational, insecure, and even traumatic, and that thus engendered unique challenges for the cultural figures tasked with articulating a vision of national identity that would subsume—but ultimately demonstrated—unresolved social conflicts. For Irving and Bryant, the burden of defining a paradigmatic American literature amidst such conflicting external pressures and national uncertainty illuminated irresolvable problems: how to mediate the borderless, unstable political and geographic landscapes of America; the haunting presence of British tradition shadowing

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[20] Matthew Garrett writes that at the time of Salmagundi's inception (1807–08), "An approach to writing that understood it as work, or even more distantly, as a career, was more than a decade away—specifically, the moment when Washington Irving's Sketch Book could be a desirable (and preferable) alternative to the family's merchant business. At that point, writing relinquished its position as leisured alternative to commerce and installed itself within the marketplace; the Sketch Book was both written and printed to sell" (127). Thus, the Sketch Book is the first literary submission made by Irving for the purposes of both economic gain and American cultural advancement.

America from the east; the problem of Native American displacement and its implications for a legacy built on North America; and the self-consciousness of establishing an American literary heritage with no established tradition on which to draw. Rather than circumvent or disregard these issues, Irving and Bryant internalized them in a vulnerable, interior space of self-awareness that paradoxically cast the author as both colonizer and colonized. As such, I intend to demonstrate my argument in two phases. First, I establish each author's conflicted expression of (or strategic maneuvering between) the Anglophilia/Anglophobia and demophilia/demophobia divides, thus positioning himself—and America—as both colonized and colonizer. And, second, I explore Irving's and Bryant's tropes of displacement—xenotopia and deathscapes—that reveal how the incongruous values and ideological commitments underwriting American life in the early national era displaced the author from his own work and the dubious task of defining a distinctly American literary tradition within the paradox of American colonialism.

Early National Authorship as Postcolonial and Transnational

In the last few decades, scholars have continued to historicize the conditions of early national and antebellum authorship, and to refine and complicate the ways in which we are able to talk about it. New work has interrogated how the literary marketplace evolved from the politically-dominant revolutionary era to an industry of print commodity in the 1850s; how texts came to print in such a volatile public sphere; and how the contention between authors and publishers, critics, and readers came to bear upon the production of texts. Noting the "dramatic shift in not only the material conditions, but also in the very meaning of public writing" at the turn of the century (4), Rice suggests it was "the separation of the economic from the political domain…which allowed the birth of the professional writer" (80).[21] Jackson claims that the concepts of "professional" and "amateur" are anachronistically ascribed to early national and antebellum writers who participated in myriad differing economies of literary exchange, such as patronage, competition, and gift exchange.[22] While Ellis highlights the social struggles over literary authority that emerged as reviewers exercised the role of gatekeepers of proper literary culture, Everton attributes this struggle to the contention between authors and publishers over issues of moral propriety.[23] Recent scholarship has employed McGill's methodology of decentering the author from the evolution of the literary marketplace. For instance, Machor frames authorship as a series of what he calls "reception events" and interpretive practices of readers, while Garrett foregrounds the early national period by focusing on the episodic form in the revolutionary era, both working toward an understanding of the ideological contradictions of the age.[24] Studies such as these tend to focus on authorship as a part of the public sphere, one component of a complicated web of interrelations of sociohistorical value to modern scholars.

While more attention has been given to the literary history of the early nation, and though there has been the occasional moment of critical emphasis placed on authorial self-conception,[25] American Studies requires a more rigorous consideration of the literary marketplace and the private dimension of authorship in the post-revolutionary and pre-Jacksonian era. Most scholars focus on the 1830s–1840s as the transitional moment in nineteenth-century American authorship and thus provide only a cursory overview of prior political and social conditions.[26] Studies of authorship still seem to be unilateral in their endeavor to direct attention away from the individual, local, and personal levels, as well as to minimize (or even outright disregard) the 1810s and 1820s. At the present moment, American Studies could benefit greatly from several methodological developments: a deeper investment in authorship between the revolutionary period and the American Renaissance; a re-reading of this era as a discrete, coherent, and yet liminal moment in literary history beyond the growth of the literary marketplace; and a re-centered focus on the author as a site of study in the early national era. Criticizing Charvat's methodology, McGill makes the important point that we should avoid the assumption that we gain "a measure of epistemological certainty" in restricting our field of inquiry to authors (18). However, I maintain that in examining the fragmentation of the literary marketplace through authors' perspectives, we achieve a more thorough understanding of how a national literature emerged not out of bold triumphalist methodologies but instead was conceived by self-conscious individuals in an ambivalent postcolonial mode caught between competing ideologies.

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[21] See Rice, The Transformation of Authorship in America (1997).

[22] See Jackson, The Business of Letters (2007).

[23] See Ellis, "'Reviewers Reviewed'" (2007), and Everton, The Grand Chorus of Complaint: Authors and the Business Ethics of American Publishing (2011).

[24] See Machor, Reading Fiction in Antebellum America: Informed Response and Reception Histories, 1820–1865 (2011), and Garrett, Episodic Poetics: Politics and Literary Form after the Constitution (2014).

[25] For example, Rice contends that "early American letters" registers a "self-reflexive pre-occupation…with authorship, texts, and textuality" that authors deployed to "maintain critical agency in the face of objectification and conventionalization" (11).

I propose a methodology that approaches early national authorship in three key ways: 1) viewing the early national era as a cohesive period of authorship, in spite of political and social contention bifurcating the public sphere;[27] 2) redefining early national authorship as its own space of individual self-conceptualization and psychological exertion within the communal pursuit of writing a new national literature; and 3) examining the codification of a tradition of American literature through postcolonial and transnational theories, both which help to shed new light on the underlying tensions of the period and how they came to bear upon early national authorial self-conception. In so doing, we are better able to contextualize the call for—and response to—a national literature in the transitionary early national era. Robert A. Ferguson makes the point that early national authors are often more easily placed than understood because scholars retrospectively relegate their language to convention and civic homily: “In reading their words today, we take for granted a reality that they questioned, and we drown their doubts in the certitudes of a later time” (14). A postcolonial/transnational examination of this period discourages such generalizations that have come to occupy studies of how a national literature emerged, instead decentering literary nationalism and economics from the narrative in favor of an author-centered view of early national authorship.

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[26] For example, Dowling's Capital Letters (2009) spends only a few pages on the "transformation of literary economics" between 1820–61, then reviews the technological, social, and economic dimensions of the antebellum literary market (mostly the 1840s and 1850s) before shifting to authorship in the 1850s and 1860s. Similarly, Newbury's Figuring Authorship (1997) declares there was "no profession of authorship to be anxious about" at the turn of the century (2), and, after a short anecdote about Hawthorne in 1821, leaps forward to the 1840s, thus obscuring part of that landscape by dealing one-dimensionally with biographical and historical details prior to the 1840s.

[27] For my purposes, the early national era is defined as 1815–1836. This period begins with the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812 (and violent conflict with Great Britain) and shifted Americans' attention from

Divided Loyalty and Literary Property in Irving’s Authorship

In 1809, Washington Irving conducted an experiment on the literary marketplace with his satirical mock-history, *A History of New-York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty, by Diedrich Knickerbocker.* He placed newspaper articles seeking information on the whereabouts of his fictional author/narrator, Diedrich Knickerbocker, exciting interest in a mysterious manuscript found in Knickerbocker’s abandoned room. His ploy was intended to “insert the fictionalized historical text itself into the real history of 1809 America,” but the

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international politics to domestic cultural issues. The period is closed by Emerson’s publication of Nature in 1836, which set forth a firestorm of literary imaginings later codified as Transcendentalism, American Romanticism, and/or the American Renaissance.

Knickerbocker hoax reveals more than Irving's literary ambitions (Looby 93). By distancing himself from his own creation through the use of a fictionalized author, then insinuating that surrogate into public consciousness, Irving exhibits a marked distrust of his ability to enter the American literary marketplace in 1809 as an author undisguised, but also a modicum of faith in the new function of fictional texts to sustain an author's reputation. In a marketplace that was not yet overly competitive, *A History of New-York* won Irving both critical and public popularity; reflecting on the reception of *History* in 1823, Irving granted that although he was never able to "look upon it with satisfaction," it nonetheless "took with the public, and gave me celebrity, as an original work was something remarkable and uncommon in America. I was noticed, caressed, and for a time elevated by the popularity I had gained" ("Life" 461). He had developed an understanding that personal/authorial gratification, artistic achievement, and critical and public acceptance were not necessarily mutually attainable.

It would be a decade before he took the leap from anonymity to asking American readers to buy a text with the name "Washington Irving" on the title page. During this period, he worked as an editor for *Analeptic Magazine*, served in the New York State Militia, and then left for his seventeen-year expatriation to England. At the time, a wistful and conflicted Anglophilia seized the American literary community, and many writers made pilgrimages, as Haynes indicates, to pay dutiful homage to what they regarded as the holy land of high culture, Great Britain: "For these writers, the blood of England continued to course through American veins" (53). It would seem at this point that Irving was explicitly aligned with the values of Anglophilia, demophobia, and Federalism: it was in England that Irving decided to forego other vocational pursuits and ironically forge a writing career in America, and his Federalist background and deep regard for British literature seemed to mark him as a staunch Anglophile. After all, it was only a few years earlier that Irving (under the guise of visiting Muslim Mustapha in *Salmagundi*) questioned the burgeoning democratic America as "strangely at a loss to determine the nature and proper character of their government," observing the ideological divide of political leaders positing America as an aristocracy, a "*pure* democracy," or a "*mobocracy*" (qtd. in Looby 207). And, yet, with the 1819–1820 publication of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*,[28] Irving's values seem to have shifted with his first major work as an outright declaration of American literary value, written by an American for an all-encompassing American audience, incorporating the American people, landscape, and democratic character.[29]

While some believe Irving was motivated to pen *The Sketch Book* (and thus envision his authorship as a vocation) by his role in the collapse of P. & E. Irving, his family's business,[30] Andrew Kopec insists that Irving felt anxiety for the opposite reason: "his brothers' ruin threw into relief his own lack of ambition" during an era in which vocational skill and ambition were being conflated with democratic obligation, and *The Sketch Book* was thus Irving's attempt to "enact an ideology of identity" that depended on the risk of failure, not on the certainty of success (711). By signing his name to *The Sketch Book,* Irving intended to establish himself as an American author of democratic and hemispheric values, this time attributing the text to his thinly veiled alter ego, Geoffrey Crayon, whose presence in the sketches is merely titular and does nothing to obscure Irving's authorship. While he was an unabashed Anglophile, Irving was also, Haynes assures, "dismayed by the seemingly unending torrent of abuse from English writers" (28). Irving wrote *The Sketch Book* not just for profit, but also as a means of validating the American landscape and the democratic nation as fertile terrain for bearing a democratic and hemispheric literature capable of withstanding critical scrutiny and achieving public acclaim.

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[28] The Sketch Book was initially published in seven serialized installments in 1819 and 1820 by C. S. Van Winkle. They were later collected and published as a single volume in 1824.

[29] In the Preface to the revised edition, Irving declares his intentions for an American readership: "It was not my intention to publish them in England, being conscious that much of their contents would be interesting only to American readers, and in truth, being deterred by the severity with which American productions had been treated by the British press" (5).

[30] Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky remarks that Irving wrote The Sketch Book out of financial necessity and the need to work through a market-based anxiety over his financial problems (32); David Anthony asserts that Irving penned The Sketch Book as a reflection of his nostalgia for a period "predating the modern period of commerce and credit" in which he felt out of place (42). Rice contends that Irving intended The Sketch Book to "secure fiscal independence and security…despite Irving's desire to view a literary vocation, as he had in A History of New York, as a means of independent social and philosophical criticism" (73).

Nonetheless, only two of the twenty-nine sketches were fictional portrayals of American life; the other twenty-seven essays were reflections on Irving's English excursions. Furthermore, both American short stories were credited to Knickerbocker, revealing Irving's ambivalence about fully executing a self-authored fictional American literature and the viability of literary representations of American life.[31] In the folds of his American representations—and in the surrounding stories of English life that threaten to swallow the two American stories—Irving's defamiliarized landscapes and haunting deathscapes demonstrate two parallel anxieties. First, Irving registers his distrust of America's fragmented ideologies and ill-defined geography, questioning its ability to maintain a literary heritage that erases its Atlantic-facing history in an effort to construct a forward- and westward-facing literature. Moreover, xenotopia and deathscapes reveal the skeptical interiority of Irving's anxiety of bequest: the displacement of the author—divided within himself between Anglophilic loyalties and American literary nationalism—as he negotiates his work as literary property in a democratic milieu.

In the five sketches of the first installment, Irving sets a nationalist tone for *The Sketch Book*, establishing the American landscape as an inspirational source of literal material for the writer, but also a space of metaphorical potential. In “The Author’s Account of Himself,” Irving sets up Crayon (whom contemporary readers would likely have conflated with Irving) as both observer and interpreter of the land, inherently gifted since boyhood with a “rambling propensity,” a keen eye for perceiving its “strange characters and manners,” and thus able to enlighten the reader on the land’s signification (11). Perpetuating nationalist ideology, he depicts the landscape as an infinite expanse waiting for settlement, as Crayon reminisces upon climbing to the “summit of the most distant hill, whence I stretched my eye over many a mile of terra incognita, and was astonished to find how vast a globe I inhabited” (11). This view marks America as the center of the earth, implicitly facing the author away from the settled eastern seaboard and toward the distant, unpopulated west. Irving extends the exceptionalism narrative to the extraordinary American landscape, intimating its unique power and fecundity from which a self-contained literature can be grown (11):

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[31] The titular attribution of authorship to Geoffrey Crayon places The Sketch Book in unique generic territory, arguably situating the entirety of the text in the fictional realm; yet, all but two of the sketches were creative non-fiction/auto-biographical essays about Irving's sojourn to England. Since Irving did nothing to perpetuate Crayon as a public figure (as he had with Knickerbocker), it appears that Irving was taking ownership (albeit hesitantly) of the arguments being made as Geoffrey Crayon. The small American readership likely would have known of Irving's trip to England and would quite probably attribute Crayon's political and cultural point of view to Irving.

> …on no country had the charms of nature been more prodigally lavished. Her mighty lakes, her oceans of liquid silver; her mountains, with their bright aerial tints; her valleys, teeming with wild fertility; her tremendous cataracts, thundering in their solitudes; her boundless plains, waving with spontaneous verdure; her broad, deep rivers, rolling in solemn silence to the ocean; her trackless forests, where vegetation puts forth all its magnificence; her skies, kindling with the magic of summer clouds and glorious sunshine;—no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery. (12)

Terming it “terra incognita,” he more so frames the land in line with the expansionist *terra nova* paradigm in which it is not simply unknown to Anglo-Americans but rather *new*. The prior vacancy of the continent, argues Jehlen, was “the crucial founding fiction” on which America’s nationhood was built (9). Expressing the vision of the colonizer, Irving works to nationalize a long discursive tradition involving the imperial gaze that stretches back to Columbus. Irving embraces the rhetoric of American colonial expansion when describing the continent’s "solitudes," the "solemn silence" and "trackless" expanses unmarked by prior civilization, imagining a land increasingly absent of human impress as it reaches the Pacific coast.

This colonizing vision, and the ambivalent pivot to follow, necessitates a transnational reading that takes into account not only the wider international matrix in which American authors conceived of themselves as individuals and as public figures/authors, but the transitory landscape on and about which they were writing. For all its triumphalist rhetoric, the concept of Americanness was not yet grafted onto a cleanly determined geographical space nor contained by clearly demarcated borders. Irving's *terra nova* echoes Jefferson, who in 1801 envisaged America as "a rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye" (qtd. in Burstein 229). Here Jefferson invokes the abstract concept of the nation inscribed indeterminately atop the expansive and somewhat nebulous physical space of the American continent. Such admissions of geographical indeterminacy in the early national period should be read through Giles's rubric of "deterritorialization" (*Global* 1), to broadly conceive of the ways America's spatial variability illuminated what Sara Suleri calls "the precarious vulnerability of cultural boundaries in the context of colonial exchange" (2). Giles considers it anachronistic (and thus problematic) to associate America, and by extension American literature, with its current political geography:[32] "During the colonial period and the early years of the republic, the country's more amorphous territorial framework engendered parallel uncertainties about the status and authority of American discourse" (*Global* 1). As Giles concludes, to reconfigure an understanding of

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[32] Giles argues, "The identification of American literature with U.S. national territory was an equation confined to the national period and not something that was equally prevalent either before or afterward"; he defines the "national period" as 1865–1981, the Civil War's end through Carter's presidency (Global 1).

American geography is to illuminate the concept of displacement at the center of an imagining of American literature. Removing the telos from an inevitable United States—what Giles terms the "'sea to shining sea' model" of geographical determinism (*Atlantic* 72), and the post-reconstruction sense of national unity—withdraws the certainty of the inexorable emergence of a cohesive American literary heritage. Deterritorialization illuminates how and why Irving (and later Bryant) was noncommittal to a wholesale tone of Anglophobia and demophilia, as well as his ambivalence about a paradigm of colonizer or colonized.

With deterritorialization in mind, we see the ironic British influence underscoring nationalist depictions of American land, and furthermore, why Irving found the American land an analog to the literary marketplace. First, early national Americans interpreted the continent through a Lockean perspective that framed the land as enclosed and privatized property. The legal extension of property rights to both land and literary marketplace thus asserted British colonizing epistemology over a unique American literary identity. Locke's most important contribution to American colonization, argues James D. Lilley, was distinguishing a precolonial "state of nature" from the work of colonials transforming that nature into property: "At stake is both a particular form of temporality (progression from the precolonial to the colonial) and a specific mapping of space (the transition from a radically open 'state of nature' to the world of enclosure that property demands)" (121). The Lockean view of the American landscape created a problem for authors in terms of how to represent *terra nova*, or the "wilderness."[33] The uniquely "unsettled" western frontier became a complex space embodying competing metaphorical possibilities, as this "dark Other of civilized world order" was also valorized for being a vast open space of uniquely American topographical and geological form (Abrams 7). The “wilderness” was reflective of the rugged and independent American character, and yet the Lockean principle of property necessitated its reinscribement with British models of land value and purpose. That which was intrinsically and organically American nonetheless required British epistemological intervention and reinterpretation.

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[33] Robert E. Abrams illustrates a dualistic geography in early nineteenth century America that articulated a clear division between civilization and a "wild, historically uncompromised space" (1). The view of a polarized wilderness was "rooted in the religious and cultural history of northern and western Europe, where…'wilderness' is felt to shadow humanly organized space as its alien antithesis" (7).

Deterritorialization secondly reveals how the paradox created by Lockean interpretation of the American landscape was an apt metaphor for Irving’s vision of the literary marketplace. Represented by editors and publishers as a vast, open forum in which to freely inscribe one’s unique American authorship, in reality the literary marketplace was operating as privatized, enclosed space of Lockean property rights and British literary values in which commodification and ownership were at stake. This commodified concept of literature directly competed with the “republican understanding of print as public property” (McGill 14) in which “the right to literary property was secure only in so far as it promoted the public well being and only for a finite period” (Buinicki 2). Furthermore, the Lockean narrative of America from “precolonial ‘state of nature’” to colonial “world of enclosure” is a narrative of obscuration, one that, as Jehlen demonstrates, was predicated upon a framework that defined the continent by its geography, not its chronology—as a place and not a time, a space for expansion of the new rather than transformation of the extant (6). But obscuring chronology necessarily effaced history and raised the question of whether or not the continent could sustain either ownership or heritage altogether, a problematic paradigm for authors tasked with establishing a unique American literary heritage.

Irving expresses his anxiety of bequest, and begins working through issues of property rights and heritage, as his rhetoric turns from colonizing expansionist to Anglophilic traditionalist. Just after his expansionist rhetoric, Irving dichotomizes America’s natural beauty and England's cultural relevance, exposing his ambivalence about American exceptionalism and its implicit Anglophobia. Declaring Europeans the "great men of earth," Irving elevates Europe as the epicenter of "highly cultivated society" in contrast to his "native country…full of youthful promise" (12). The juxtaposition of sublime American landscape and European cultural achievement implies a mutual exclusivity between the common everyday reality and immediacy of American democracy and the history, antiquity, and cultural heritage of storied Europe:

> Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of the times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past. (12)

Europe, Irving suggests, is an environment conducive to heritage; the American landscape, albeit singularly beautiful and wildly fertile, is not. David Lowenthal detects a "sentiment for preserving antiquities" that evolved in Western thought out of the age of revolutions, in which "both nature and antiquity [needed] protection against not only decay and dissolution but improvidence and iconoclasm" (83). This mode of thought, however, ultimately privileged cultural heritage over natural heritage, as Lowenthal states, "Nature seems essentially *other* than us," but, by contrast, "cultural heritage promotes empathy. Our very lineaments augment our progenitors' legacy" (86). While exhibiting this characteristically European/colonialist value system, Irving's anxieties over the American landscape and America's lack of cultural heritage doubly indict the democratic/hemispheric literary project.

Irving further perpetuates the European notion of America as a space of cultural degeneration. Citing philosophers who believed "all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number," he deduces that the great man of Europe must necessarily be "superior to a great man of America" (12). Irving maintains an Anglophilic perspective as he expresses his longing to visit the European “land of wonders” and see the “gigantic race from which I am degenerated” (12). Here Irving conflates the concepts of race and nationality. Representing the English and Americans as discrete races of people in contradistinction to one another, he depicts both the flourishing and degeneration of culture as the success or failure of both race and nation. Such a view promotes a belief in the potential for racial extinction, as the first shades of Irving’s anxiety of bequest begin to surface in his implicit suggestion that the American race may not be capable of constructing a lasting heritage. Moreover, the charged verb “degenerated” further underscores American subordination, and, more specifically, Irving’s sense of personal inferiority at having devolved from the glory of the British race (12). By invoking the personal pronoun “I,” Irving shows that it is the immediate question of his own livelihood and heritage—beyond the more abstract survival of the American race or culture—that occupies his thoughts.

Irving’s authorial anxiety also extends to his status as author in America. He laments the shadow looming over him by the great men of America, having been “almost withered by the shade into which they cast me” (12). He concludes by declaring his authorship unique and his authorial epistemology separate from the “eye of a philosopher,” as he claims his singular “sauntering gaze” has born witness to the many “shifting scenes of life” (13). In a move from abstraction to experience, Irving alone is privy to the flux and malleability of life in the early nation. He further questions whether his unique authorial perspective has been a blessing or a curse, either his “good or evil lot” to gratify his “roving passion” (12). Irving’s anxiety over his potential for authorial failure is palpable: “…my heart almost fails me, at finding how my idle humor has led me astray from the great object studied by every regular traveller who would make a book…I fear I shall give equal disappointment” (13). Here Irving insists his work must necessarily be distinctly American but also intimately and singularly *Irving*, connected to a powerful American present *and* a British racial and cultural heritage that both threaten to overpower and consume Irving the individual author. Thus, within a few introductory pages, he establishes *The Sketch Book* as an ambivalent text, one in which the American landscape is sublime and fertile yet quite possibly inhospitable to literary heritage, one in which a British past haunts and hinders American textual output, and one in which Irving the author is alone uniquely qualified to narrate and yet singularly inferior in the public spheres on both sides of the Atlantic.

In an effort toward literary nationalism, Irving's *Sketch Book* continuously highlights the hemispheric and democratic ideologies underlying the popular call for an American literature. In "The Voyage," Irving thinks in hemispheric terms when describing his transatlantic journey from America to Europe. He represents the Atlantic as a space of "temporary absence" that divides two entirely separate "worldly scenes," rather than as a connective thread between two spaces of shared history and heritage (14). Irving writes,

> The vast space of waters that separate the hemispheres is like a blank page in existence. There is no gradual transition by which, as in Europe, the features and population of one country blend almost imperceptibly with those of another. From the moment you lose sight of the land you have left, all is vacancy, until you step on the opposite shore, and are launched at once into the bustle and novelties of another world. (14)

Unlike current literary studies' understanding of transnationalism as mutual exchanges and continuities, Irving's Atlantic divides the world into two hemispheres—American and European—in which the topographical margins of land demarcate the natural and cultural divide: "…I saw the last blue lines of my native land fade away" (14–15). Establishing Anglo-American claim to his "native" continent, he implicitly effaces Native American heritage. Here, too, Irving suggests the theoretical possibility for America to sustain the "'lengthening chain'" of its own democratic cultural heritage, as he contends that on American land, "there is a continuity of scene, and a connected succession of persons and incidents, that carry on the story of life, and lessen the effect of absence and separation" (14). Drifting into the intermediary space of the Atlantic, Irving finds, "interposes a gulf, not merely imaginary, but real, between us and our homes—a gulf subject to tempest, and fear, and uncertainty, rendering distance palpable, and return precarious" (14). As he lands in England, he underscores the cultural hemispheric divide, noting, "I alone was solitary and idle. I had no friend to meet, no cheering to receive. I stepped into the land of my forefathers—but felt that I was a stranger in the land" (19). It is in his eastern transatlantic voyage that Irving ironically establishes his westward-facing authorship, reiterating the importance of his Anglo-American democratic heritage and the American continent for his authorship as he retreats into his European expatriation.

Though never overtly using the word "democracy" (and, quite probably, purposefully avoiding it), Irving works to accommodate the burgeoning democratic zeitgeist throughout *The Sketch Book*. In "English Writers on America," he enters the conversation of the paper wars, the battle waged in newspapers and magazines wherein there was "an increased tendency of Britons to criticize the United States and growing willingness of American writers to offer rejoinders defending their rising nation" (Eaton 52). Noting the "literary animosity daily growing up between England and America," Irving issues a defense of an American literature built upon democratic values (50). Rather than "degeneration," he now asserts America's geographical and political exceptionalism, its "singular state of moral and physical development; a country in which one of the greatest political experiments in the history of the world is now performing" (51). He stokes the fires of Anglophobia by noting that the prejudices of "coarse and obscure" English travel writers who disparage America stem from the fact that the American land and ideology are too "vast and elevated for their capacities" (51–52). When English writers, "brought up in a servile feeling of inferiority" in the English class system, experience the egalitarianism of democracy and are “treated with unwonted respect in America,” they then “become arrogant on the common boon of civility: they attribute to the lowliness of others their own elevation; and underrate a society where there are no artificial distinctions, and where, by any chance, such individuals as themselves can rise to consequence” (52). Irving celebrates the “infant giant” America and its “rapidly-growing importance, and matchless prosperity” owing to its “physical and local” geography, but also to its “moral causes” of “political liberty, the general diffusion of knowledge, the prevalence of sound moral and religious principles” (53). Its geography, democratic ideology, and political and religious liberty make America exceptional, claims Irving, as he sets these “generous and brave” qualities in opposition to the “jealousy and ill-will” of English writers (53–54). He even casts English heritage in a dark light, as having been forged in “rude and ignorant ages” of “distrust and hostility,” as opposed to the “enlightened and philosophic age” of America’s birth (56–57). In so doing, Irving marks the hemispheric and democratic qualities that must necessarily underwrite American literary heritage set in opposition to European, and, specifically, English models.

Yet within nearly the same breath Irving reveals either (or both) his accommodation of American cultural ambivalence or his own personal equivocation as he pivots back toward demophobia/Anglophilia. He depicts Europe as a “land of promise” (18), then later concedes that most Americans maintain Anglophilic loyalties, stating the “prepossessions of the people are strongly in favor of England” (54). Delineating what is “really excellent and amiable in the English character,” he admits there “is no country more worthy of our study than England. The spirit of her constitution is most analogous to ours. The manners of her people…are all congenial to the American character; and, in fact, are all intrinsically excellent” (58). Moreover, it is England’s cultural heritage in which its superiority lies, and Irving deferentially attempts to lay

American claim, stating, “there must be something solid in the basis, admirable in the materials, and stable in the structure of an edifice that so long has towered unshaken amidst the tempests of the world” (58). Wary of the ability to forge a national literature independent from English forms and themes, he calls America “a young people, necessarily an imitative one” who must take our examples and models, in a great degree, from the existing nations of Europe,” venerating Old World history and antiquity (58). It is specifically England’s deep and established heritage—its “ages of experience”—from which America must “strengthen” and “embellish our national character,” Irving avers (58).

Complementing his Anglophilia, Irving’s demophobia is most evident in “Rip Van Winkle,” whose twenty-year sleep divides a British colonial America of “drowsy tranquility” (43) from the frenetic, impersonal democracy of post-revolutionary United States (43). Irving idealizes the British colonial milieu (which afforded anti-hero Van Winkle an idle, unambitious life with an “insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor”) now at odds with post-revolutionary democracy in which ambition and skilled labor are associated with civic responsibility (35). On his return, Van Winkle notices the replacement of a great tree (symbolic of English rootedness, tradition, and organic continuity [Looby 779]) with a liberty pole flying an American flag. Van Winkle is aggressively approached to reveal his political affiliation—“Federal or Democrat”—at which point he notices the “very character of the people seemed changed” by a “busy, bustling, disputatious tone” (43). American identity is now fragmented by political affiliation, and Irving betrays uneasiness about the era’s obsessive partisanship. He implicitly encodes a demophobic inclination in Van Winkle’s experience with one hand-bill laden zealot who was “haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens–elections–members of congress–liberty–Bunker’s Hill–heroes of seventy-six,” as his demophilic tirade rings like a "perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle" (43). Paul Downes suggests Irving's representation of "'tyrannous' authority in the figure of Dame Van Winkle and in the tongues of democratic politicians" provides additional insight into the "anxiety generated by an expanded body politic" and "the shortcomings of post-revolutionary democracy" (x). Irving considers the inherent similarities and shared lineage between American and British governments and cultures when Van Winkle comfortably confuses the face of George Washington on the inn's sign for King George III, noting only that the "red coat was changed for one of blue and buff" (43). Democracy, Irving implies, is an outgrowth of the British Enlightenment, and America thus a devolution of (rather than radical departure from) Great Britain. Though his contemporaries might try to rewrite a narrative of the nation's historical past that neglects its British heritage, Irving's Van Winkle serves to remind an increasingly Anglophobic and demophilic society that it was only one short generation—and one long sleep—providing the connective thread between a colonial British America and a post-revolutionary democratic United States.

Irving's back-and-forth about American versus English cultural superiority exhibits an ideological incoherence at the heart of the colonial subject's complex position in early national America, one shared by other key ideologues of the period. In 1815, Walter Channing indicted America for its "melancholy record" of literary output, asking outright, "[W]hy is this country deficient in literature?" (307).[34] Blaming the "colonial existence which was unfortunately so long the condition of America," he cites the "enslaving" influences of a national language shared with a European country and the American obsession with foreign literature (312). Expounding on the organic process by which a national literature should emerge, he draws on tropes of nature:

> The remotest germs of literature are the native peculiarities of the country in which it is to spring. These are diversified beyond all estimation, by the climate, and the various other

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[34] From "Essay on American Language and Literature" published in the North American Review.

> circumstances which produce them.—Next to these are the social institutions, into which the various tribes of intellectual beings resolve themselves, for certain specifick objects. Then follow the relations which issue from these, which constitute the moral, religious, and political states, together with all the other various objects of history. All the circumstances now mentioned as the elements of literature, are essentially peculiar to every nation. (308)

Here Channing establishes that a national literature will be rooted in the natural and distinct landscape of America, but specifically in geographical, cultural, and ideological opposition to England, stating, "The language in which we speak and write, is the vernacular tongue of a nation…whose natural, political, religious, and literary relations and peculiarities, are totally unlike our own…The whole external character of our country is totally unlike that of England" (309). Yet Channing maintains an uneasy attachment to his "transatlantick brethren" in the "old country," calling for a national literature that exceeds that of the British but nonetheless achieves international renown, tasking the "native" American author with exerting his "original genius" and finding in "the labors of his own pencil, a language which all nations understand" (310). The problem, he asserts, exists because Americans are intellectually and culturally colonized beings, the implication being an epistemological revolution must take place that pits a hemispheric identity against British colonial hegemony—"When did England look to the West-Indies for any thing but its sugars, or to Canada for any thing but its furs?" he asks (313)—and that oddly finds an affinity with Native American cultural independence as its model. Channing proclaims,

> [T]he oral literature of [America's] aborigines…is as bold as his own unshackled conceptions, and as rapid as his own step…It is now as rich as the soil on which he was nurtured, and ornamented with every blossom that blows in his path. It is now elevated and soaring, for his image is the eagle, and now precipitous and hoarse as the cataract among whose mists he is descanting. In the oral literature of the Indian, even when rendered in a language enfeebled by excessive cultivation, every one has found genuine originality. (313–14)

Without the least sense of irony, Channing invokes the Native American as a model of literary heritage, while simultaneously promoting an image of the Anglo-American as a cultural subaltern oppressed by hegemonic Britain. He insists that the Anglo-American must inscribe his own identity (both figuratively and literally) upon the American *terra nova*, which, implicitly, necessitates Native American displacement. From a position of colonized subjugation, and with two wars fought in recent memory over Anglo-American displacement, Channing contends that American identity must be realized through the displacement of others/the Other.

Channing works within a paradigm articulated by postcolonial theorist Albert Memmi as the problem of the "middle-class colonized" intellectual, who "lives more in cultural anguish" and must choose between assimilation ("to become equal to that splendid model and to resemble him to the point of disappearing in him" [120]) or revolt: "[T]he colonial condition cannot be changed except by doing away with the colonial relationship (126)….His condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution; a break and not a Compromise!" (128). The colonized's liberation, Memmi declares, necessitates the "recovery of self and of autonomous dignity," but inevitably, "[t]he colonized's self-assertion, born out of a protest, continues to define itself in relation to it. In the midst of revolt, the colonized continues to think, feel and live against and, therefore, in relation to the colonizer and colonization" (139). As Channing's ambivalent wavering between colonizer and colonized affirms, the farther the Anglo-American intellectual retreated into the act of self-assertion, the more that self-assertion became intertwined with both colonizer and colonized statuses, shadowed by Great Britain in its overt attempt to resist English influence while also effacing America's displacement of Native Americans. As Channing's essay "would set the tone for discussions of the national literature for decades to come," the dialogical vocabulary and epistemology upon which the new national literature was taking shape thus centered upon this colonizer/colonized paradox (Brickhouse 15).[35]

In his satire of authorship, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Irving exhibits the colonized intellectual's fragmented psyche as he struggles to negotiate competing ideologies—Anglophilia/ Anglophobia and demophilia/demophobia—in the act of establishing a legacy of American literature while also asserting control of his work as literary property. He defamiliarizes the American landscape in close proximity to scenes of death, resulting in xenotopic deathscapes that mark his retreat from the public sphere into the interiority of his vexed space of authorship. When first introduced, the landscape around Tarry Town is described in xenotopic terms. Knickerbocker depicts the "sequestered glen" as an exceptionally static environment marked aurally, visually, and climatologically by both absence and excess: "one of the quietest places in the whole world"; of "uniform tranquility" and "listless repose"; a place where "stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country"; and a place of "Sabbath stillness" that when broken by Knickerbocker's boyhood interference produces "angry echoes" (291–92). This "region of shadows" seems to reject the intervention of the narrating subject, thus establishing it early on as a space inhospitable to the literary imagination (293).

Furthermore, the xenotopic land accounts for the "peculiar character of its inhabitants" (292). Knickerbocker maintains that a "drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over" the strange New York landscape and "pervade the very atmosphere," resulting in the degradation of European-American character:

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[35] Brickhouse notes the additional significance to the medium in which Channing published his nationalist polemic: "Founded in 1815 by William Tudor, with Channing's brother Edward Tyrell Channing and Richard Henry Dana, Jr., the North American Review was the first US literary journal to print entirely original content, quickly becoming one of the most prestigious of nineteenth-century periodicals. Self-consciously elite, the Review addressed itself to an exclusive class of intelligentsia dominating the northeastern seat of US literary capital, a small but powerful group of readers and writers among whom circulated, as one early contributor put it, 'the best that has been said and thought'" (16–17). Intended for (in Memmi's terms) the "native [American] intellectual," this inclusivity and colonial pride was directed at a specifically limited audience of powerful, white, Anglo-Americans on the eastern seaboard: ironically the hegemonic colonial elite being asked to envision themselves in subaltern status.

> Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie…However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure in a little time to inhale the witching influence of the air and begin to grow imaginative—to dream dreams and see apparitions. (293)

In this depiction of the land, Irving illuminates a paradox for the American author: though it exerts a degenerative influence upon the Euro-American and threatens violence specifically against the author (in this case the figure of Knickerbocker), it is nonetheless the landscape that initiates the imaginative impulse necessary to author a piece of fictional literature, a literature that must necessarily be written upon and about that landscape.

And, yet, that very imaginative impulse, Knickerbocker suggests, is dangerous to the ambitious author, particularly when the storyteller attempts to elevate it from the oral/local realm and into the professional/economic. The diseased American environment—the "contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region"—creates an "atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land," and the residents of Sleepy Hollow (like authors themselves) react by "doling out their wild and wonderful legends," many of which are centered upon death and mourning (310). But it is not the imaginative act itself that proves potentially fatal, but rather the attempt to economize it. Irving implies an affinity with Ichabod Crane, the region's "man of letters," whose disappearance (or supposed death) is brought about by both his own surfeit of imagination and his attempt to rise above his station as schoolmaster to property owner. At the beginning of the tale, Crane experiences the insularity and regional orientation of revolutionary-era America, standing outside of the parochial community he ambitiously attempts to join (296). Irving's anxiety of bequest surfaces as he reproduces Crane's social displacement through three layers of authorial displacement: originally told by a "pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly old fellow" and recorded by the "late" Knickerbocker, whose story then resides in Crayon's sketches (319). The act of exerting ownership over literary property is thus immediately problematized, then further developed through Crane's economically-motivated interest in Katrina Van Tassel: "his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea how they might be readily turned into cash and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land and shingle palaces in the wilderness" (299–300). Crane's imaginative impulse replicates democratic/expansionist ideology, as property ownership leads to westward-facing expansion and accumulation. It is the democratic spirit that feeds the rich imaginative power wherein a mere schoolteacher can eschew aristocracy and envision himself an American land baron. Yet it is this ambitious attempt to transform his lot in life by surreptitiously gaining ownership over the land that initiates the rivalry with Brom Bones, which results in Crane's excessive imagination and disappearance (or, perhaps, death), a dark portent for the author attempting to establish a westward-facing authorship constructed upon the American landscape and informed by democratic values of upward mobility, economic reward, and property rights.

In the early national era, literary property rights became entangled in the demophilic shift due to the increased focus on copyright.[36] American ingenuity and progress—industry and expansion—while generally celebrated, were also cautioned against, as avarice and self-interest could be spun as demophilic or demophobic qualities and used to buttress the agendas of both Federalists and Republicans. The notion of literary property was conceptually tied to the land, in terms of both land ownership and westward expansion. Robert H. Wiebe advises, “If in the 18th century becoming a landowner established a putative claim to independence, in the 19th century each citizen’s independence established a putative claim to becoming a landowner” (31). To be an American was to *own*, and to own was to submit to the marketplace values extending to land, literary property, and even the self. Important connections were established between individual production, democracy, self-ownership, textual ownership, and land ownership; however, the issue of land ownership was fraught with problems that would soon extend to literary property. While property ownership was the key to citizenry and “Americanness,” it nonetheless opened up issues of land disputes to the court and to public criticism, shifting power from the individual to the public. But the rationale behind public determination posed a problem for authors since the demophilic shift raised serious questions about the nation’s cultural future. The general question among Americans, explains Haynes, was whether or not a nation that valued the practical, the common citizen, and the utilitarian would be capable of great artistic achievement: “Feelings of inadequacy ran so deep within the intellectual community that some writers were all but ready to pronounce the new republic a barren cultural desert, unfit for literary products of any kind” (58–59). This same democratic shift of control over one’s textual production to public reception (readers, reviewers, and publishers) threatened the individual author’s autonomy and creative freedom. No model existed for how to navigate entering the increasingly market-oriented literary marketplace as producers and owners of literary property. Irving thus defined the parameters of his authorship amidst the conflict of writing for civic virtue/public good, writing for individual production and economic reward, and writing to establish literary heritage.

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[36] Democratic values realized the effect of individuals achieving property rights over themselves, and hence, "their skills—what enabled them to produce—were integral parts to what they owned—their property—and, of course, to who they were" (Wiebe 13). Nonetheless, there were those who argued that copyright dangerously elevated the rights of the individual over the public good (Buinicki 3). John Adams lamented in 1808 that "our national sin….[a]n aristocracy of wealth, without any check but a democracy of licentiousness, is our curse" (qtd. in Burstein 226).

As both land and death are central to the act of bequest, xenotopia and deathscapes aptly express Irving’s anxiety over literary longevity and intellectual property in the early national milieu. The language of economic legacy, which in a pre-industrial climate would be most closely associated with the patrimonial inheritance of land, was being conflated with political achievement and historical heritage and drew upon the pathos of the looming deaths of the last of the founding fathers, as evidenced in John Quincy Adams's 1825 inaugural address:

> Since the adoption of this social compact one of these generations has passed away. It is the work of our forefathers…We now receive it as a precious inheritance from those to whom we are indebted for its establishment, doubly bound by the examples which they have left us and by the blessings which we have enjoyed as the fruits of their labors to transmit the same unimpaired to the succeeding generation. (par. 2)

The endowment of this "precious inheritance" of American citizenry was framed as a cyclical privilege of both advantage and duty: democracy and the American landscape were to be enjoyed and experienced while equally maintained and protected for future generations. With disputes over land ownership, property rights, and expansionism occupying the legal and political realms of the young nation's public sphere, the literal dimension of bequest—the act of giving property to a beneficiary by will upon death—serves as an apt metaphor for the bequest of an American belles-lettres extending to future generations and coalescing into historical tradition.[37] Moreover, the act of bequest depends upon death; a grantor must establish his or her claim over the property (either the land or literary property) in question, but then relinquish that claim upon death.

However, the crucial difference between America's political legacy and the inheritance of a national literature was that, politically, the nation had been legitimized by a history of war and revolution and "heroic" political figures who shaped the myth of American exceptionalism. But literary culture was less conclusive or self-actualized. For authors attempting to define American literature with no cohesive literary heritage as a springboard, the sense of duty was framed less in terms of endowment and more of a progenitorship. The burden to create an original literature was compounded by the pressure to achieve international renown, embody America's unique political and geographical qualities, and constitute its own literary tradition that would recommend itself to future generations of American writers.

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[37] Connotatively, there is a sense of formalization to the act of bequest by virtue of the grantor's bequest being written and recorded in order to be acknowledged legally and socially by his own society; the origin of bequest is something very personal and internal to the grantor, who then externally projects his or her wishes upon a future in which he or she will have no direct participation. Thus, the grantor must necessarily place his faith in the social and political system in which he is a part, a concept that was complicated by the nascent state of the American nation.

Irving explores these pressures and the problem of literary property through Crane's relationship to the land. Though initially imagining the pastoral landscape as an agrarian paradise ("fat meadow lands"), once Crane, the man of letters, allows his imagination to exert ownership over that land, he now reinterprets it in xenotopic terms (299). In the theme of excessive imagination, Irving invokes the psychology of the gothic and its implied homage to British tradition; however, he turns it in an unexpected direction, away from merely "irrationalism" and toward the colonial imagination, symbolically appropriating the land and recognizing its deathliness. The Tappan Zee, the river that feeds the fertile valley, now spreads out below him as a "dusky and indistinct waste of waters," inverting Sleepy Hollow from a space of cleanly delineated agrarian productivity and plenitude to an amorphous and undefined wasteland bearing the threat of violent effacement. The surrounding landscape itself transforms into an exaggerated space of darkness and absence: "The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal" (312). Moving farther into a space of isolation and indeterminacy, the man of letters is thrust into the unknown and left to his own interpretive devices, an apt parallel for the author attempting to forge a definition of authorship about and upon American soil.

Irving implies that it is Crane's fictional impulse that produces the perception of death's looming threat as it propels him into his encounter with the xenotopic vision of Major André's tree, a preternaturally large entity with "gnarled and fantastic" limbs that had been "scathed by lightning and the white wood laid bare" (312–13). Standing in the center of the road, the tree is identified by the hanging of British revolutionary spy Major John André, serving as a symbol of the unproductive but violent divide between Great Britain and America. As the tree bifurcates a road and separates the same uniform place and people from one another, Irving intimates that the colonial violence informing the tree's symbolic power only divides a space of similitude and severs two sides of one whole. Furthermore, Knickerbocker states that Major André's tree is the subject of the locals' imaginative efforts, as he recounts "the tales of strange sights and doleful lamentations told concerning it" (313). Here Irving suggests that the violent break from the metropole—implicitly a space of democratic and Anglophobic nationalism—will not result in the recording of historical truths to learn from but rather in dangerous fictional reinterpretation. And when an individual attempts to transform that fictional reinterpretation into literary property for profit, there is a dark foreboding that registers Irving's anxiety of bequest.

Knickerbocker further highlights the colonial divide when describing how the region is scarred by the violence of its colonial past, as the "British and American line had run near [Sleepy Hollow] during the war"; he observes that between the subsequent waves of violence he sarcastically terms "border chivalry," enough time passed for "each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and in the indistinctness of his recollection to make himself the hero of every exploit" (309). Colonial violence, fictional storytelling, and revisionist history are inscribed upon the xenotopic landscape, as Irving implies that the only way for American literary legacy to survive is for the author to superintend and control the narrative of colonialism, and yet that very act threatens to turn the land into a palimpsest on which each successive wave of colonial violence erases the stories of the previous generation. The American landscape cannot support or sustain a literary heritage because it rejects a singular historical narrative.

But even more consequential is that, just as he cannot assert control of his literary property, the individual author cannot inscribe his authority upon that landscape or effect a lasting heritage upon it; it is that authorial intervention that Irving alludes to that threatens to efface or subsume the individual author himself. As Crane advances closer and closer into the fictional space of Major André's tree, the scene becomes uncanny and the encounter between the man of letters and the headless horseman results in Crane's vague death or disappearance. As Crane mysteriously vanishes into the xenotopic landscape, he is subsumed back into that same imagination-inducing atmosphere that instigated the fictional act to begin with. Unable to realize a claim to any topographical or legal property, Crane is equally incapable of inscribing a legacy upon the landscape as he becomes a pseudo-historical footnote for other storytellers to perpetuate rather than the author controlling his own imaginative act. This conundrum manifests Irving's anxiety of bequest: it is the American land that both produces and provides material for the fictional imagination, but it is this fictional imagination that, when translated into the space of commodification and literary property, ultimately leads to the disappearance of the man of letters. Death in this capacity is made strange, as "the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered," and without Crane's corporeal remnants, there can be no proper burial or mourning and no legacy can be established (316). As the posthumous attribution of Knickerbocker's two fictional sketches implies, only in death can one assert literary ownership and/or construct an authorial legacy, and, yet, that legacy is not sustainable on a colonial landscape beyond one's immediate generation. Colonial violence, democracy, and Anglophobia—all of which divide

America from its British heritage—lead to dangerous fictional reinterpretation, the perpetuation of a revisionist history endemic to colonial violence, and the effacement of the individual author.

Colonial Ambivalence and the Threat of Expansion in Bryant's Authorship

Though he fell out of favor with both the academy and the public over the course of the twentieth century,[38] this is certainly not a reflection of William Cullen Bryant's popularity or reputation in his own time.[39] Noting that Bryant was a celebrity for almost seventy-five years, Gilbert H. Muller proclaims, "No one had greater cultural authority than this self-made man from rural New England" (1). Charvat measures Bryant's success in economic terms: up until 1845, "no poet was read more eagerly," leading to *Graham's Magazine* offering him (and Longfellow) $50 a poem in 1842—top dollar for the time (109). Upon the publication of his first major volume of poetry, a critic for the New York magazine *American* declared Bryant the "first living poet in the [American] language," and Bryant was widely regarded as America's first literary representative that could be proudly exported to Europe (qtd. in Muller 102). From an aerial perspective, Bryant appears to have triumphantly answered the call for a national literature that appeased his American readers and critics on both sides of the Atlantic, advancing the cause of American literary nationalism through a democratic and hemispheric American poetry.

And, yet, in spite of being (as his friend Cooper avowed) the "author of America," Bryant's career was rife with self-contradiction as he navigated the complicated literary marketplace and the colonizer/colonized quandary (qtd. in W. Franklin 759). Even with his rising fame and favorable critical reception, Bryant never fully gave himself over to a career in poetry. Whether due to financial or personal insecurity, or perhaps because it gave him the most freedom or control within the public sphere, Bryant sustained a distinguished editorial career for over fifty years, though, as Charvat contends, forced into it by “the failure of his early poetry” (109). In 1825, he vacated his Massachusetts law practice to pursue his literary interests in New York City, the cultural and financial capital of the nation, but also the center of emerging democratic and capitalist ideologies. Though his main objective appears to have been forging an authorial career, Bryant quickly took an editorship upon arriving. As he admitted to Richard Henry Dana, “‘The business of sitting in judgment upon books as they come out is not the literary employment the most to my taste nor that for which I am best fitted,” but, he conceded, the editorship “affords me for the present a certain compensation—which is a matter of consequence to a poor devil like myself’” (qtd. in Muller 52). Beyond financial stability, the role of editor made Bryant keenly aware of the vicissitudes of American society in the early national era: a vacillation between the Anglophilic and demophobic Federalism of the previous generation and the rising demophilia and westward expansion underscoring progress and cultural advancement. But his editorship also furnished him a space of respite from the exacting demands and trenchant criticism heaped upon the emerging American author.

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[38] Though more widely read in his own day than Wordsworth, explains Kinereth Meyer, today Bryant is omitted from American literature courses, his poems striking readers as "quaint relics of nineteenth-century naïveté at best, or at worst as insipid affirmations of the most conservative elements of nineteenth-century thought" (196–97).

[39] Muller details some of the praise heaped upon Bryant during his heyday: "As early as 1821, an English critic, reviewing Bryant's first collection of seven poems, wrote that the young poet 'stood at the head of the American Parnassus.'…In the November 1831 issue of the New England Magazine, a reviewer professed that 'by common consent' Bryant headed 'the list of American poets.' Poets as diverse as Poe, Whitman, and Emerson also elevated Bryant to the rank of first American poet" (338).

As an editor, Bryant felt more confident in univocally expressing exceptionalism and national pride, falling in line with the rhetoric of Indian Removal and democratic expansion growing more popular in the late 1820s and early 1830s. As a poet, however, Bryant registered a more personal, internalized pressure to resolve his ambivalent nationalism; as the public sphere began to rally around the call to abandon American subservience to British models, Bryant seemed to draw nearer to his British heritage, and as the expansionist ethos of Jacksonian democracy surged, he forged a symbolic connection with the colonized and displaced Native American. With its sweeping scenes of topographical sublimity and its cold observational and elegiac tone, Bryant's poetry is a clear attempt to answer the call for a unique national literature, and, yet, it is also equally conflicted. Attempting to accommodate the two factions of American thought—Anglophilia/demophobia and Anglophobia/demophilia—Bryant's authorial anxiety reveals itself through xenotopia and deathscapes, as he expresses his misgivings over the seeming antithesis of the cultural and ideological America (democracy, westward expansion, and hemispheric enclosure) and the physical place of "America" on which a sustainable heritage is dubiously conceived. By representing the American landscape in xenotopic terms—particularly the frontier prairies as strange, foreboding, immutable, and uncanny—Bryant portrays the interiority of authorship as subjected to the same dangerous, unpredictable elements endemic to westward expansion and the colonizing endeavor.

If we take his nationalistic expressions at face value, Bryant's poetry often seems in line with the colonizing vision, offering the power of his editorial voice and optimistic, forward- and westward-facing poetry in support of a new democratic and hemispheric "native" literature. As Muller claims, Bryant "would always subscribe to a doctrine of progress that was central to American democracy," and thus to American imperialism (13). While his boyhood poem, "The Embargo" (1808), parroted his father's Federalist politics in its pillory of Jeffersonian democracy, as Bryant came of age he grew to embrace what Muller calls the "liberal political principles" evolving in the 1820s in New York City;[40] his transition from practicing law to editing and writing for a living was a move partly informed by civic duty, to promote democratic values in the public sphere across a hemispherically-conceived America (45). Throughout his first major volume, *Poems* (1832),[41] Bryant imagines the unique power of the American continent and its potential for representing a strengthening democracy. At times he represents the land as a pastoral Eden: laying Anglo-American claim to western Massachusetts, he calls the "[b]road, round, and green" (2) Berkshire landscape his "native hills" (1), a rural paradise of "waving grass and grain" (3) and "[o]rchards, and beechen forests" (4) gleaming with "verdure" and "light" (12).[42] Other times, as in "Thanatopsis" (1817), the American landscape is a sublime *terra nova*, wherein Bryant depicts the solemn, primeval quality of the western landscape:

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[40] Muller details these liberal principles of 1820s New York as: "liberty and self-determination (at least for white men), freedom from foreign entanglements, free trade, pan-Americanism, and—with slow but growing conviction—suppression of the slave trade" (45).

> …The hills
> Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, —the vales
> Stretching in pensive quietness between;
> The venerable woods—rivers that move
> In majesty, and the complaining brooks
> That make the meadows green… (37–42)

Here—and throughout the compilation—he details distinctly North American topography, praising native American flora (the fringed gentian and the "Painted Cup") and fauna (the "whippoorwill" [sic] and bison).[43] He also highlights specific geographical locations in America, from east (the "Catterskill Falls" and the "kingly Hudson") to west (the Sangamon river).[44]

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[41] Poems is an assemblage of poetry previously published in various magazines and gift books in the 1820s.

[42] From "Lines on Revisiting the Country" (1825).

[43] From "To the Fringed Gentian"; "November. A Sonnet."; "The Painted Cup"; "The White-Footed Deer"; "To Cole, the Painter, Departing for Europe. A Sonnet."; "The Prairies"; "The Hunter of the Prairies"; and "The Indian Girl's Lament."

[44] Eastern references from "Catterskill Falls" (now Kaaterskill Falls, located in the eastern Catskill Mountains of New York); western reference to the Sangamon River, a tributary of the Illinois River, from "The Painted Cup."

Written for individual publication and anthologized later, *Poems* nonetheless coheres in a teleological current that moves geographically, ideologically, and psychologically from east to west.[45] In “Thanatopsis,” his poetic eye fixes westward upon the “Barcan wilderness” (51) and the “continuous woods / where rolls the Oregon” (52–53), a reference to the Columbia River of the Pacific Northwest, an area being framed as virgin wilderness and primed for American expansion. This sense of westward-oriented momentum continues in “The Conjunction of Jupiter and Venus” as he traces the arc of the stars—which he hopes shine “brightest on our [American] borders” (48)—as they withdraw westward “Towards the great Pacific, marking out / The path of empire” (49–50). In this early articulation of Manifest Destiny, Bryant trumpets the democratic nation’s divinely legitimized expansion all the way to the “shore of that calm ocean” (54) and envisions an American empire that occupies the entire continent. Although still in geographical flux in the 1820s, there was a developing sense of realizing full continental conquest that framed a nebulous but expansive conception of “America” between the two oceanic borders.

With westward expansion and oceanic enclosure in sight, Bryant consistently strikes an Anglophobic chord by venerating the American landscape as both isolated from and superior to that of Europe. In “Thanatopsis,” he contrasts verdant, dynamic American land with oceanic void (and, implicitly, the “Old World” beyond it) as he depicts “Old Ocean’s gray and melancholy waste” (43) being “poured round all” (42), hermetically sealing the eastern coastal border and celebrating that which is contained within the continent’s hemispheric enclosure. Elsewhere, his verse instructs his friend, the painter Thomas Cole, to bear a living image of their “native land” to Europe, including America’s “Lone lakes” and “savannas where the bison roves” (5), its

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[45] Bryant mentions some variation of “west” (West, western, south-west, etc.) at least twenty-five times in Poems; by contrast, “east” or “eastern” is only mentioned six times.

"solemn streams" (6), "Skies, where the desert eagle wheels and screams" (7), and "boundless groves" (8) that Bryant makes clear are "different" (10) from that which Cole will undoubtedly experience in Europe, where "life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air" (12) and the landscape is marred by the "trace of men" (10).[46] He continually draws a line—not only geographically but also politically, culturally, and ideologically—between east (European "Old World") and west (American "New World"), often implying demophilic exceptionalism. In the Spenserian/ European form of "The Ages" (1821), Bryant nonetheless offers a sweeping panorama of the rise and fall of successive civilizations culminating in the birth of America as the realization of cultural progress. In the final stanza, written as an apostrophe to his personified country, he reiterates American hemispheric closure ("…seas and stormy air / Are the wide barrier of thy borders…" [310–11]) and democratic exceptionalism ("…thy blessings showered on all" [309]), noting that Europe "writhes in shackles" (299) awaiting to be set free by its own democratic revolution. He declares that America "shalt never fall" (307) but will instead "laugh'st at enemies" (313), those outside of the hemispheric and democratic construction. Here Bryant challenges the belief shared by American Federalists and European critics that democracy lies at odds with history, antiquity, and heritage. Instead, Bryant makes the argument that democracy is the fulfillment of the triumphalist arc of western civilization, a progressive historical momentum moving westward geographically toward the American hemisphere and ideologically away from the stunted and obsolescent political ideologies of Europe. American heritage is thusly conceived in terms of abstract cultural progression rather than specifically traced backward to Europe.

Just as Irving and Channing before him, Bryant exhibits the ideological ambivalence of the colonial subject, the interiority of his authorship marked by a sort of artistic schizophrenia:

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[46] From "To Cole, The Painter, Departing for Europe. A Sonnet."

ideologically nationalist but aesthetically conservative, and ambivalent about both orientations. Though often reading like a Jacksonian Democrat, Bryant nonetheless betrays significant Anglophilic and demophobic tendencies within his writings, which might be attributable to his own background.[47] Certainly during Bryant's formative years there was, as Andrew W. Robertson details, a "fierce and often violent partisanship" (1264) between Federalists, who "generated a traditional Anglo-American identity that located its origins in…British nationalism," and Republicans, who "adopted an Enlightenment-influenced identity based on 'citizenship' that, like emerging French republican nationalism, took inspiration from the ideas of liberty, equality, and natural rights as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence" (1273–74). America's intelligentsia were divided over the nation's political and cultural future, a feud that swept the public sphere with "violent 'politics out of doors'" in which "crowds of opposing partisans would engage in mock violence, such as burning in effigy, or real violence, such as beatings or tar and feathering" (Robertson 1275). What is significant about the Anglophobic/ Anglophilic divide is not which attitude held greater sway but that these competing ideologies existed concurrently, challenging the author who was attempting to establish a cohesive literary tradition. How America was to make sense of Great Britain—embracing or rejecting its heritage and history—was in flux, and Bryant's authorship was caught in the middle.

Even as he came of age and began to embrace the progressive political and nationalistic fervor of New York City, Bryant maintained an allegiance to English literary culture that he did not exactly hide from public view—nor, perhaps, did he feel the need to, as a palpable nostalgia for Great Britain's power and heritage perpetuated among colonial elites. While theoretically agreeing on the wholesale repudiation of Old World ideas, considers Haynes, the "centripetal pull of Britain's imperial orbit remained strong. It was easy enough to call for an end to British influences, but even the most strident Anglophobe often found it difficult to translate these convictions into practice" (23). Intended as a defense of the potential for an original American poetic tradition, Bryant's 1826 lecture series nonetheless expresses his poetic sensibilities in line with English romanticists, using Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron as a standard and deriving his definition of proper poetry from Wordsworth and Burke. Elisa Tamarkin's study on American Anglophilia contends that post-independence Americans looked back on the experience of empire as an "elegiac fantasy of rank, stability, and paternal authority," one in which pleasurable associations with "the social world of Britain—imagined always as a reliquary of tradition, ornament, and ritual—gave rise to a retrospective love of its imperial forms" (xxviii). In spite of youthful declarations against European imitation,[48] here Bryant justifies the "use and value of imitation in poetry" as an organic component of literary evolution, declaring that a "great deal of [poetry's] effect depends upon the degree of success with which a sagacious and strong mind seizes and applies the skill of others" (*Prose* 35–36). When arguing that genius "is but a dependent quality," his implication is clear: Anglo-Americans have a right to British literary heritage, and any poetic innovation singular to America must necessarily derive itself from European forms and themes (*Prose* 37).

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[47] The ancestry of his mother, Sarah Snell Bryant, can be traced back to the Mayflower, confirming an Anglo-American lineage that was of particular pride for the family. His father, Dr. Peter Bryant, was a staunch anti-Jeffersonian Federalist who encouraged his son's interest in poetry by supplying him with a steady stream of British literature, from Shakespeare and Milton to Pope, Byron, and Wordsworth.

European imitation became a central concern for Bryant as critics increasingly accused him of deriving his forms and thematic focus on nature from British romanticism, his "poetic voice…pitched too closely to English and European models" (Galloway 731).[49] Bryant seemed ever more restricted within a web of his own contradictions, between his desire to exemplify American poetic innovation and his inherent affinity for British literary heritage. But these were the very clashing ideologies bifurcating the American nation, and thus his vacillation between Anglophobia and Anglophilia could just as easily reflect his strategic maneuvering in attempting to accommodate his divided postcolonial self. This diametric pull registers throughout *Poems*: a discordant timbre is struck between English resonance—the Spenserian forms of "The Ages" and "After a Tempest," and the Wordsworthian treatment of nature in "A Winter Piece" and "A Forest Hymn," among many others—and Bryant's declarations of the exceptionalism of the American continent and nation. Speaking about "The Ages," Virginia Jackson poses the rhetorical question that best summarizes the incongruous nature of Bryant's *Poems*: "What is the stanzaic form of the *Faerie Queene* doing in a poem about America's transcendence of Old World cultural forms?" (186–87).

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[48] As early as 1818, Bryant vehemently insisted that American poetry was "a sickly and affected imitation of the peculiar manner of some of the late popular poets of England" (qtd. in Weisbuch, "Post-Colonial Emerson" 200).

As his poetry evinced his divided loyalties and seemed to affirm Americans' division between Anglophilia and Anglophobia, Bryant continually (and sometimes ironically) reiterated the call for an original native literature that relied on the Wordsworthian notion of originary genius. In "On Originality and Imitation," he implicitly appeals to the American public sphere:

> But when once a tame and frigid taste has possessed the tribe of poets, when all their powers are employed in servilely copying the works of their predecessors, it is not only impossible that any great work should be produced among them, but the period of a literary reformation, of the awakening of genius, is postponed to a distant futurity. It is the quality of such a state of literature, by the imposing precision of its rules and the ridicule it throws on everything out of its own beaten track, to perpetuate itself indefinitely. The happy appearance of some extraordinary genius, educated under different influences than those operating on the age, and compelling admiration by the

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[49] The self-declared "intelligent critics" ("American Poetry" 405) of the North British Review, for example, backhandedly complimented Bryant by stating, "Mr. Bryant's study of nature may have been hard, but unfortunately it has not been independent. He has paced through field, forest, and city, observing many things; but it has always been with a volume of the English poets in his hand…he is not, and does not pretend to be 'original'" (409).

> force of his talents; or, perhaps, some great moral or political revolution, by unsettling old opinions and familiarizing men to daring speculations—can alone have any effect to remove it. (*Prose* 44)

Here Bryant makes several interesting rhetorical maneuvers. While indicting the imitativeness of American poetry, he seems to provide two distinct but incompatible solutions to the deficit of originality: either the arrival of some mythical literary prophet, or a political or social revolution, which, when framed in the public sphere of the mid–1820s, would be a clear allusion to democracy. But for Bryant, these two solutions—the savior poet or the democratic revolution—were exclusive of one another, provided as an "either/or" panacea for a general lack of literary originality. He suggests that these events could not occur simultaneously, so the ascendency of Jacksonian democracy in the 1820s supplants the emergence of a poetic genius, which Bryant (the literary critic and editor) seems to be signaling to Bryant the emerging poet. Thus his writings in the early national era betray an ambivalent defensiveness of America, his authorial psyche divided between colonizer and colonized status: simultaneously appealing for and apprehensive of a national heritage built upon democracy, and confirming his British heritage while challenging and resisting it. As he vacillates on how best to represent American literature and accommodate a divided American audience, his works resonate with the tensile stress of an expanding nation—its national culture and literary marketplace suspended between two epochs—and an authorship fractured by the postcolonial milieu.

Bryant (and early national America) may not fit neatly within the traditional "white-European-colonizer/brown-indigenous-colonized" paradigm of postcolonial studies, but it is important to note that he himself could (and did) envision America as both colonizer and colonized—invader *and* native, master *and* Other, sovereign *and* subaltern—and, for my purposes here, that authors such as Irving and Bryant could express both identities concurrently within the space of one text, conceiving of their own native American authorship outside of the metaphorical enclosure of what we have come to think of in terms of traditional literary nationalism. In writing on the complexity of colonial British India, Suleri declares, "…[C]olonial facts are vertiginous: they lack a recognizable cultural plot; they frequently fail to cohere around the master-myth that proclaims static lines of demarcation between imperial power and disempowered culture, between colonizer and colonized. Instead, they move with ghostly mobility to suggest how highly unsettling an economy of complicity and guilt is in operation between each actor on the colonial stage" (3). When such a colonial stage is complicated by the pressures of new nationhood, a violent break from the metropole, and the forcible relocation of other cultures of people through slavery and Native American displacement, the "vertiginousness" intensifies. Haynes claims that early national America exhibited anxieties consistent with nations that have emerged from long periods of colonial rule: "the challenge of reconciling two fundamentally opposing impulses—the desire to repudiate *and* emulate the ancien regime—is one that has confronted the descendants of colonizers and colonized alike" (2). In defense of reading early national America from a postcolonial perspective, Haynes concludes, "To ignore these inherent tensions is to view the early American experience through the lens of another age, to see in the young republic the colossus it would become" (2).

Such "inherent tensions" were displayed in James Monroe's 1823 presidential address to Congress, a summary of the Monroe Doctrine that now seems so blatantly hypocritical, as he stated, "'[T]he American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers'" (qtd. in Unger 350). Of course, what the passive voice obscures here is that the "free and independent condition" that has been "assumed" on the American continent is the result of Anglo-American colonization and the violent displacement of Native Americans. For Monroe, as for most Americans, America signified hemispheric insularity and fraternalism (note the plural "American continents") that viewed itself as the victim of European colonization, rather than the perpetrator of its own colonial regime, marrying the topography of the continents with the core democratic principles of freedom and independence.

The paradox of coexisting colonizer and colonized paradigms was problematic for Bryant and became central to his expression of an anxiety of bequest as he contemplated Native American displacement and its implications for literary heritage and authorial legacy. The age of American expansion, reinforced by the language of democracy (i.e. equality, liberty, and progress), was a time of corresponding contraction for Native American rights and occupation of North American territory.[50] Expansionist rhetoric depended upon framing the American land as *terra nova* ("new land") that was virgin and wild, ready to be claimed and settled by Americans and their "civil" democracy; however, a logical leap from colonized to colonizer required the effacement of Native Americans and their rights, social values, political investments, a relationship with and claim to the continent, and, most importantly, a heritage. This led to an irresolvable paradox for writers taking up the call to bequeath a legacy of "native" American literary tradition to future generations, one framed in opposition to colonizing England, built upon the American *terra nova*, and predicated upon an ideological commitment to the concept of a sustainable heritage. Just as democratic/hemispheric literature must efface the literal heritage of the Native American, so must it efface or resist the English literary tradition on which it was built. Replicating their alliance of the War of 1812, the Native American and the British shared a figurative space of displacement from this new American literature, portrayed as agents that must be expunged or circumvented in order for American literary culture to survive and thrive. American authorship could thus not sustain both colonizer and colonized statuses.

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[50] The War of 1812 saw the dissolution of Tecumseh's confederation, followed swiftly by further marginalization through legislation—the Missouri Compromise (1820) and the Monroe Doctrine (1823)—that codified Anglo-American rights to the land and legitimized westward expansion, culminating in Jackson's ultimate triumphalist expression of Manifest Destiny, the Indian Removal Act (1830).

Rather than avoiding the "problem" of Native American displacement, Bryant embraced it as an analogy for the vexed state of early American authorship. In the passage from his lecture series, Bryant reveals a glimpse of his fascination with Native American culture and heritage, as he effects a subtle analogy by using the term "tribe of poets" to liken Native Americans with the imitative group of American poets in the 1820s. This trace of his association of author with Native American would emerge much more forcefully in his poetry as he wrestled between perpetuating the colonizing expansionist rhetoric of Manifest Destiny and representing both Native Americans and American authors as subjugated beings. In the early 1820s, Bryant told Richard Henry Dana of his preoccupation with Native Americans: "'You see my head rush upon the Indians—The very mention of them once used to make me sick—perhaps because those who undertook to make poetical use of them have made a terrible butchery of the subject—I think however, at present, a great deal might be done with them'" (qtd. in Muller 90). Already Bryant was envisioning the metaphorical possibilities of Native Americans and what he perceived to be their prior misappropriation by poets like Philip Freneau, Joel Barlow, and Sarah Morton.

As for Bryant's literary treatment of Native Americans, at first glance he appears aligned with demophilic/Anglophobic nationalism. As an editor, he was an outspoken advocate of Jackson's Indian Removal policies that legitimized westward expansion: penning a series of editorials in support of the Indian Removal Act, Bryant calls it "'universally commended for its humanity and justice'" (qtd. in Muller 89). He frames Native Americans as Anglo-Americans' "barbarous neighbors," placing the two societies in an antithetical relationship distinguished by social, cultural, and racial difference; in an 1830 article, Bryant declares, "such a race could not exist in contact with a civilized community" (qtd. in Galloway 747). He further advances such views in his poetry, as perhaps his most common theme throughout *Poems* is the historical inevitability of Indian removal and eventual Native American extinction.[51] Extending the image of the noble savage in "The Disinterred Warrior," Bryant waxes nostalgic, "A noble race! but they are gone" (33), and he consistently returns to the vanishing native trope, as in "A Walk at Sunset": "But never shalt thou see these realms again / Darkened by boundless groves, and roamed by savage men" (59–60). Such images were commonplace in the 1820s and 1830s.[52] In this way Bryant was not at the forefront of a new tradition but rather seemingly a man of his time attempting to marshal existing ideological commitments and perfect upon extant tropes.

As Andrew Galloway advises, so influential was Bryant that his editorship at the *Evening Post* "helped found the New York 'liberal' tradition: adamantly antislavery and pro-Abolition, adamantly prounion, adamantly proimmigrant, and adamantly in favor of (decorous) freedom of speech," and his editorials and poems seem to align him confidently and unapologetically with the rising democratic and exceptionalist view that differentiated Anglo-America from both Native American and British societies (727). But part of that alleged egalitarian liberal tradition depended on the effacement of Native American rights and a heritage already inscribed upon the continent. Bryant's establishment of hierarchies of "proper civilization" was conceptually at odds with the notion of social equality underwriting American democracy. Thus, he captured the problematic ethos of his society: the ideological commitments of democratic and hemispheric orientations underwriting a native literature were incompatible. Hemispheric enclosure was legitimized by an Anglophobic perspective that framed American David as a colonized subaltern requiring a violent break from colonizing Goliath Great Britain. Conversely, the expansion and perpetuation of the democratic nation depended upon an inverted paradigm in which Anglo-America became the hegemon perpetrating colonial violence against Native Americans. In short, hemispheric enclosure required America to be the colonized; democratic expansion, on the other hand, made America into the colonizer. Thus the democratic and hemispheric literary endeavor was an act rife with internal contradictions that required constant effacement and/or unapologetic displacement; to face westward as an author necessitated either a blind eye ethos or a methodology of managing, contending with, explaining away, or effacing altogether the inborn paradoxes of paradigmatic colonial inversion. As Bryant perpetuates the vanishing native trope in poem after poem, he seems to push the Native American geographically and conceptually toward the west in a framework of historical inevitability, portraying their displacement as the sad but necessary collateral damage of expanding the democratic empire.

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[51] See "A Walk at Sunset," "An Indian at the Burial-Place of His Fathers," "The Indian Girl's Lament," "An Indian Story," "Monument Mountain," and "The Disinterred Warrior," among others.

[52] Brian W. Dippie contends, "Some forty novels published between 1824 and 1834 included Indian episodes," and poets such as Freneau had been incorporating these tropes into their works since the 1780s (41).

Bryant, however, could not (or would not) ignore the inherent paradox of democratic expansion across North America and westward removal of the Native American. For an Anglo-American author attempting to establish a literary heritage upon the American continent, this effacement and displacement of the Native American raised inevitable questions about the act of inscribing heritage on the American continent altogether. When portending the “fearful sign” (61) that the white men’s “race may vanish” (63) and the continent they colonized with democratic politics “May be a barren desert yet” (78), he questions the ability of the North American continent to sustain any heritage altogether, a problem intrinsic to the cyclical historical theory of the rise and fall of civilizations.[53] As Bryant mourns the ephemerality of humanity (and particularly Native Americans), there is always the implied futility hovering over the poet's shoulder to inscribe a heritage in a place that resists cultural inscription.

Thus, beyond his external engagement with the vicissitudes of America's social/political climate and the literary marketplace, and as he struggled with how to represent the American landscape and wrestled with the conflicts inherent in Native American displacement and heritage, Bryant's authorial anxieties refracted back into an interior psychological space that transcended the immediate geographical and historical moment and became preoccupied with the concept of authorial bequest. As part of his philosophical meditation on the transient nature of humankind, his concerns regarding authorial legacy and literary heritage emerged in xenotopic depictions of the American landscape that are themselves inscribed with death and mourning. In no single piece of writing is the interiority of Bryant's ambivalent colonialism more resonant than in "The Prairies" (1833), a poem he spent more than a year crafting and revising as the western frontier evolved for him experientially and personally. As Bryant's endorsement of a democratic/hemispheric construction of literature displaced the Native American westward, so did he necessarily feel the authorial eye pushed westward, as well. Having taken a western sojourn throughout the year of 1832, Bryant returned deeply impacted by what he had seen and experienced, writing to Dana, "'What I have thought and felt among these boundless wastes and awful solitudes I shall reserve for the only form of expression in which it can be properly uttered'" (qtd. in Muller 110). The symbolic import of the vast prairies seemed to necessitate poetic utterance, but the image Bryant ultimately chose to represent that western frontier was neither one of wild sublimity nor verdant georgic potentiality. Instead, he depicts the vast prairies as the geographical embodiment of the anxiety of bequest, a strange and problematic space in which no race of men—not Native Americans, not Anglo-Americans, and least of all a race of poets—can inscribe a lasting heritage: a topographical and cultural wasteland representing the margins of racial sustainability, patrimonial extension, national expansion, and authorial control. Thus, Bryant's preoccupation with Native American displacement, and its haunting portrayal in "The Prairies," requires a postcolonial reading that: 1) analyzes the colonizer/colonized paradox and its effect upon Bryant's conception of American authorship, and 2) acknowledges that the ideology of "The Prairies" is more complex when considering the problem of authorial anxiety underlying the representation of Native American displacement.

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[53] From "An Indian at the Burial-Place of His Fathers."

From its first few lines, "The Prairies" registers contemporary American society's tension between Anglophilia/demophobia and Anglophobia/demophilia, as the speaker rushes westward in hemispheric closure and democratic expansion but paradoxically maintains his British connection and an Anglocentric point of view. Written in classical blank verse, "The Prairies" is ordered, measured, and controlled, immediately establishing the poem as an extension of English tradition. And yet the first four lines project an image of the American landscape befitting the demophilic and Anglophobic rhetoric of Manifest Destiny:

> These are the Gardens of the Desert, these
> The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
> For which the speech of England has no name—
> The Prairies. (1-4)

As in his editorial writings and lecture series, Bryant takes an exceptionalist view of the western perimeter of the nation, declaring the prairies a singularly American space of topographical duality—the "Gardens of the Desert"—embodying both agrarian possibility ("Gardens," "unshorn fields") and otherworldly beauty. Uninterrupted by topographical features nor delimited by political geography, the "boundless" prairies topographically illustrate a seemingly infinite geographic *and* conceptual perpetuation of the democratic empire; from his colonizing point of view, the speaker thus effaces the Native American from his expansionist perspective.

Effecting an Anglophobic/demophilic perspective, the speaker represents the prairies in contradistinction to Europe, facing westward away from Atlantic affiliation and distanced geographically, culturally, and linguistically from Europe. As he portrays it, the American desert is so entirely unique to the North American continent that it defies linguistic representation by British English, and only he—the American poet/speaker—can successfully represent the land through American English and independent from Europe. By beginning with the demonstrative pronoun “These” (instead of the more distanced “Those” or “They”) and the present tense verb “are,” the speaker places himself in spatial and chronological proximity to the prairies, demarcating it as the geographical and temporal present (removed from any notion of antiquity or heritage) and making his relationship with the western frontier more personally and immediately experiential. He continues this westward orientation and hemispheric affiliation by following the continental breezes (absent an Atlantic origin and seemingly materializing mid–continent) that move from the South, westward through Mexico, Texas, and Sonora, ultimately dissipating into the “calm Pacific” (22). The poetic momentum draws force as it progresses westward, as the poet’s back is turned away from Europe and its associated concepts: antiquity, history, the past, and tradition. Instead of focusing on retraction (the backward movement toward Europe, the past, and heritage) or contraction (constricting his view to the immediate geographic or political space of the nation), the poet exercises an infinite and interminable perspective that extends in perpetuity not only the landscape but the poet’s role as the impersonal, observing eye.

In the next few lines, the speaker proclaims, “I behold them for the first, / And my heart swells, while the dilated sight / Takes in the encircling vastness…” (4-6). Expansion is the characteristic motion that marks the poetic endeavor and is recreated by the distension of the poet’s heart and the dilation of his sight, thus establishing the poetic act as a reflection of the expansive landscape at the same time that it interprets that landscape for the reader. In other words, the American poet both embodies and linguistically controls the American landscape; his eye has necessarily adapted to an expansive North American landscape, evolving beyond the stringent and narrow poetic standards of Europe and at the same time implicitly validating the moral righteousness of the colonizing ethos underlying Manifest Destiny and Jacksonian policies. There is a circularity present to the concentric waves of the speaker's dilating vision—and replicated in the “encircling vastness” of the prairies—that centers the poet as the origin of sight, motion, and language, and roots the reader in the speaker's perspective. As the speaker's point of view is represented as “*the* dilated sight” (emphasis added), not pronominally exclusive to the poet but rather all-encompassing and inclusive of his readers, the poet becomes an “American Adam,” the namer attaching and exercising language upon the continent on behalf of all Americans; thus the exceptional and singular nature of the poet replicates that of the landscape. In this way, Bryant has ennobled the poet as an intermediary force connecting his readers to the land, as well as the controlling force providing both linguistic justification for colonial expansion and the artistic expression of a democratic/hemispheric American literature.

Yet just as quickly as he establishes a tone of triumphant exceptionalism and self-confidence in the American poetic ambition, Bryant abruptly upends this paradigm, first by rendering the American landscape in defamiliarized terms. Now depicting the prairies as a preternatural scene of both constant motion and motionlessness, the speaker suddenly is incapable of capturing the uncanny scene with his poetic language. In the speaker’s imagination, the prairies have become defamiliarized, an image he struggles to articulate:

> …Lo! they stretch
> In airy undulations, far away,
> As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,
> Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
> And motionless for ever.–Motionless?–
> No–they are all unchained again. The clouds
> Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
> The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
> Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
> The sunny ridges. (6–15)

Marking the shift with the exclamation “Lo!”, the speaker turns from actively superintending the landscape’s representation to joining the reader as a passive observer of the xenotopic scene, now out of his linguistic control and outside the bounds of normative topographical conditions. The speaker takes a rhetorical and geographical leap of displacement: positioning himself from a vantage point of distance, he describes the prairies as moving “far away” from him and the reader and concedes his own authorial control in the process. The poet is now displaced from that which he is describing and was just moments ago so present within and proximal to.

That Bryant chooses to expose his linguistic fumbling and the potential artistic failure of poetic representation is key: the American poet, just moments ago so entirely in control of the poetic endeavor, could also here remain in control, but Bryant chooses to lay bare the difficulties and ultimate impossibility of accurately depicting the American landscape. Grasping for any mechanism to appropriately represent the now defamiliarized landscape, the speaker shifts to the land’s elemental opposites, first air (“airy undulations”) and now water, as he uses the topographically amorphous and nationally/politically indeterminate space of the ocean as an awkward analog to the billowing prairies. There is a strangeness and self-consciousness to the ekphrastic moments that follow. First is the ocean, spatially and temporally frozen in perpetual motionlessness: “…with all his rounded billows fixed, / And motionless for ever” (9–10). A few lines later, the speaker, once again invoking elementally discordant terms to describe the prairies as “flame-like flowers” (16), crafts an ekphrastic scene in which the southern breezes seem to maneuver through and past a static space wherein a prairie-hawk is “poised on high” (17) and “Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not” (18). It is as if the prairies are now being viewed from outside the confines of the poem, detailed by the hand of a painter and articulated secondhand from a displaced poetic perspective.

Such moments of ekphrasis are problematic for the poet’s endeavor to create a uniquely American poetry for several reasons. First, the poet has been further removed from the site of the prairies; while just moments ago he was distanced to a space of observation far away from (but still within) the scene, he is now discharged to a self-reflexive position outside of the prairies *and* the poem. The poet now looks in on his poem as only one discrete, insufficiently rendered artistic act in the service of attempting—and failing—to fully represent the American landscape. As such, he has seen (and invited the reader to see) his poem as an inadequate professional process, not allowing it to stand as its own successful literary and artistic production. Secondly, the poet seems to be describing a painting more than his own personal observation, subordinating the poetic act of representation to that of the painter. The poem is no longer self-contained and capable of embodying its subject; instead, it has necessitated the use of other media to aid in the act of representation, and even still all media fail to capture the prairies. Thirdly, ekphrasis was a common poetic device of British romanticists, thus reiterating Bryant’s inability to generate a uniquely American literature without the standard literary devices of English tradition.[54] And, finally but most importantly, the ekphrastic scenes serve to illuminate the artificiality of the poetic act itself. Rather than letting the subject of the literary/artistic act maintain the focus of the poem throughout, the emphasis is recentered upon the failed author/artist who has been charged with the act of representation but is ultimately incapable of controlling his own poem or manifesting either the American landscape or a uniquely American poetry.

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[54] Examples of ekphrastic poetry in British romantic poetry include Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” Shelley’s “Ozymandias,” and Wordsworth’s “Elegiac Stanzas on a Picture of Peek Castle.”

Almost immediately thereafter, the speaker now questions whether or not the prairies can be construed through an ekphrastic lens, thus questioning his own poetic instincts by upending the motionlessness and further defamiliarizing the prairie landscape. He poses this rhetorical interrogative: "…—Motionless?— / No—they are all unchained again" (10–11). In so doing, he untethers the prairies from ekphrasis, but he also casts further doubt upon his control over his own poetic representation or the ability of the American prairies to be captured by artistic expression altogether. As the poet seems to assert some control back over the scene, the prairies then become a preternatural, uncanny place in which both sky and ground operate as parallel spaces of constant motion. The poet now finds the prairies to be dark, unstable, and rootless:

> …The clouds
> Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
> The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
> Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
> The sunny ridges. (11–15)

No longer a providential agrarian expanse, the prairies have become a kinetic and indeterminate frontier that seemingly defies the stillness and security necessary for the civic and agrarian practices endemic to westward expansion, but also requisite for poetic representation.

By the time Bryant concedes the prairies to be a "verdant waste" (35), the paradoxical image of unproductive fertility—the notion that a certain place (or conceptual space) *could* be viable but nonetheless defies external domination or management—portends failure for both democratic expansion and a distinctly American literature. At this point, Bryant's anxiety of bequest surfaces; it is clear that "The Prairies" is no longer in homage to the American frontier.

Instead, the poem’s focus shifts to the problematic poetic act and the concept of cultural obsolescence. More specifically, Bryant fixates upon the struggle of the American poet to meet the challenges of the divided literary marketplace of the early national period: the anxiety about being tasked with constructing a tenable literary heritage built upon an unstable American environment which itself defies artistic representation and rejects cultural inscription.

The xenotopic scene unfolds into a deathscape of subsequent phases of racial extinction as the poet contemplates the “dead of other days” (40). Assuming an elegiac tone of cold, detached mourning, Bryant explores the larger philosophical problem of racial and cultural supersession on the American continent(s), which results in characterizing the Native American as an intermediary figure between racial epochs. On the one hand, the Native American is depicted as the “red man” (58) whose “warlike and fierce” (59) nature eradicated the previous continental occupants, a fictionalized race of passive and culturally evolved “mound-builders” (60) who “vanished from the earth” (60) at the hands of Native American savagery. This pre-Native American “disciplined and populous race” (46) is implicitly conceived as light-skinned—contrasted against the “brown vultures” (72) who violently eradicated their race from the continent—and a peaceful, semi-democratic sect who lived in rooted communities based upon agriculture and husbandry and nurtured a cultural heritage that included language, music, and religion.[55] On the other hand, Bryant acknowledges that the colonized Native American himself is being pushed westward past the Rocky Mountains in spaces unknown to the “white man’s face” (95). In contrast to the waves of racial supersession, Bryant seemingly celebrates the eternal perpetuation of the natural environment of the North American continent, as he extols the abundance of flora and fauna: “Still this great solitude is quick with life” (103). He describes the insects and flowers, then the birds and reptiles and quadrupeds that abound in the native American frontier, and yet the dichotomy between nature being eternal and humanity being ephemeral marks the divide between that which can sustain itself in the American environment and that which cannot. Humanity, the poet suggests, is ultimately rendered powerless and transitory in the larger scheme of North American history:

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[55] Bryant writes of the mound-builders’ agriculture and animal husbandry: “These ample fields / Nourished their harvests, here their herds were fed” (50–51). He later depicts their culture as more akin to Anglo-American culture than Native American: “All day this desert murmured with their toils, / Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed / In a forgotten language, and old tunes, / From instruments of unremembered form, / Gave the soft winds a voice” (54–58). He then later frames them as a religious society, noting how they “worshipped unknown gods” (67).

> Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
> Races of living things, glorious in strength,
> And perish, as the quickening breath of God
> Fills them, or is withdrawn. (86–89)

The poet wistfully concedes to the inevitability of racial supersession, the corporeal palimpsest created by layers of dead races upon the continent. Races of men are subject to the same cyclical momentum of nature, but ultimately cannot survive long enough to establish cultural heritage that will not be written over and forgotten by the next race.

In his hemispheric perspective—looking away from British literary heritage and finding “native” inspiration on the North American continent—Bryant has to confront the problem of Native American racial and cultural displacement. He wrestles with whether or not the North American land is hospitable to heritage altogether, a question that legitimized longstanding arguments made by European writers indicting the American climate as a catalyst for racial extinction.[56] If an entire race of people could prove ephemeral and the various Native American tribes and nations could each be subsumed by the wild, expansive land devoid of any permanent markers of human heritage, was the American wilderness a threat that could consume America and its (literary) heritage and thus nullify the impulse for bequest? If the very land on which an American literature would be founded resisted or even defied human possession, and was under constant territorial dispute, how could an American literary heritage take root?

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[56] Ralph Bauer argues that seventeenth century English writers used the term “frontier of exclusion” to express their misgivings over the ability of the British character to survive in those born in America. These writers, states Bauer, conceived of America as a space of “cultural degeneration,” as they noted the “disturbing” changes in European immigrants’ complexion, dress, custom, or morality brought about by contact with the American environment (41).

However, it is not the physical process of races of men dying out but rather the problem of cultural obsolescence that most concerns the poet. Subordinating national and political expansion to the perpetuation of the poet's literary legacy, Bryant now grasps for appropriate metaphors to illustrate the complexity of an environment that cannot sustain cultural heritage and the implications for the individual poet tasked with establishing a tradition of literature in an unstable literary marketplace. Transitioning between the cold, objective space of philosophical observation and mourning to the psychological interiority of his anxiety of bequest and personal sense of loss, Bryant uses the bee as a symbol for the European colonizer whose chronological and geographical movements westward across the Atlantic and into the North American continent put it in the same historical arc as Anglo-Americans:

> …The bee,
> A more adventurous colonist than man,
> With whom he came across the eastern deep,
> Fills the savannas with his murmurings,
> And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,
> Within the hollow oak. (109–14)

Like Anglo-American transatlantic migration, Bryant insists, the bee crossed the Atlantic Ocean, naturalized itself on the American continent, and perpetuated its race by amassing valuable commodities. Yet the bee is not subject to the same forces of extinction that Bryant implies the white man will soon be faced with, though he ends the poem before making this explicit. The race of bees was alive during the ancient times of western civilization (the golden age) and thrives upon the continent during Bryant's contemporary moment, thus spanning multiple human epochs and proving the permanence of nature in contrast to the ephemerality of humankind. A more enduring nature is cast as superior to humanity, as Bryant grieves, “All is gone— / All—save the piles of earth that hold their bones” (65–66). After each wave of racial supersession, the native environment of America persists and even cradles the corporeal decay of successive races, proving its resilience as a xenotopic deathscape. Once the “swarming cities” (65) of the mound-builders have vanished, the poet’s concern is not for the loss of the race but for the death of their cultural heritage—their “forgotten language” (56) and the “unremembered form” (57) of their music—unrecorded and forever irretrievable. Bryant declares, “The solitude of centuries untold / Has settled where they dwelt” (61–62), as the corporeal remains *and* cultural heritage of an entire race are covered by an impenetrable stratum of silence.

While it is often argued that the “eternal nature/ephemeral human” paradigm serves as Bryant’s justification for Native American removal (and support of Jacksonian policies), I contend that, rather than operating outwardly as a commentary on external social and political issues, this is the exact space in which he takes his inward turn, using the colonized and culturally effaced races of mound-builders and Native Americans as analogs for the beleaguered poet himself. The speaker’s self-consciousness and apprehension reverberate here and throughout the rest of the poem as his subjectivity comes to the fore. The colonizing bee consumes his sense of hearing, and time seems to stand still as the weight and force of the poet’s dilemma bears down upon him in a xenotopic moment of motionless contemplation:

> …I listen long
> To his domestic hum, and think I hear
> The sound of that advancing multitude
> Which soon shall fill these deserts. (114–17)

Removed from the momentum of historical progression and westward expansion, the poet stands outside of time and place as a mysteriously omniscient but powerless observer, ultimately alone as philosopher/author. The humble bee transports the poet's thoughts to the advancing Anglo-American race, and yet he remains somewhat apprehensive about the act of westward expansion, hedging that he only *thinks* he hears them coming. Bryant once again adopts a strange tone of mourning when describing a preternatural scene of prospective racial extinction, as if ghostly echoes from future Anglo-American generations emanate upward from their predestined burial grounds not yet (but certain to be) filled due to inexorable racial annihilation:

> …From the ground
> Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
> Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
> Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds
> Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
> Over the dark-brown furrows. (117–22)

Already the xenotopic landscape begins to subsume the Anglo-American race, as the phrasing of this vision migrates from human culture (laughter, voices, singing of religious songs) to human/natural hybrid (the sounds of animal husbandry and agricultural products reacting to the environment) and ending with an ominous portent of the open grooves of the continent, as if waiting to consume and silence the current race within its "dark-brown furrows" (122).

Abruptly wrenched from his morbid and doleful vision of future racial extermination, the poet closes the poem by confirming his displacement from both the natural environment of North America and the current society/race for which he presumably writes:

> …All at once
> A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,
> And I am in the wilderness alone. (122–24)

The logic of his historical theory (i.e. that the white man will also be subsumed and "pass away") requires the poet to pull back from the vision, catapulting him back into the present in a space of alienation and self-doubt. The poet, like colonized races of men before him (one completely vanished and one in the process of vanishing), is himself a threatened and displaced being alone on the frontier. No longer espousing the triumphalist rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, he portrays himself and his individual authorial situation in synonymy with colonized races of men, equally threatened by the dominating force of the American landscape and ultimately powerless to perpetuate the literary heritage he is ironically attempting to establish. Beyond maintaining the poem's perfect iambic pentameter, the comparative use of the adjective "fresher" reminds the reader of the "Breezes of the South!" (15) that early on introduced an exceptionalist viewpoint and validated westward expansion and Indian removal. A new directionless wind suddenly arises and breaks the poet from exceptionalism and his impersonal philosophical meanderings to confront his own powerlessness and inadequacy in establishing literary heritage. He concludes with a subtle expression of his anxiety of bequest: he must admit that he is alone—on the prairies, but also in his current literary marketplace—and devoid of a legacy, displaced from a tradition of American belles-lettres and thus failing at the only endeavor that seemed to matter to an early national American author. Just as humankind has an ephemeral presence upon the landscape, so is the nature of early national American authorship an ephemeral and paradoxical space in which Bryant's poetry will live, die, and then be forgotten.

Insinuating an ironic affinity with the displaced Native American, Bryant exploits the vanishing native trope as a metaphor for his own personal anxieties about his present relationship to the literary marketplace and his future authorial legacy. Compelled to construct a literature that reflected the flourishing democratic and hemispheric values of the nation, he bespoke the displacement of the author's individual achievement in a nation that increasingly celebrated the common, the average, and the absorption of individual achievement into a "greater good" nationalism. If American literature were constructed as democratic (effacing the individual) and hemispheric (facing westward), Bryant seemed to ask, would the individual author be effaced and fade (or be forced) beyond the western rim of the nation like the Native American? Displacement went beyond psychological trauma or geographical removal and insinuated racial extinction, a loose but compelling metaphor for authorial extinction that informed the bequest anxiety. For Bryant, the “disappearance” of the Native American race figured the death of the American author before he had the chance to establish himself.

Conclusion

A postcolonial reading of early national authorship helps us understand the endowment of American literary heritage as not simply motivated by economics or nationalism but by personal, psychological conflicts over what it meant to be American, to be an author, and to establish literary legacy. By envisioning a new literature capable of navigating the polarization of American political and social ideologies and simultaneously embodying the subjectivities of both colonized and colonizer perspectives, Irving and Bryant demonstrate the foundation of American literary heritage—while seemingly assertive and self-confident—to be an ironic mode of self-conscious nationalism that arises from and adapts to multiple perspectives, paradoxically displaces the author in an attempt to include all readers, and unapologetically self-identifies as both colonizer and colonized.

In the last decade, American Studies scholars have debated the legitimacy of considering America “postcolonial.”[57] New work defends early national America as a postcolonial space in which unique layers of identity politics, national allegiances, and ideological commitments specific to North America reveal increasingly complex negotiations of identity. In 2004, Malini

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[57] Many scholars support Edward Said’s concept of postcoloniality: an east/west binarism specific to European colonialism. Others point out the problematic application of postcoloniality to American society, as when Gesa Mackenthun argues, “Early American cultural identity…may be called ‘postcolonial’ only in an oxymoronic way (as combining national ‘awakening’ with the activities of imperial expansion and a slavery-based economy)” (336).

Johar Schueller authored a comprehensive survey on the infant state of American postcolonial studies for *American Literary History*, concluding, "the suitability of postcolonial theory to the study of US culture should no longer be a subject of debate" (162).[58] Giles reacted with a call to move beyond Schueller's abstract theoretical discussion into the realm of praxis, considering the concrete function of postcoloniality in American Studies and the responsibility of scholars to "explore complicated questions of how postcolonialism intersects with the administrative apparatus of the nation-state" ("Postcolonial" 214). After violently breaking from the metropole, (white) post-Revolution America should be deemed a postcolonial moment with all the national instability, dramatic redefinition, and contingency that implies. Arguing for transatlantic and postcolonial readings of texts of the revolution and early republic, Davidson explains that the "ambiguous legacy of America's settler colonialism" and subsequent revolution extend past the early national moment and inform current American epistemology: "This complex story of origins (with its contradictory narratives of power and powerlessness, isolation and global superiority) has had a formative impact on American ideology to the present, including on America's infinitely refreshable self-concept as the innocent and its self-appointed role as world crusader" (14). To read the early nation as postcolonial thus illuminates several key insights: how Irving and Bryant could identify as both colonized and colonizer; how difficult it was (and continues to be) to derive a cohesive, viable definition of American literature; and how America's cultural self-conceptualization has historically been a vexed, paradoxical endeavor.

A postcolonial approach further unveils the author's preoccupation with his place not just in the American literary marketplace but also amid the transnational exchange of ideas, showing how a distinctly American authorship was, in all reality, composed of non-American elements—and particularly shaped by its relationship with Britain. Both Irving and Bryant came from Federalist backgrounds with Anglophilic sympathies, were raised on classical European works, and spent a considerable amount of time as expatriates at the height of their authorial careers. Tasked with inventing a new literature specific to the American continent and nation that overtly resisted British influence—the very lingual, social, and cultural systems in which they were educated and their notions of proper literature informed—proved to fracture the psyche of the emerging American author and divide his loyalties in ways he could not suppress in his writings.

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[58] Lawrence Buell offered an early defense of reading the American literary tradition within a postcolonial perspective in his 1992 essay "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon." However, as Schueller's essay indicates, not much critical consensus was achieved in the intervening decade, as she positions the debate in terms of its urgency and contemporary relevance to the field in 2004.

An aerial view of both Irving's and Bryant's careers reveals that they both eventually found their footing in the literary marketplace as it grew to accommodate Transcendentalism and democracy and cohered into a more stable, lucrative, and productive space for authors to navigate. But this small but significant moment in the evolution of the American literary marketplace deserves extended attention. While the early national period does not mark a seismic shift in literary production, it is a fundamentally important moment within the expansion of the epistemology behind American identity. Authors such as Irving and Bryant encoded into the foundation of American literature (and arguably set the historical register for) an accommodationist perspective that could frame America simultaneously in dichotomous terms: Anglophilic and Anglophobic, demophilic and demophobic, colonizer and colonized, victim and victimizer, Native and Other. As Suleri proclaims, "the story of colonial encounter is in itself a radically decentering narrative that is impelled to realign with violence any static binarism between colonizer and colonized," and the birth of an American literary tradition should be explored with that framework in which authors positioned themselves and the nation outside of that static binarism into a space of ironic displacement (2).

CHAPTER 3

AUTHORIAL ALIENATION: PLACE AND DISPLACEMENT IN 1830S BLACK AUTHORSHIP

Around the same time that Bryant was penning "The Prairies," black authors were also navigating problematic relationships to the American literary marketplace. Because Irving and Bryant were operating from a position of white dominant-class entitlement, they defined American authorship within a context specific to that milieu: as postcolonial citizens of a sovereign democracy that theoretically provided them the rights that came with acknowledged personhood, such as property ownership, professional opportunities and remuneration, and the freedom to navigate the land and the literary marketplace relatively unimpeded. Denied that very citizenship and personhood, black authors, for whom democracy, national identity, and international relationships held little import, would not have conceived of issues involving the bequest of a national literature. Instead, their authorial concerns reflected the immediacy of the present moment as they were encumbered by issues involving access: the problematic access to the act of publishing, the distanced or mediated access to one's reading public, and the distance inevitably placed between the author and control of his or her work once it was published and rendered vulnerable to both critical and public evaluation. This chapter considers two important contributions by black authors in 1831—Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* and Nat Turner's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*—that, in spite of access issues, nonetheless demonstrated xenotopia and deathscapes (the very same tropes used by Irving and Bryant) as expressions of authorial alienation while also exerting a strong sense of black American authorship as its own unique, individual, psychological space.

Considering the concept of “black authorship” is immediately complicated by nineteenth-century culture. The very notion of “American authorship” transgressed the normative expectations of black ability, achievement, and prerogative, thus black authorship was vexed on multiple levels: the designations of being *American*, *author*, and/or *American author* were problematized by a denial of citizenship, subject status, legal personhood, and, in many cases, the classification of “humanness.” Arthur Riss explains that the meaning of the term “Man” was in dispute during the antebellum era, as many “considered it manifest that the Negro was a different species…inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race” (2), and Nicole Aljoe affirms that a central topic of discourse in the abolitionist campaign (1770–1836) was whether African slaves were human beings altogether (13). Thus, when an antebellum black author managed to find himself or herself in the improbable circumstance of authorship, his or her works were often mediated by seemingly heavy-handed white editorial intervention, as in the cases of Prince and Turner, foregrounded and/or back-ended by paratextual addenda that legitimized the text through the endorsement of a white intermediary. Robin Riley Fast advises that incorporating the recommendations and testimonials of one or more white guarantor or intercessor was a key convention of the antebellum slave narrative, meant to illuminate the blackness of the author and yet the whiteness of the resulting text. Fast elaborates, “The relationship between the slave and her/his sponsor(s) is typically one of radical difference founded on race”: an enslaved, illiterate, marginal black subject requires a free, educated, white guarantor to establish credibility with a white reading audience (4–5). The antebellum black voice was thus interrupted, interpreted, and/or transmuted in a manner that marks a clean line of separation between black authorship and white.

For black authors writing in the early nineteenth century, both the literal landscape (the geographical borders and topographical features of American land) and the figurative landscape of the literary marketplace were *terra incognita* (unknown land), territories from which blacks had been deliberately alienated, denied both knowledge and experience. Even more so than for whites, there was not a coherent tradition of black authorship prior to the 1850s upon which black writers could define, compare, or build their own works. Denied both experiential knowledge and the lingual and geographical literacies required to navigate those spaces, African Americans had to actively negotiate the displacement encountered within each *terra incognita*, often subversively. For slaves (or former slaves) narrating their experiences, the denial of access to the very land they were arguably more physically connected to (by way of labor and the closer communion of black bodies working the soil) could be employed metaphorically to articulate the complex relationship black authors had to the literary marketplace of antebellum America, as they were denied overt and direct entry into the publishing world without white interpretation, mediation, and justification. Thus, a compelling tension exists around the concept of "authenticity," which was inflected by race in a paradoxical way: the black voice was transmuted by white editorial/publishing interference at the same time that it was ennobled or heightened by the comparative thinness of the pre-1830 African American literary tradition. African American Studies needs a greater examination of this authorial tension, how it produced a sense of ambivalence about what it meant to be a black author and resulted in certain narrative or representational strategies for negotiating the problem—xenotopia and deathscapes—that ironically aligned it with the contemporary white democratic/hemispheric authorship of Irving and Bryant.

Taken together, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, texts authored in 1831 with challenging editorial circumstances, represent an early articulation and specific mode of black authorship. I argue that the texts of Prince and Turner embody both a material condition and a psychological exertion of authorial alienation through their reimagining of death and the landscape, indicating the vanguard of a tradition of black American authorship that registers both placement and displacement, interiority and exteriority, and subversion and subjugation. In *The History of Mary Prince*, Prince portrays the various Bermudan and West Indian isles that she calls her "native land" in xenotopic terms, only to be displaced from them later by her transatlantic travel to England. This displacement mirrors the authorial displacement from her own text, twice removed by the mediating hands of transcriptionist Susanna Strickland and editor Thomas Pringle. For Nat Turner, whose text was transcribed and edited by the white lawyer Thomas Gray, his "confessions" include the xenotopic vision in which Turner describes a war-torn landscape where the sun is darkened, thunder peals, and rivers turn to blood. Such apocalyptic rhetoric and its Biblical allusions work to authenticate Turner's self-fashioned character of the otherworldly prophet, further complicating the conception of authorship in a text with an already greatly complicated author/editor/reader relationship.

Though authored under disparate circumstances, the black voices of Prince and Turner both utilize the currency provided by xenotopia and deathscapes to attempt to maneuver beyond their editorial constraints and carve out their own individual spaces of black authorship capable of being acknowledged and heard by the reader. In both texts, the authors express their awareness of their problematic access to the act of publishing and their displacement from the reading public, as well as how distanced they inevitably became from the control of their work once it had left their hands and was open to critical and public usage and interpretation. While antebellum American readers voraciously devoured slave narratives,[59] such interest remained voyeuristic and did not result in a broad public definition of independent and autonomous black authorship, thus necessitating the subversive manifestation of the black author through xenotopia and deathscapes.

Along with the obvious racial and social strictures imposed upon them as black subjects, what linked Prince's and Turner's authorial positions was the condition of alienation that pervaded their representations of literal and figurative displacement from the society for which they were writing. Certainly, blackness informed this alienation. Joanna Brooks discusses the "discounted presence of blacks in the [early national] public sphere" in contrast to the cultural and economic capital afforded by whiteness: "features of accessibility, transparency, fluidity, and disinterest imaginatively associated with the bourgeois public sphere [were] also characteristics imagined to belong to whiteness…the discursive self-projection of this new economic and cultural class, rather than a representation of its real social relations" (71–72). The authorial alienation effect, then, operated for blacks in parallel to the structure of slavery, as the alienation from economies of exchange that were both literal and conceptual; not only were black authors distanced from participation in the dialogical aspect of the public sphere and denied control over the final output of their intellectual property, but they were also denied monetary compensation. Brooks explains the effects of historically unequal access to economic, educational, political, and legal resources and the lasting imprints of slavery on early national black authorship: "blacks as a class, regardless of individual achievement, standing, or behavior, were marked as 'publicly available'….Under such conditions ex-slaves were designated for exclusion from the public sphere, which was constituted by propertied men engaged in philosophical and economic exchange" (72–73). Black authors not only acknowledged and thematized this authorial alienation within their texts, but they often exhibited a marked ambivalence toward this condition; while decrying the injustice and/or bitter irony of such alienation, these authors nevertheless made authorial alienation a central tenet of their definition of American authorship while simultaneously celebrating it as a necessary determinant of their authorial personae. In other words, the alienated authorial condition becomes all at once the impediment to writing, the impetus for a certain text's production, and a fundamental component of the definition of American authorship emerging at the time.

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[59] Henry Louis Gates, Jr. provides specific dimensions to the popularity of the slave narrative form in Northern antebellum America: "Moses Roper's text went into ten editions between 1837 and 1856….Truth Stranger than Fiction, one of Josiah Henson's narratives, had advance sale of 5,000 copies. As John A Collins, general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, wrote to William Lloyd Garrison in 1842, 'The public have itching ears to hear a colored man speak, and particularly a slave'" (Classic 3–4).

Thus, the concept of authorial alienation is a hermeneutic of dynamic exchange, in which a black author registers the space he or she occupies of externally imposed definition and distance from the public sphere, then reimagines authorship through his or her text's xenotopia and deathscapes. Rather than a static condition, authorial alienation becomes an agentive tool for black authors to articulate the problems of access to the literary marketplace, define authorship (for themselves and/or for the American literary marketplace as a whole), and critique the current state of the literary marketplace that both embraced and denied them. Because of the dynamism of the relationship between author and authorial condition/strategy, the very notion of authorship itself becomes defamiliarized—the normative relationship or exchange between author and reader is neither upheld nor upended, but rather made strange by virtue of the author's interpretation of that distance between them.

Toward a Definition of Black Authorship

In order to sufficiently assess the condition of authorial alienation in antebellum works by black authors, American Studies needs a better account of black authorship than has been provided so far in current scholarship. A brief survey of texts written by black authors around the early 1830s—David Walker's *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles, to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829); George Moses Horton's *The Hope of Liberty* (1829); Prince's *The History of Mary Prince* (1831); Maria Stewart's "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality" (1835)—reveals a disparate array of formal conventions, diegetic constructs, and personal backgrounds from which these authors were composing, and recent surveys have quantified an explosion of black writing at this time.[60] However expansive the catalog of black-authored literature written in the first half of the nineteenth century, literary studies scholars have not paid enough attention to African American works, and, inversely, scholars of African American literature have not effectively attended to literary marketplace issues within African American works. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein declare that "print culture and African American literature have rarely been considered in relation to one another" (2).[61] As such, I propose an interdisciplinary approach at the conjunction of African American studies, authorship studies, and literary marketplace studies as a paradigm for explicating the interiority of black authors' conceptions of authorship, which has yet to be uniformly and adequately addressed in American Studies.

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[60] Gates recently placed the number of published book-length slave narratives at 102 antebellum, with another 102 written postbellum ("How Many" 1). Marion Wilson Starling estimates over 6,000 extant slave narratives—including court records, broadsides, and oral histories—the vast majority of which were written in what she calls the "boom years" of 1830–65 (1). Outside of the slave narrative genre, Joan R. Sherman catalogues the achievements of dozens of black authors, from the poetry of George Moses Horton and Frances Watkins Harper to the protest literature written in black-helmed journals and newspapers, and further to fictional works by William Wells Brown and Martin Delany.

[61] Cohen and Stein further explain: "…[I]f scholars of early African American texts have ignored much theoretical work in book history in favor of stable notions of identity and print, it is equally true that scholarship in book history has often ignored African American literature, however broadly conceived…This neglect is all the more surprising given the abundance of potential material…The sheer breadth and diversity of their experiences has a great deal to tell us about American print culture, while their omission from critical accounts renders even the freshest reconsiderations of the field inevitably partial" (2–3).

Forging a new definition of black authorship as a distinct mode both separate from and yet related to other modes of white-authored texts that utilize xenotopia and deathscapes, I argue that the term “black authorship” should be seen as a psychological condition rather than a racial designation, acknowledging the racial identity without risking it being the only (and therefore an essentializing) determinant for categorization. Indeed, great care should be taken not to collapse all antebellum black-authored works into a category of monolithic and univocal black experience that homogenizes the disparate authorial modes operating therein. Elizabeth McHenry reminds scholars to tread carefully, stating, “it has never been possible to speak of *the* black experience, and attempts to do so constitute a gross oversimplification of African American history. Equally detrimental and inaccurate are attempts to romanticize the solidarity or common experience of the black community” (15). Conscientious of these issues, I intend to invoke the concept of the black voice as a unifying term intended to typify the diverse experiences of antebellum black authors working against the tide of an American public sphere dominated by white editorial and political agendas.

Furthermore, I contend that black authorship extends beyond the racial designation to apply to an epistemological space of authorial introspection, self-reflexivity, and intellectual authority. From such a vantage point, the “black voice” refers to the condition of authorship from a displaced perspective from outside the operative literary marketplace, both exemplifying the interiority of an author’s self-determination and philosophical defiance working outside of the public sphere. For African-American authors, the notion of “black authorship” transcends the racial designation of “blackness”; while certainly informed by that designation, “black authorship" also evinces the condition of authorial alienation that is predicated upon many facets of the black author's position, only one component of which is racial. Blackness is indeed racial identity, but it is also subjugated author status, self-determined displacement from the public sphere, and the self-reflexive strategies implemented within a black author's text to highlight or circumvent that authorial alienation.

A monolithic and stable definition of "black authorship" remains nearly as elusive today in twenty-first-century American Studies scholarship as it was for those black authors writing within the burgeoning literary marketplace of the 1830s. While the fields of African American studies and literary history have greatly expanded in recent years, there is still much work to be done on black authorship in antebellum America—specifically textual history, publication history, and the concept of blacks as authors, either from a black or white perspective. Important works by Betsy Erkkilä and Kenneth W. Warren have asked and begun addressing the question of how to (re)define black literature within the academy,[62] while scholars such as Brooks and Carla L. Peterson argue for and about black achievements within the white-dominant antebellum public sphere.[63] However, such studies still interpret the black voice and achievement through mediating lenses: either the academy's retrospective perspective or comparatively against antebellum white authorship.

In the last decade or so, scholars have called for a greater synthesis between African American studies and print culture studies.[64] Cohen and Stein's anthology represents a promising start to confronting the term “black authorship” and merging African American studies with the study of literary history and/or print culture. They identify the work of the anthology as an alternative to the “black authorship” scholarly paradigm: in this model, they determine, scholars interpret African American literature as that which is “written *by* (rather than *for* or *about*) African American persons” and should thus extend beyond writers to narrative protagonists, performers, editors, booksellers, editors, and signifiers (14–15). As such, the specific term “black authorship” is only introduced as a means for identifying an outmoded approach to African American Studies scholarship, even though the term “black authorship” has rarely been used historically, and the work within focuses primarily on black authors’ external engagement with the act of publishing and relationship to the literary marketplace. To address black authorship only in this way is to perpetuate the very undervaluation of black authors as self-possessed agents of their texts’ productions that existed during the time in which they were writing. Certainly, isolated studies of individual black authors and the merits of their achievements in publication exist throughout African American and transatlantic studies.[65] Yet no work of literary history or criticism exists that offers a sustained exploration of black authors’ engagements with the act of publication (prior to the emergence of Frederick Douglass) or their conceptions of what it meant—semantically, ontologically, and/or epistemologically—to be a black author in antebellum America; moreover, there is no scholarship theorizing on the interconnections between early antebellum authors’ conceptions and expressions of black authorship.

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[62] See Erkkilä's "'Theory in the Flesh': Questions of Race, Questions of Resistance" (1996) and Warren's What Was African American Literature (2011).

[63] See Brooks's "The Early American Public Sphere and the Emergence of a Black Print Counterpublic" (2005) and Peterson's "Doers of the Word": African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880) (1995).

[64] See Frances Smith Foster's "A Narrative of Interesting Origins and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture" (2005) and Leon Jackson's "The Talking Book and the Talking Book Historian: African American Cultures of Print—the State of the Discipline" (2010).

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[65] See John Ernest’s discussion of Brown’s Clotel as a signal moment in the profession of black authorship in Resistance and Reformation in Nineteenth Century African-American Literature (1995); also, Karen A. Weyler’s examination of Phillis Wheatley and her audacious and ambitious approach toward authorship as a means for making money in Empowering Words: Outsiders and Authorship in Early America (2013).

This lack of cohesion in antebellum black authorship studies can be attributed to several related tendencies. First, as Warren points out, there is a penchant in American Studies of codifying African American and/or black literature as a "postemancipation phenomenon that gained its coherence as an undertaking in the social world defined by the system of Jim Crow segregation, which ensued after the nation's retreat from Reconstruction" (1), thus marginalizing early American and antebellum black-authored texts as fragmented anomalies grouped together generally by racial status (or occasionally thematic or religious elements) and not by any coherent ideological or political force other than abolitionism.[66] Another issue frustrating progress on antebellum black authorship studies is the dominance of Douglass's first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, written in 1845 and, in some cases, comprising the totality of black achievement in pre-Civil War authorship.[67] Lastly, in the few instances in which the term "authorship" is invoked in scholarship on black-authored texts, it refers to the material construction of the text and/or ownership of the text's production, rather than the author's interiority or self-conceptualization of himself or herself as an American author.[68]

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[66] For example, Hutchinson and Young's anthology Publishing Blackness: Textual Constructions of Race Since 1850 (2013) provides a brief introductory chapter on antebellum African American editorial practices, then shifts forward into a chronological arc that begins with the Harlem Renaissance. As of this writing, there is no existing scholarship on "black authorship" as a foundational or predominant concept other than a recent work by Anna Pochmara focused on black male authorship in the Harlem Renaissance, The Making of the New Negro: Black Authorship, Masculinity, and Sexuality in the Harlem Renaissance (2011).

[67] Starling voices what other scholars imply through methodological models and exclusions: "Douglass's 125-page first edition of 1845, which ranks first among all the slave narratives, is considered the most perfect representation of the slave narrative and precedes, not only in the date of composition but also in quality, the successive editions that appeared in 1855, 1881, and 1892….Douglass's little book stands for the entire genre, in my mind" (xvii).

[68] For example, Eric Gardner's important work Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature (2011) takes a materialist approach in recovering African American literature to include black journalism and poetry in newspapers (among other media), though his notion of authorship is quantified in terms of the region-specific material conditions of publication. In "The Slave Narrative as Material Text" (2014), Teresa A. Goddu offers a thorough discussion of the various and complex discursive and cultural negotiations of authorial conditions in antebellum slave narratives.

I agree with Brooks regarding the importance of turning a critical eye to black authorship as a distinct mode of access to the early national public sphere, as she argues for the "emergence in this era of a distinctly black tradition of publication informed by black experiences of slavery and post-slavery, premised on principles of self-determination and structured by black criticisms of white political and economic dominance" (68). However, Brooks' focus (and that of limited subsequent scholarship) is directed toward the exteriority of how black authors navigated the difficult path of entry into the literary marketplace, and the interiority of how they integrated an anti-slavery agenda and a critique of white hegemony into their resulting texts. The interiority of black authorship—the epistemological understanding of what it means to be a black author in such a complicated milieu of authorship and publication—has yet to be sufficiently articulated or addressed.

Such scholarship risks subsuming authority from the author by engaging in a debate over the circumstances (historical, cultural, and biographical) of the author's involvement in the text. This externally oriented scholarship often attempts to quantify the "blackness" or "authenticity" of authorship, retroactively imposing such terms on the text, and further aggregating black-authored texts into categories based on how "authentic" they are to the genre of black literature. Gene Andrew Jarrett warns of the "long-standing consequences of classifying, interpreting, politicizing, and assessing the aesthetic value of African American literature" based upon presumptions about racial "authenticity" (2). Citing the admirable and necessary goal of scholars to expand the canon and curriculum of African American literature with the aim of teaching students about ethnic diversity, Jarrett contends that such an endeavor "presumes and promotes an 'authentic' version of ethnic literature, in which literary representations of ethnicity must correlate with the ethnicity of their author(s). The cost of defying the essentialist paradigms of ethnic authenticity and realism, or the belief that these qualities are essential or required, is marginality or exclusion in the academic and cultural marketplaces" (5). Simply put, authorship scholarship can be an impositional—perhaps even hegemonic—process that is much more about how *we* read, aggregate, and qualify texts and assign values such as "authenticity," "author," and "canonical" than how the texts' own authors valued—or, as the case may be, devalued—their roles as authors and participants in the literary marketplace. Jarrett calls for scholars to explore "the historical assignation of racial essentialism and authenticity to black authorship and culture," to challenge "the notion of an African American literary tradition built according to racial iconography," and build "new frameworks for theorizing black intellectualism and culture" (7).

Toward such new frameworks for viewing black literary achievement, an evolved account of black antebellum authorship is needed, one that builds on but also complicates and reorients the important strands of inquiry opened up by works at the convergence of African American and print culture studies. To operate on the perceived self-evidence of the problematic aspects of publishing as a black author in antebellum America, or to presume the concept of black authorship as an experiential mode of inquiry beginning with Douglass and only institutionalized later in the Harlem Renaissance, is to discredit the self-reflective abilities of antebellum black writers. The signs pointing to an awareness on the part of black authors of themselves as agentive writers struggling for access to publication and readership exist in what I argue are the folds of their representations of strange landscapes and death. In this chapter, I propose to reevaluate black authorship, contending that black authors not only were aware of both the strictures and opportunities within the antebellum literary marketplace, but they leveraged that awareness into agency. Black antebellum authors were savvy enough to understand their place within the publishing sphere and their limited mobility therein, providing them collective agency that has yet to receive significant attention within American Studies scholarship. I further propose to complicate the term “authorship” to consider not how *we* understand the authenticity of the author(s) involved in a certain text’s production but instead to illuminate the understanding of authorship, and values associated with textual production, on the part of the very person or people involved. In so doing, the term “authorship” will be repositioned within the text’s historical milieu, attempting to discern agency in those whose concerns, while undoubtedly focused upon the institution of slavery, still expanded outward to include the institution of publication while simultaneously contracting inward to a space of interiority and self-reflection.

To define black authorship—a term rarely invoked in scholarship—is to endeavor to establish it as a space of interiority, as distinct from black “print culture,” an externally oriented and culturally/historically-focused term emerging in current scholarship that lacks this dimension of inwardness. To do so establishes an important connection of anxious displacement and self-conscious authorial agency that extended across the literary marketplace—between the interiority of the black authorship of Prince and Turner and the democratic and hemispheric authorship of Irving and Bryant (discussed in Chapter 2), the sustainable authorship of Poe and Longfellow (Chapter 4), and the asocial authorship of Dickinson and Preston (Chapter 5)—and thus transcended race, gender, socioeconomics, and politics. As Gates considers, black authorship (or what he calls “Anglo-African writing”) emerged as “a response to allegations of its absence,” that is, an articulated counteraction of books, poetry, and autobiographical narratives on the part of black writers to the “profoundly serious allegations about their ‘nature’” and their lack of “a formal and collective history” (*Loose Canons* 62). By this definition, black writing—and by implication black authorship—not only depended upon Anglo-American legitimization for self-definition, but ironically shared a fundamental quality with white American authorship at that time: the self-consciousness about emerging from an established literary and historical tradition, which, for white authors, extended to an anxiety over national tradition, as well. The foundational exertion of the black author in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, according to Gates, was the "recording of an 'authentic' black voice, a voice of deliverance from the deafening discursive silence which an enlightened Europe cited as proof of the absence of the African's humanity" and thus spoke on behalf of the race and its claims to personhood (*Loose Canons* 63). Thusly put, black authorship, emerging from "absence," was indeed a deliberate assertion of the black voice in early American literature that betrayed a profound self-awareness, shared by white authors at the time, of not belonging to an established tradition. For black authors, there was what we might call (to reconfigure DuBois's term) a "double self-consciousness," the consciousness of not belonging to an established American tradition, nor emerging from an established African-American tradition. Thus, the "black voice" undergirding black authorship was both conflicted and self-aware.

While acknowledging black authorship as a discrete mode of conceptualizing antebellum authorship—one predicated upon both racial identity and a complex psychological subjectivity—it is equally important to establish its function, and the author's self-reflexivity, within the public sphere. There was a substantial demand by white Northern audiences for literature by and about blacks, particularly the slave narrative, driven by curiosity, an appetite for novelty, and both Christian and abolitionist agendas.[69] From demand, agency and/or strategy materialized in black authorship. As Phillip M. Richards frames it, the early American “black voice” functioned as a sort of ontological mirror to the social codification of white society as the first African writers of the Anglo-Atlantic world “turned their appropriated Europeanized consciousness back upon the West itself” (247). Citing the religious tracts of Lemuel Haynes, the poetry of Phillis Wheatley, and the sermons and verses of Jupiter Hammon, Richards observes, “black literary personae” emerged that “measured members of the white Anglo-Atlantic world by its own standards, and extended the implications of its central ideologies” through a language of sentiment that drew on Puritan theology and thus allowed black writers to communicate with a white audience by way of a shared language (248). “Within the context of this world, white Western audiences grasped the possibility of a ‘black’ voice whose psychology mirrored their own, and black writers formulated their own place within a white Anglo-Atlantic world” (248). While I argue that black authorship, and the “black voice” that sustained it, functioned in a much more complex manner than a direct mirror by which white society gazed back upon itself (an argument that discredits a black reading public and reductively presumes black authors were writing with only a white readership in mind), Richards raises an important point about the black voice availing itself of—and possibly even exploiting—the tools of an emergent American literary and social tradition, such as the language of sentiment. Whether we can deem these “tools” as authentic expressions of the black voice or tactical machinations of black authorship is a matter that deserves deeper exploration and must be taken on a case-by-case basis. Regardless, black authors were engaged in the dynamic current of what was happening in the public sphere, reading and writing in an active and developing literary milieu, and helping to shape it alongside white writers like Bryant and Longfellow.

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[69] Speaking of the slave narrative alone, Gates notes that Douglass's Narrative sold 5,000 copies in its first four months and 11,000 copies from 1845–1847; Solomon Northup's narrative sold 27,000 copies within two years; and the narrative of William Wells Brown went through four editions in its first year of publication (Classic 3).

Another important component of black writers' engagement with the literary marketplace involved the material conditions of publication, and in particular what Peterson calls "complex problems of commodification" encountered by the "African-American elite," including: black authors being separated from their broader community as a distinct class and thus working against community cohesiveness; the undependable nature of black readership and patronage, thus necessitating white sponsorship and the "constraining presence of a white audience that might be indifferent or even unsympathetic"; and a shallow pool of publishing venues, including self-publication, publication by a white abolitionist press, or publication in Britain (13). Within these publishing constraints, declares Peterson, African American writers "constructed a productive discourse generated from within the community that borrows the vocabulary and categories of the dominant discourse only to dislocate them from their privileged position of authority and adapt them to the local place" (14). While appearing to reiterate the dominant discourse as an act of cultural complicity, the African American discourse in fact "disrupts it and 'challenges its boundaries' by inscribing both presence and absence in its texts…work[ing] to subvert literary commodification; they constitute, in fact, imaginative recreations of local place and function as cultural sites of resistance" (14). Peterson's argument helps to shape a working definition of black authorship in two ways: first, by illuminating the economic factors involved in black-authored texts that warranted the author's complex negotiation of audience values that often conflicted with or put pressure against the author's work *and* persona, leading to the risk of commodification; and second, by establishing the locally-determined nature of black-authored texts, which, while undoubtedly in conversation with one another on a larger scale, were nevertheless products of a local environment with very specific political, social, and, most importantly, publication standards.

Though certainly maintaining a relationship to a local space, as Peterson suggests, antebellum black authorship (as well as the literary marketplace it encountered) was dynamic, dialectical, and even dialogical. The black voice entered into the wider cultural matrix of the public sphere, affecting and being affected by white authors, editors, readers, and publishers. Just as contingent and undefined as the nascent publishing industry, black authorship was at risk of being externally defined by the agonistic forces of polemical/satirical white-authored broadsides, editorials, and literary pieces. One such example is, as Corey Capers argues, the satiric discourse of "Bobalition," an act of literary pre-minstrelsy published in broadsides and newspapers in which white writers would assume a "ridiculous fictive black dialect" (107) that extolled "'Bobalition,' a corrupted form of abolition" (109). Such misappropriations of the black voice, Capers maintains, epitomize "the conditions of possibility of black writing in the early republic and antebellum years, providing some sense of the logic, figures, and practices against which black writers fought and necessarily engaged" (109). While Bobalition indeed served as a "technology for the production and maintenance of racial difference," nevertheless, such practices provide evidence that "some white writers and printers as well as their audiences deemed African American processions and orations, as well as their printed surrogates in newspapers and pamphlets, significant enough to comment upon, in celebration and execration" (109). The black voice was conceptually being brought into the public sphere by whites, and black-authored texts were being read, circulated, commented on, and satirized in the wider cross-racial boundaries of the literary marketplace. In other words, black authorship mattered outside of the singular production of one black author's text and authorial persona, and it should thus be considered as part of a complex and heterogeneous space of cross-racial and cross-cultural dynamics.

McHenry asserts that “we need to reassess and complicate our ideas about what has constituted resistance for African Americans given their diverse experiences” (15); taking up this challenge, I propose a definition of black authorship that is dualistic in its recognition of the simultaneous embodiment of two states: a material condition or practice resulting in the production of a text *and* a psychological expression of an author’s interpretation of what it means to write and/or publish in his or her own specific cultural milieu (15). More than just a static noun and abstract generalization, at the center of black authorship lies the black voice, constituting both an internal exertion of selfhood and an external intervention in the literary marketplace, the active articulation of a “double self-consciousness” of not belonging to established American *or* African-American literary traditions, as well as the (sometimes strategic) deployment of literary devices being used contemporaneously in the public sphere. Furthermore, black authorship was both affected and affective, a conceptual and performative space occupied by black writers (and, at times, impersonated by whites) that helped to shape a dynamic and dialogical antebellum literary marketplace alongside the efforts of white authors, editors, readers, and publishers while itself being shaped and defined. Thus, antebellum black authorship must be valued as both an outward and inward phenomenon. Exteriorly, it operates as an experiential process of creating and producing a text while negotiating the power matrices created by certain material, cultural, political, social, and racial constraints and the value systems of multifarious audiences within both local and national publishing milieus. Interiorly, black authorship is an epistemology, an interpretation of the self as an author, a racial identity, a non-citizen, a subaltern, an Other, and an agent of both assimilation and subversion to the heterogeneous and cross-racial literary marketplace.

I argue that the literature representing black voices of the 1830s—notably, Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince* and Nat Turner's/Thomas R. Gray's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*—embodies xenotopia and deathscapes in order to express this very dualism: the interiority and exteriority of black authorship, a simultaneously vexed and empowered space of black authorial alienation. These works are themselves constituents of a dynamic process of alienation and control—both displacement and placement. And through that dynamic process, each individual author defined for himself or herself the parameters of black authorship, drawing the lines for what it meant to be a black author outside of the delimiting social exteriors imposed upon him or her: beyond the racial designation of "black," the legal designation of "property" or "non-citizen," and the restrictive and complex designation of being mediated/authenticated by a white editor. The result of such authorial alienation, a process by which black authors exercise control while self-consciously illuminating the lack thereof, is that black authors of later eras had more authorial mobility, creativity, and independence. Authors just fifteen years later could more readily construct authorial personae that could be marketed to both black and white audiences alike: for example, the strong authorial personae of the narratives of Douglass (1845) and William Wells Brown (1847). The space of later antebellum black authorship represents a site in which the embittered ex-slave, the trustworthy and knowledgeable black "human," and the adept and omniscient creator of textual artifacts worthy of the (white) public sphere could co-exist. Mary Prince and Nat Turner stand at the head of a tradition of black authorship—extending from the 1830s through Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Black Arts era into current post-modern black-authored literature—that embraces fluidity and heterogeneity, subversively assimilates and exerts agency, and expresses the simultaneity of placement and displacement within the black psyche. Using xenotopia and strange scenes of death and mourning as a point of registry, an examination of black authorship within Prince's and Turner's works as simultaneously a mode of textual production, an engagement with the literary marketplace, and a self-reflexive representation of selfhood allows us to more fully contextualize the works of an early African American literary tradition and work toward a better definition of black authorship.

Empowerment, Fluidity, and Abjection in Prince's Black Authorship

Published in 1831, Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince*, the first known testimonial by a black female slave in the West Indies, represents an early instance of antebellum American black authorship and authorial alienation. Casting her "native land" in xenotopic terms, Prince writes of the enigmatic Bermudan and West Indian Isles where she was enslaved, geographically and commercially displaced from one physical place and/or legal site of ownership to the next no less than twenty times.[70] Later in her narrative, she recalls being further displaced on a trip to England, alienated from all that was familiar—or, arguably, *de*familiar. These literal geographic and legal/economic displacements work to parallel the figurative authorial displacement from her own text, as her authorial control was itself twice displaced by the mediating hands of transcriptionist Susanna Strickland and editor Thomas Pringle. Each xenotopic place that Prince describes integrates a deathscape, in which topographical and geographical features of the landscape are transmuted beyond the physical/material, often by way of sensational natural phenomena. These deathscapes represent sites on which Prince must navigate her self-initiation into the symbolic order of a white-dominated literary marketplace, as well as an interior struggle between grief—her own desire to mourn the losses incurred within the slave system and her own physical displacements—and authorial duty, the necessity of testifying to that which will otherwise dissipate into obscurity. Ultimately, death is not allowed to lead to silence for Mary Prince; instead, death and mourning are incorporated into her narrative in defamiliarized terms, deathscapes of abjection that disrupt the established order Prince is both entering and critiquing. Xenotopia and deathscapes thus guide the text's production and illuminate key aspects of Prince's particular "black authorship"—those of vexation and empowerment, displacement and placement—and her foray into the complicated transatlantic literary marketplace of the 1830s.

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[70] Prince's movements throughout the text are as follows: born into slavery on the Bermudan farm of Charles Myners; bought by Captain Williams; hired out to Mrs. Pruden; sent back to Mr. Williams upon Mrs. Williams's death; sold to Captain John Ingham; runs away to her mother's house; taken back to the Inghams by her father; sent via sloop to Turk's Island and sold to Mr. D (probably Robert Darrell); ownership transferred to Mr. D's son, Master Dickey and returned to Bermuda; hired out to work at Cedar Hills; taken by Mr. Wood to St. John's, Antigua, and eventually purchased; moved with the Woods to the Point from the middle of town; moved to Date Hill in the country; moved back to the Point; accompanied the Woods family to England and lives in a tavern; moved with the Woods family to a house on Leigh Street; driven out by the Woodses to the Moravian missionary lodgings; moved into the Mash family's home; moved in with Mrs. Forsyth; went back to the Moravian lodgings; entered the service of Thomas Pringle and his wife.

Prince's *History* is at the center of several scholarly debates involving how to categorize, authenticate, and understand black-authored and/or African-American texts. Whether or not we can consider Prince's text within the purview of African-American Studies is up for question, and recent works in the field indicate an expansion in the way scholars are conceiving of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "Americanness." The indeterminate national status of Prince's narrative—authored by a British Bermudan/West Indian slave writing in the heterogeneous black Atlantic sphere of authorship—makes it a good case for inclusion within American Studies. Arguing for a hemispheric adaptation to what we consider to be American Studies, Aljoe asserts that West Indian slave narratives "played a crucial role in the transnational abolitionist movement" and "articulate the varied and constantly shifting dynamics of power within the discourse of slavery during this period" (2). Citing recent work in transatlantic book history, Joseph Rezek further illuminates "the possibility of textual travel" in this period that underwrites the inclusion of texts written in the Caribbean within American Studies (656). With these scholars' confident appeals in mind, I propose to carefully consider Prince's *History* as an American work.

The *History* is also the subject of further scholarly debate regarding the dubious nature of Prince's authorship and what can be considered "authentic" authorship in the complex web of mediation and editorial intervention created by Strickland and Pringle. Prince's text represents a miscegenated narrative in which both black and white subjectivity commingle and simultaneously reveal an alliance of interests and purposes but also a struggle for authority. This struggle for authority and authorship was, as Aljoe contends, a common condition of the Caribbean slave narrative, in particular: "every West Indian slave narrative is explicitly mediated in some way—by a white transcriber, editor, or translator….To date, not a single self-written slave narrative has been discovered in the Caribbean" (14). The production of Prince's first person narrative includes Mary Prince's narration/dictation; the transcription of that dictation, interpreted and drafted (and possibly edited) by Susanna Strickland; further editing by Thomas Pringle, who additionally incorporates an original Preface, Supplement, and explanatory notes of his own authoring; and the black voices resonating throughout Prince's narrative that are attributed to other slaves (and yet quoted, despite the multiple layers of narration/interpretation), as well as abolitionists and proslavery activists Prince encountered in England. This phenomenon of what R. J. Boutelle calls "the polyvocal collaboration of voices"—at times complimentary and at times competitive—greatly problematizes a statement such as, "I will say the truth to English people who may read this history that my good friend, Miss S——, is now writing down for me" (Prince 288), giving rise to questions of how narrative truth and editorial mediation can co-exist in one document and what is the nature of (black) authorial truth altogether. As Aljoe rhetorically asks, “Since Strickland did the actual writing, and Thomas Pringle edited the text, to whom does the ‘I’ refer?” (60).

Nevertheless, Aljoe makes the case for critical attention to what she terms “creole testimonies” with authorships characterized by “an entanglement of often conflicting voices” because they “aim to represent ‘real’ experiences of slavery despite the absence of a single identifiable ‘author’” (58). Despite lacking an easily discernible “author,” such texts “nonetheless suggest that the slave narrators are crucial participants in the creation of the ‘author function’ in each slave narrative,” and further that “categories such as ‘authentic’ or ‘slave voice’ can never be absolute but are always produced by a process of connections and tensions along a continuum of other possibilities that grew out of the Caribbean’s colonial history” (Aljoe 61–62). Prince herself was aware of the complex network of tensions specific to her particular authorial situation. Her narrative exemplifies that she was conscious of the pre-established forum or voice she had in the public sphere due to the fact that her lawsuit, brought in British court against Woods for her freedom, incited public contention upon the publication of an article condemning Prince’s narrative in *Blackwood’s Magazine* (Aljoe 10). Thus, she understood the opportunity afforded her to exert her voice—and establish her definition of black authorship—that had been opened up in the British (and, arguably, American) public sphere and could be leveraged in the literary marketplace(s).

Taking Aljoe’s assertions further, I maintain that, rather than calling into question the nature of Prince’s authorship, her admissions of displacement from authorial control of her own text are the very devices by which she defines black authorship and exerts her authorial agency, revealing an awareness of the limitations imposed upon her by a pre-existing social order and pushing from a space of interiority against those external forces bearing down upon the legitimacy of her text. While the “historical” account (approximately ninety-five percent of the entire first section, with only a few brief moments of “slippage”) is crafted with a “proper” “white” English style of narration, in the final section in which Prince gives her appeal, Strickland’s mediation recedes. In this last five percent of the text, Prince’s voice intensifies—direct, less rhetorical, and more idiosyncratic—and her agency as author seems more firmly established. Revisiting that same earlier pronouncement from the appeal section—“I will say the truth to English people who may read this history that my good friend, Miss S——, is now writing down for me”—Prince syntactically orders the sentence to place Strickland just outside of the intimacy that Prince assumes between herself and her English readers, underwritten by the concept of “narrative truth” (288). Furthermore, the use of the definite article “the” points readers to the singularity of only one correct and incontrovertible truth—one single narrative of which Prince is the sole possessor and guarantor—developing her essential spiritual right to the narrative. In the process of openly admitting to the mediation of Strickland’s transcription, Prince ironically asserts herself as the controlling force behind the text and unifies her authorial personae to the notion of truth. She then draws attention to her knowledge of the factors of publication: “*may* read this history” (emphasis added) reveals an awareness of the fluctuations of the literary marketplace and that Prince is neither guaranteed nor denied an audience based on perceptions of her race. Prince further declares that Strickland’s transcription is in the service of Prince (as she is clear to articulate: Strickland is “writing down for me”) rather than Prince’s narrative in the service of a white agenda, thus conceptualizing her authorial alienation as a paradigm of empowerment.

However she may frame herself as an independent agent here, it is nevertheless important for Prince’s definition of authorship that she equally draws attention to her authorial displacement from her own text. Both concepts of “placement” and “displacement” are simultaneously explored in her *History* as she illuminates the paradoxes of life as both slave and ex-slave: being geographically dislocated from one space to the next (*displacement*) but nevertheless incongruously identifying one place, Bermuda, as “home” (254) and later longing for it as “*my* native place” (270) (emphasis added), indicating *placement*; being displaced from exclusively voicing her own text but exerting control and situating herself rhetorically within the literary marketplace; being turned out by the Woods in England but willfully forcing their hand by refusing her service, positioning herself as their economic and legal equal, and articulating her knowledge of such; and finally realizing freedom in England, only to ironically lose mobility and economic viability (“I knew that I was free in England, but I did not know where to go, or how to get my living; and therefore, I did not like to leave the house” [282]). The tension created between the placements and displacements in Prince’s narrative define for the (probably) white readers the fluidity, inconsistency, and volatility involved in being black, and, especially, a black woman in the transatlantic nineteenth century and extended such connotations to a definition of black authorship.

Prince’s small “appeal” section contains her most overt overtures toward establishing her exertion of black authorship. However, within the pages of the historical account—in language seemingly tightly controlled by Strickland (and probably Pringle, as well)—Prince nonetheless manages to extend and reproduce these same impulses and paradoxes regarding black authorship—as well as black subjectivity in slavery—through xenotopia and deathscapes. As both death and the landscape are defamiliarized, they become conceptual spaces of disruption to normative identity, system, and order that Julia Kristeva terms “abjection,” that which “does not respect borders, positions, rules” and thus represents the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (*Powers* 4). Kristeva proposes that abjection lies "beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" and cannot be assimilated, thus becoming a threat that "beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire" (*Powers* 1). Evoking both horror and fascination, the abject is most effectively produced by "the most sickening of wastes," the corpse, and its physical signs—"blood and pus…the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay"—which, Kristeva contends, "*show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live," thus placing her "at the border of my condition as a living being" (*Powers* 3). Prince collapses the slave body, the West Indian landscape, and her black authorship into a single space of abjection through a series of events in which she suggests that nature collaborates with her authorial selfhood, resulting (whether intentionally or organically) in the disruption of both natural order and dominant (white) symbolic order.

The first two events happen in close succession at Captain Ingham's plantation at Spanish Point on the western tip of Bermuda. Prince sets the stage by introducing the cruelly overworked and viciously abused "French Black called Hetty" (260) who offered Prince the "only friendly face" (261) at the Inghams' plantation, despite the torture Hetty endured on a daily basis. Prince describes the familial bond she forged with Hetty while under duress at the Inghams': "Poor Hetty, my fellow slave, was very kind to me, and I used to call her my Aunt; but she led a most miserable life, and her death was hastened (at least the slaves all believed and said so), by the dreadful chastisement she received from my master during her pregnancy" (262). Prince recounts the vicious flogging Hetty received while pregnant, leading to her "all over streaming with blood" and the subsequent stillbirth of her child after "severe labour" (263). As the Inghams continue to flog Hetty in the ensuing days, Prince describes the slave woman's horrific and painful death in maternal terms that recall abject fluidity: "…her body and limbs swelled to a great size; and she lay on a mat in the kitchen, till the water burst out of her body and she died" (263). This nearly inconceivable deathscape is biblical in its description of the preternatural condition of Hetty's black body and the bursting forth of water prior to her death, while also recalling the formlessness, abstraction, and resistance of Derrida's *chora*.[71] Here Prince introduces the theme of abject fluidity—a significant motif that becomes increasingly important throughout the narrative—as the imagery of blood, amniotic fluid, and edema combine in a violent eruption, an aberrant mixture representing the horror of Hetty's tragic labor and subsequent murder.

Prince's grisly language of the abject provides a strong contrast with the sentimental scenes of death written by her contemporaries, those who represented the dominant symbolic order in the antebellum American marketplace. For example, in Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney's elegiac tribute "Death of an Infant" (1827), she describes a sublimely beautiful scene in which the "tint of rose" (2) fades from the "polish'd brow" (1) and cheeks of a dying baby, but a personified Death dare not steal the "So fix'd, so holy" (16) smile from its white "cherub brow" (16). Prince's portrayal of Hetty's deathscape goes beyond the contained, clean, and even genteel death of the infant of Sigourney's sentimentalism; instead, Hetty's death is gruesome, messy, and violent, inviting readers abroad to learn more intimately what Vincent Brown observes was "a well known aspect of social reality" in the West Indies that "death was imminent" (3). This scene further serves to exemplify the singular locality of Prince's particular authorship, as Bermuda and the West Indies were geographies uniquely marked by excess water and death and saturated in the physical abject—the blood, tears, and death secretions—of slaves.

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[71] Derrida refigures the chora in Plato's Timaeus as "the place of absolute exteriority" (57) that "never admits of any indemnification" and will "never permit itself to be sacralized, sanctified, humanized, theologized, cultivated, historicized" (58). Derrida calls the chora the "very place of an infinite resistance…an utterly faceless other" (59).

Historically, the West Indies had been portrayed in Anglo-authored literature as a geography abnormally affected by water and thus represented in terms of fluidity, volatility, and biological indeterminacy. The uniquely wet climate of the West Indies, especially in contrast to the North American mainland and Great Britain, was routinely interpreted by European and Anglo-American writers as "transgressive," an environment of excessive fertility, vegetation, growth, water, and verdancy; a degenerative climate that threatened to subsume or eat away European identity (Bauer 49); a place of "fragmentation and instability" (Aljoe 19); and a space of "sexual fecundity" and "degeneracy and danger" (Dillon 87) in which the humid environment and violent weather patterns posed a threat to economic production. Yet, as Brown demonstrates, death in the West Indies was "as generative as it was destructive," providing structure to society and giving "the volatile world a reliable axis" (4). The extreme and defamiliarized nature of Hetty's death is a generative occurrence for Prince and her unique black authorship. It operates as a demarcating line between the passivity of black slaves and the tremendous violence of white West Indian slaveholders, necessitates and underwrites Prince's narrative act, and underscores the singularity of Prince as the witness to these extraordinary events. In so doing, Prince establishes her authority over the narrative being told and distinguishes herself as separate from her white mediators. Prince is asserting the locally determined nature of her black authorship, while using the "morbid environment" of the West Indies and the ubiquity of death to help define that space (Brown 4).

After narrating the experience of Hetty's death, Prince testifies to the manner of her own considerable mourning: "All the slaves said that death was a good thing for poor Hetty; but I cried very much for her death. The manner of it filled me with horror. I could not bear to think about it; yet it was always present to my mind for many a day" (263). Violently removed from the working order of the estate, Hetty's copious tasks now fall to Prince, which precipitates a suicidal impulse in Prince as she proclaims slavery is a fate worse than death: "I…often wished that like poor Hetty I could escape from this cruel bondage and be at rest in the grave" (263). Whether intended to connect herself rhetorically to other slave narratives, Prince's discussion of the slaves' positive interpretation of Hetty's death and her own death wish twice invokes a well-established trope within the genre—what Paul Gilroy terms "death as agency" (63)—that existed prior to her narration and perpetuated in black-authored literature long after the 1830s.[72] Death was frequently portrayed as a blessing bestowed (or withheld, as the case may be) by a benevolent nature or god; at other times, suicide was cast in terms of a human right cleverly withheld by the master and thus representing another form of freedom denied to the black body and psyche within slavery. Adélékè Adéèkó explains, "The motivation for the slave's self-liberation struggle, which almost always involves some effort to rebel physically, also emanates from the desire to snap, once and for all, out of the melancholy that arises from the master's prevention of the bondsman's literal death" (19). Both Hetty's death and Prince's subsequent death wish are portrayed outside of the normal ritualization and dogma of Christian death, thus reappropriating the meaning of death and its import. Prince's narration of Hetty's death fixates on the corporeal, rather than the passage of the corporeal into the spiritual, as in the case of Sigourney's poem. And Prince's mourning is inextricably bound with her own death wish, a near-suicidal state directly in opposition to Christian mourning rituals in which the mourner's attention is directed inward toward the self, rather than outward toward the mourned. Prince portrays death not as the enemy (as in the case of Sigourney's personified thief) but as respite and freedom.

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[72] Olaudah Equiano states in his narrative of 1814, "I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me" (58); in Harriet Jacobs's 1861 narrative, she claims, "I had often prayed for death" (508). And perhaps one of the most poignant examples can be found in Douglass's 1845 autobiography, in which he proclaims, "I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed" (370).

Indeed, much of Prince's recounting is occupied with the externalization of grief, most frequently depicted in (often extreme) images of fluidity that are potentially threatening or disruptive. This is particularly evident among the women in the narrative: the female slaves must constantly navigate the tension between extreme grief and duty that often results in weeping. "Duty" represents a paradox for female slaves in Prince's narrative: while it comes in the form of sacred familial bonds (motherhood, sisterhood, daughterhood), it is also the externally imposed and perpetual duty inherent in the slave system, a system which disrupts those familial bonds and leaves no time or space for appropriate mourning, and, more importantly, a system for which no amount of grief or mourning can assuage the psyche of the subjugated. Grief was a problematic endeavor for slaves. Claude H. Nolen indicates that honorable and consistent religious ceremonies and death rites were practices commonly denied to slaves: "[t]he institution of slavery tended against the sacredness of the person, thus slaves had to struggle to pay proper respect to their dead" (20).[73] Whenever slaves tried to circumvent the white laws and culture that actively prohibited black burial and mourning, they were generally met with threats of violence or displacement.[74]

For Prince herself, both grief and duty extend beyond the historical past and enter into her narrating present, which she must find a way to manage in order to maintain control over her authorship and text. After detailing her significant mourning, in which it was her “heavy lot to weep, weep, weep,” Prince draws attention to her authorial control by stating, “But I must go on with the thread of my story” (263). This pivot is critical to Prince’s narrative and her sense of black authorship. Such a maneuver serves to remind the reader of the veracity of the narrative, as there is a real narrating “I” working to recount the story, and it further underscores that this story is pronominally (and, thus, perhaps legally and commoditarily) *her* story and space of ownership. But, more importantly, Prince wrestles here between the impulse to mourn and the necessity of communicating the trauma, down to its graphic and uncompromising details. Death and grief do not result in silence; to the contrary, death and grief are brought out of the private realm and into the public sphere, incorporated into the narrative as a material entity (tears or blood) and experiential practice (weeping or murder), and soon defamiliarized through their association with two natural events: a squall and an earthquake.

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[73] In one such example, Nolen details an oxcart that carried the corpses of both white and black dead to a graveyard, wherein the whites were honored with a sermon "while relatives and friends of blacks had to wait for a slack season, like lay-by time, for memorial services. Some slaves were buried without ceremony of any kind and their graves marked by nothing but a wood post" (20).

[74] Nolen provides another example from Lizzie Norfleet, who witnessed an episode in which a child died and an elder black leader attempted to lead the plantation community in the common Christian mourning rites of prayer and song. The "master" broke up the ceremony, riding up on horseback and threatening to lash them all if they did not "'shut up dat singin' an' carryin' on'" (20).

Throughout the narrative, Prince casts the natural world as responsive to her emotional conditions, particularly those brought about by mourning and death. She describes three natural events—two climatical and one geophysical—that accompany scenes of death and/or mourning and significantly alter the landscape, rendering it as defamiliarized and disrupted as her own displacement within the slave system renders her. Immediately following the scene of Hetty’s death, Prince picks up her narrative: “One day a heavy squall of wind and rain came on suddenly, and my mistress sent me round the corner of the house to empty a large earthen jar” (263). This squall, a rainstorm characterized by violent wind—becomes the catalyst for an episode in which Prince gets stripped and severely flogged by Mrs. Ingham because of the breakage of the already cracked earthen jar, then further beaten by Mr. Ingham upon his return home until he himself was “quite wearied” (264). As Mr. Ingham sinks back into his chair, faint from the physical exertion of brutalizing Prince's body, the second natural event spontaneously occurs:

> While my mistress went to bring him drink, there was a dreadful earthquake. Part of the roof fell down, and every thing in the house went—clatter, clatter, clatter. Oh I thought the end of all things near at hand; and I was so sore with the flogging, that I scarcely cared whether I lived or died. The earth was groaning and shaking; every thing tumbling about; and my mistress and the slaves were shrieking and crying out, 'The earthquake! the earthquake!' It was an awful day for us all. (264)

The Bermudan landscape is disfigured and thrown into chaos, transforming into a xenotopic space of disruption in which the land anthropomorphically groans and shakes, causing damage to the Inghams' ill-gotten possessions. The natural world provides a means for Prince to incorporate and defamiliarize death into the narrative. Earlier in the *History*, she foreshadows this geological disturbance and reiterates her close communion with natural forces by describing her grief in xenotopic terms, suggesting her own sense of loss and mourning (in this case, grief over being auctioned off and leaving her mother, as the severing of family bonds were their own kind of death in the slave system) is akin to an earthquake or volcanic eruption: "My heart throbbed with grief and terror so violently, that I pressed my hands quite tightly across my breast, but I could not keep it still, and it continued to leap as though it would burst out of my body" (257). Here, the natural reaction of Prince's black body mimics the defamiliarized landscape later shaken by an earthquake. In so doing, Prince demonstrates that her body is a site that she can at least attempt to control herself, and her failure at realizing that control underscores, rather than undermines, her agency in the text: her body is subject to natural law, just as are white bodies, thus decentering the white colonists and their ability to fully control Prince or her *History*. Additionally, Prince marshals the psychological power behind the notion that both whites and blacks are subject to natural order, as the violent squall and earthquake pose the same threat of mortality to both groups, and Prince thus utilizes these deathscapes to substantiate her agency and authorial control.

By bookending these two natural events—the squall and the earthquake—around one of Prince's most personally intimate and vicious accounts of white slaveholders' brutality, she implicitly suggests that nature foreshadows, responds to, and/or intervenes in the conditions brought about by slavery and its accompanying violence. She rhetorically aligns herself (and, implicitly, all black slaves) with nature in opposition to the aberrant and unnatural whites and their slave system. In so doing, she establishes the literal/physical landscape on which slavery occurs as *terra incognita*, a place that is geographically and topographically unstable, unpredictable, and unfamiliar, a spatial abjection that undermines established order. Prince leverages the concept of *terra incognita* as a metaphor for the landscape of the literary marketplace, a space aligned with the dominant symbolic order that she must enter and navigate, but that she also disrupts in the telling of her narrative. As Pringle's Preface and Supplement reveal, the path to publication for Prince's *History* was as circuitous as her own journey throughout Bermuda and the West Indies, involving: her exhortations to the Woods for her freedom; her appeals to the Anti-Slavery Society and a petition to the English House of Commons; a defamatory letter from her former master, Woods; the intervention of Thomas Pringle on her behalf; two libel cases in England, both for which Prince was called to testify; the transcription by Susanna Strickland; and the heavy editorial intercession by Pringle.[75] Prince's description of the xenotopic Bermudan landscape amidst the squall and ensuing earthquake becomes a metaphor for the figurative space of publication, *terra incognita* in which Prince can exist and even maneuver, endorsed by her close alignment with nature, but nevertheless is subject to the same racial biases and strictures placed upon her by slavery and the dominant symbolic order.

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[75] In the Preface, Pringle himself wrestles with the paradoxical nature of Prince's black authorship, both affirming and undercutting her narrative authority: "The narrative was…written out fully, with all the narrator's repetitions and prolixities, and afterwards pruned into its present shape; retaining, as far as was practicable, Mary's exact expressions and peculiar phraseology. No fact of importance has been omitted, and not a single circumstance or sentiment has been added. It is essentially her own, without any material alteration farther than was requisite to exclude redundances and gross grammatical errors, so as to render it clearly intelligible….After it had been thus written out, I went over the whole, carefully examining her on every fact and circumstance detailed" (251).

Furthermore, the death wish trope that Prince reiterates in the epicenter of the earthquake—"I scarcely cared whether I lived or died"—serves to remind the reader that Prince is simultaneously a figure of placement and displacement, both on the Bermudan plantation and in her own narrative (264). To willfully wish for her own death is to recognize the forces oppressing her and causing her to desire death over life; however, it is also to acknowledge her own value and agency, potentially diverting herself from the ownership of others to the ownership of herself and a deity, and thus rendering the death wish both agentive and non-agentive, placed and displaced. Brown calls such agentive activity "mortuary politics," in which people derive "profound social meaning from the beliefs and practices associated with death" that are so central to social order and tension, and employ those meanings in struggles toward particular ends (5). Prince's deployment of mortuary politics both places and displaces her from slavery, both placing her within the West Indies and displacing her to a spiritual realm of self-ownership and/or submission to a higher authority than humankind. This same placement/displacement paradox underwrites Prince's implicit definition of her space of black authorship: an admission of her lack of authorial control, a pronouncement of herself as a valuable commodity within white society, and the clever exertion of agency even while decrying her lack thereof.

The third natural event that signals a deathscape and disrupts the dominant symbolic order takes place later in the narrative and details a second-hand account of an occurrence on St. Turk's Island after Prince had already returned to Bermuda. Through her vicarious narration of this incident, in which the subjects/slaves lack agency or power, Prince reclaims that power and exerts authority over the meaning of her text. As she controls whose voices get heard and the tenor of those voices, the balance of power shifts from the white "Buckra" slaveholders to Prince and her narrating self, and her assertion of black authorship here becomes a space of intentionality, power, and authority:

> After I left Turk's Island, I was told by some negroes that came over from it, that the poor slaves had built up a place with boughs and leaves, where they might meet for prayers, but the white people pulled it down twice, and would not allow them even a shed for prayers. A flood came down soon after and washed away many houses, filled the place with sand, and overflowed the ponds: and I do think that this was for their wickedness; for the Buckra men there were very wicked. I saw and heard much that was very very bad at that place. (271–72)

In this short episode, Prince expands upon the trope of a vengeful and redemptive nature by depicting the natural world as a powerful (and yet self-harming) force that transforms Turk's Island into a flooded xenotopia as a response to white oppression, in this case the denial of religious liberty. Once again, Prince is suggesting her awareness of the simultaneity of being both victimized and agentive, as the slaves attempted multiple times to erect a modest church and exercise the right to worship while knowingly conflicting with the edicts of the white slaveholders. Like tears, blood, and the squall before it, a disruptive fluid is presented in the form of a ruinous flood. Prince depicts this deluge as a force that alters a landscape marked by slavery: destroying homes of both whites and blacks alike, defamiliarizing the landscape with a covering of sand, and reducing the surface area of usable land space (and thus economically damaging the slave owners) by flooding the ponds. As a secondary account rather than of Prince's direct experience, this episode reinforces Prince's representation of the land as a space that can be rendered unstable and unknowable.

The exaggerated water imagery that Prince invokes throughout the *History*—geographical/natural, such as the ocean, salt ponds, and rain, as well as the human/corporeal fluids of slaves, such as tears, blood, and bodily excretions occasioned by death—emphasizes the notion of fluidity and that which cannot be contained, continuously recalling Kristeva's abjection and reiterating that the dominant order is disruptable. Kristeva writes, "There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (*Powers* 1); for Kristeva, the abject is unnerving, even horrifying, but also powerful and capable of appropriation. Whether consciously strategic or an unconscious tension present in the text, Prince's use of violent abject imagery—Hetty's uncanny, watery death, or the salt water that literally ate away the slaves' black skin while working the Turk's Island salt ponds (266–69)—aligns herself and her narrative with the concepts of the threatening exteriority, the instability of the known, and that which is unthinkable. Not only are the conditions of slavery horrifying, but the mutability of the self—the interior selfhood of Mary Prince *and* Prince, the narrator/author and authority of the text—consistently poses a threat while also providing her with symbolic power and potential for the exertion and amplification of her black authorship. Expanding on Kristeva, Kelly Oliver acknowledges, "The symbolic can maintain itself only by maintaining its borders; and the abject points to the fragility of those borders" (56). Prince's abject imagery disrupts the notion of stability and associates Prince herself (the woman and the author) with the concepts of flexible margins, traversing borders, and disruption of the symbolic order.

Prince reiterates that her condition as a slave and a black author are both fluid concepts, ones in which the seemingly concrete and absolute laws of slavery and the literary marketplace can be manipulated in order for her to exercise some agency. If land—and, arguably, her black body—can both be commodified, owned, and proven sites of confinement for Prince, her invocation of fluidity and its power over the Bermudan and West Indian landscapes can exert her agency outside of those material confines. Moreover, her suggestion that the West Indian land is abnormally or excessively fluid finds Prince contributing to and participating in contemporary conversations in the public sphere debating that very topic.[76] The ocean proves to be a space of respite for Prince; for example, her "greatest delight" at the Prudens' house was accompanying Master Daniel to "walk out with him by the sea-shore," which placed Prince at geographical distance from her mistress and at psychological distance from the pain of leaving her mother (255). But being at the margin of the ocean bears the implication of change and life outside of her small island of slavery.

W. Jeffrey Bolster emphasizes that "ships and boats provided one of Caribbean slave societies' most porous boundaries. Across it flowed goods, ideas, individuals, and aesthetics, contributing to the hybridity of Afro-West Indian culture" (17). Later in the *History*, Prince discusses an oceanic voyage she undertook when the Inghams sent her away to a "strange land" without affording her the ability to say goodbye to her family (266). Upon the four-week oceanic voyage from Bermuda to Turk's Island, she nonetheless experienced kindness from "a black man called Anthony, and his wife, who had brought their own victuals, and shared them with me" (266). Transatlantic travel, Bolster further proposes, while making the slave trade possible, nevertheless “created an egalitarian, if ephemeral, social order that rejected imperial society’s hierarchy and forced labor,” and such attitudes and possibilities permeated the slave culture of the West Indies, as evidenced by the increased kindness Prince experienced on board the ship (13).

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[76] For more on European representations of "cultural degeneration" (41) in the Americas, see Bauer's "The Hemispheric Genealogies of 'Race': Creolization and the Cultural Geography of Colonial Difference across the Eighteenth-Century Americas" in Hemispheric American Studies (2007).

This permeable social order created by oceanic travel kept slaves in touch with their African heritage, as well. Though she does not indicate where Anthony and his wife are from, Prince is clear to delineate the fact that they are black. Aboard the ship, Prince’s slave status dissolves into a more fluid and ethical conception of duty and community, as Anthony and his wife seem to help Prince out of kindness and/or a shared African heritage. Furthermore, the water implicitly recalls the significance of water imagery to Prince’s African past. Camille Talkeu Tounouga states, “Three models for the representation of water are found in Black-African tribal mythology and traditions: water as a source of life, as an instrument of purification and as a locus of regeneration” (283). She further elucidates, “Throughout Africa since the times of the Pharaohs, water…has played an integral role in the fertility of fields and the fecundity of beings and things. Beyond that, every kind of water—rain, river, spring, pond, lake, sea, water cupped in the hollow of a tree, dew—is invested with a particular significance” (283). As water held deep symbolic meaning for many Sub-Saharan African tribes—all at once life affirming, violent, and destructive—Prince’s integration of water imagery throughout the rest of the *History* could thus be seen as a demonstration or exertion of her own threatening exteriority, her blackness.

Whether intellectually influenced by the emergent (and resistant) social order of African American seamen or psychologically affected by her time on and near the ocean, Prince most certainly unites herself (and other slaves) and her mourning rituals with this notion of fluidity, and, specifically, the salt water of the ocean in her syntactical choices: “crying” upon learning she was to be sold (256); “the great grief that filled my heart” on the night before she was to be sold (256); her “poor mother, weeping for the loss of her children” (256); recounting her trials making “the salt water come into my eyes” (259); “my heavy lot to weep, weep, weep” (263). She juxtaposes the image of grieving black bodies and their fluidity with the solidity of both whites and the land, united conceptually as forces/sites that oppress the black slaves. In one example, Prince narrates, “[W]e always dreaded [Mr. Williams] return from sea”; Mr. Williams’s cruelty as a master is directly linked to his presence on land (254). Later, Prince reaffirms that whites are hard, like solid matter, stating about her new home with Captain I——, “The stones and the timber were the best things in it; they were not so hard as the hearts of the owners” (260). Implicitly, Prince’s rhetoric suggests that if black bodies and their grieving rituals are fluid, then they can pass outside of the hard material strictures of the dominant symbolic order, white law and the standards of the publishing industry, able to be mobilized in the service of the telling and publication of a text like Prince’s *History*.

Prince initially establishes the significance of strange scenes of death and the fluidity of black grief early in the *History* when she details the death of her kind mistress, a scene in which Prince must navigate the tension between her need to affirm the dominant symbolic order and the creation of a new order of black authorship. Upon being told of Mrs. Williams’s death, Prince’s grief washes over her in an overwhelming flood-like state: “At this time Mrs. Williams died. I was told suddenly of her death, and my grief was so great that, forgetting I had the baby in my arms, I ran away directly to my poor mistress's house; but reached it only in time to see the corpse carried out. Oh, that was a day of sorrow.—a heavy day!” (255). Prince then represents herself as a child epistemologically shaped by African tradition, in which the dead were much more actively present and fluidly constructed than in the distanced and fearful views of death prescribed by a more inflexible western Christian dogma.[77] When Mrs. Williams dies, the female slaves perpetuate the flood of grief as young Mary implores the bystanders to reanimate her body: “All the slaves cried. My mother cried and lamented her sore; and I (foolish creature!) vainly entreated them to bring my dear mistress back to life. I knew nothing rightly about death then, and it seemed a hard thing to bear” (255). The judgmental tone of narrating post-conversion Mary, whose attitude evinces a space of Christianized hindsight and asserts the dominant symbolic order, threatens to undermine the positive connotation of fluidity later attached to slaves and black authorship.

Yet it seems to serve a narrative purpose: in so doing, Prince simultaneously reaffirms natural law (both blacks and whites alike are subject to mortality) while also endorsing as true the laws of white Christian religion, as opposed to African tradition, which she dismisses as “foolish.” Here, one of two rhetorical situations occurs. On the one hand, there is perhaps an unconscious and tragic tension in the text in which the author is caught between her past and her present, the necessity of grief and the demands of publishing. On the other hand, there is the possibility that Prince ingratiates herself to white readers, thus suggesting her comprehension of the strictures of the literary marketplace for which she is writing, and her ability to maneuver as a black slave within those strictures. Either way, black authorship emerges from Prince’s coordination (whether intentional or not) of the fluidity of black grief with the imperatives of white publishing.

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[77] For more on the importance placed on ancestors and the presence of the dead in burial rituals and postmortem rituals, see Michael Jindra and Joel Noret’s Funerals in Africa: Explorations of a Social Phenomenon.

The *History*'s most palpable scene of mourning provides another example of Prince's definition of black authorship as a space of both placement and displacement, alienation and control. Prince describes the xenotopic "black morning" of the day her mother accompanied her children to auction to be sold (257). In this short oxymoronic phrase, Prince asks the reader to envision an unnatural scene on the Bermudan landscape in which a morning (usually associated with light, freshness, and restoration) is black, with connotations of both literal darkness and metaphorical gloom, despair, and hopelessness. The homophonic symbolism of "morning" with *mourning* ushers in Prince's description of her mother dressing her children in "new osnaburgs" and proclaiming in a "sorrowful voice," "'See, I am *shrouding* my poor children: what a task for a mother!'" (257). Once at the marketplace, Prince narrates that her mother "stood beside crying over us" (257), a physical reduplication of the act of shrouding her children by laying her body over them. Thus, Prince's mother ushers them into possible physical deaths, but also the symbolic deaths of their happy childhoods and into what Orlando Patterson calls the "social death" of slavery (8).

An extension of the abject fluidity throughout the narrative, Prince's weeping mother—the archetype of maternal fluidity and familial bond—acts as a border separating Prince from slavery and thus threatens the dominant symbolic order. Kristeva emphasizes that the symbolic order attempts to repress the mother's power and abject her: "It is as if paternity were necessary in order to relieve the archaic impact of the maternal body on man; in order to complete the investigation of a ravishing maternal jouissance but also of its terrorizing aggressivity; in order somehow to admit the threat that the male feels as much from the possessive maternal body as from his separation from it—a threat that he immediately returns to that body" (*Desire* 263). Oliver further maintains, "The abject threat comes from what has been prohibited by the

Symbolic order, what has been prohibited so that the Symbolic order can be. The prohibition that founds, and yet undermines, society is the prohibition against the maternal body" (56). The body of Prince's mother (and her extreme grief) covers her children and momentarily transfigures them from commodities to human beings, upsetting economic exchange and threatening the symbolic order.

The struggle in Prince's narration between death and authorship is once again revealed. The children's youthful idyll comes to a painfully abrupt end, and the loss of the bonds of family must now be mourned as its own kind of death. Nevertheless, with this death and the lowering of the metaphorical shroud, Prince's veil is lifted and she can see herself for the commodity that she is. Ironically, rather than express disdain for this commodification, Prince demonstrates a strange pride in the sum that she fetched at auction ("…the people who stood by said that I had fetched a great sum for so young a slave") and an acquiescence to the commodification of people (258). Later in the narrative she indicates further submission to the system of slavery as she works to buy her freedom in England, even though she was already free there under British law. This maneuver causes tension with the more overtly abolitionist statements made throughout the text, particularly in the testimonial "appeal" section at the end. However, through her understanding of commodification in western society, Prince implicitly reveals her awareness of herself as a commodity in the literary marketplace, thus exposing her double self-consciousness. As a commodity (rather than a consumer or producer), she is incapable of being fully assimilated into the American literary tradition, and yet the space of black authorship that she agentively defines for herself is too acquiescent to the dominant symbolic order to be a full realization of a new African-American literary tradition.

Nevertheless, xenotopia and strange deathscapes allow Prince to carve out her own unique space of black authorship throughout *History* using defamiliarization to suggest that the same physical and economic displacement experienced as a slave in Bermuda and the West Indies extends to her position as black author. Rather than represent herself as a fully subverted being under white hegemony of cruel West Indian creoles, which would arguably more fully benefit the abolitionist cause for which she was supposed to be writing,[78] Prince's black authorship is a space of fluidity and heterogeneity, oppression and agency, displacement and placement, standing at the head of a tradition extending all the way into twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Agentive Prophethood in Turner's Black Authorship

Much like Prince's *History*, the notion of how scholars categorize and interpret "authenticity" in black-authored nineteenth-century texts proves vastly complicated in *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA* (1831), a pamphlet of miscegenated authorship that emerged from the only successful slave revolt in Virginian history. Here is a text that represents itself as a "confession," a term apparently meant to be interpreted by its white readers as an admission of legal crimes and/or religious sins, even though editor Thomas R. Gray acts as intercessor between Nat Turner's oral dictation—his "confessions"—and his antebellum readership. A clear line of demarcation exists between the alleged *Confessions* of Turner and what Gates identifies as the confessional mode: "the classic black narrative of the questing protagonist's 'journey into the heart of whiteness'" (*Signifying* 235). To the contrary, Turner's text might be better considered an attempted journey *out* of the heart of whiteness, through both violent revolt and agentive rhetorical maneuvers in the telling of his story. Nonetheless, both Turner and Prince take metaphorical literary journeys into the white literary marketplace. A more fitting term for the texts of both Turner and Prince is "testimony": Aljoe notes the heterogeneity of the Caribbean *testimonio*, in which "the syncretism of form and voice is addressed: a genre that transgresses the boundaries between the public and the private" (17). Both Prince's and Turner's narratives must negotiate those boundaries between their interior truths, how much of those truths to reveal, and with what voice, all the while knowing that whatever is delivered into the hands of a white editor will itself be renegotiated and, likely, reformed.

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[78] Aljoe asserts that the editorial choices made by both Pringle and Strickland—two noted abolitionists—were explicitly intended to support the British abolitionist cause. As Prince's History was released in the frenzy of anti-slavery sentiment amidst the Baptist War (the Jamaican slave rebellion of 1831) and leading up to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, it is clear that Prince's narrative was solicited in order to bolster the legal argument underwriting the abolitionist cause. Aljoe writes, "The appropriation of legal language and imagery, the format of legal testimony, and the assertion of the narrator as a reliable eyewitness seem explicitly intended to frame the question of abolition as a primarily legal issue, though grounded in notions of moral ethics" (99).

Yet, as Gates points out, the act of testimony cuts to the very heart of black subjectivity in antebellum America and informs any expression of the black voice: "What was at stake for the earliest black authors was nothing less than the implicit testimony to their humanity, a common humanity which they sought to demonstrate through the very writing of a text…To redress their image as a negation of all that was white and Western, black authors published as if their collective fate depended on how their texts would be received" (*Signifying* 185). Gates not only details the importance of testimony to black authorship, but he elaborates on how testimony functioned politically within the public sphere, as a method for expressing a black author's innate humanity and filling the space of absence—the conceptual absence of black humanity, but also the absence of the black author from the literary marketplace. Testimony was thus a key rhetorical strategy for subversively explicating to a white readership the black writer’s right to the authority of authorship.

Shari Goldberg interrogates the genre of testimony across racial boundaries, demonstrating that, although there were certainly the loud, declarative testimonies and confessions in antebellum reform literature, nevertheless “testimony also circulated, in texts of this period, as something subdued, muted, and elusive. This quieter strain of testimony could be as staggering and life changing as its louder counterpart, even without any fanfare” (1). As Goldberg argues, the “quiet” testimonial format confronts “the limitations of the core attributes of testimony conceived as loud: the idea that it involves a representation of the past, delivered in the first person by one who was there, performed in speech or recorded in writing, and meant to draw together a community of live listeners” (3). I contend that this notion of testimonial dwelling in the silences extends to the black authorship of Prince and Turner, forced to “testify” their narrative truths through editorial mediation and define themselves as authors and authorities while openly conceding to the limited control maintained over their texts. And through the process of testimonial or confession, the black voice is transmuted, changed from the original “authentic” or “pure” voice of the author into a xenotopic authorial landscape and expressing the author’s complex sense of authorial alienation and self-defined “placement” within his or her text and the literary marketplace.

As in Prince’s text, the notion of access is greatly problematic for Turner, who, sitting in a jail cell awaiting certain execution, voluntarily submits to interviews with—and must necessarily surrender post-interview control of the narrative to—a white mediator/underwriter. Turner’s authorial alienation is both literal and figurative, as he is physically closed off from both black and white communities and displaced from the public sphere by Gray’s intercession.

And despite Gray's declarations that the document was "a faithful record of [Turner's] confessions" with "little or no variation, from his own words," as a member of the local slaveholding community, Gray could hardly be considered a sympathizer, much less a trustworthy advocate of Turner's "truth" (40). A struggle for authority and authorship plays out between the black voice of Turner and the white mediating voice of Gray, but neither Gray nor Turner can be said to be entirely in control of the text, as the mark of both men's voices can be heard throughout.[79] Eric J. Sundquist defines the unique circumstances of the authorship of the *Confessions* as "a signal instance of 'alternating sounds' deployed for conscientious purpose" (21). Once again, the notions of authenticity, authority, and narrative truth enter into a nebulous realm in which more questions are raised than answered, and Turner's black authorship strains—and, at times, prevails—against the tensions created by these external forces of mediation and publication.

As Turner narrates the events leading up to his rebellion, including his childhood and life spent in slavery, he describes the landscapes that are directly connected to his time in slavery in xenotopic terms, unexpectedly apocalyptic and transcendental in nature. Much as in Prince's narration, Turner's xenotopia signal his black authorship as a space of placement and displacement. The literal displacements incurred in slavery (and enacted during the rebellion itself) and the figurative displacement from his authorial control are counterbalanced by the "placement" exerted through his deathscapes upon which he negotiates a complex relationship of both push and pull—submission and subversion—with the dominant symbolic order of the literary marketplace. These deathscapes are spaces through which Turner navigates the tension between death and authorship. Turner, author and authority, is a dealer of death, himself turning the Southern landscape into a deathscape but also narrating from death row and whose impending death—and ultimate displacement—implicitly haunts the narrative. Such tension manifests as a struggle to exercise authority regarding the meaning of death that Gray, in spite of his heavy mediation, nevertheless reproduces, supporting Turner's empowered space of black authorship.

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[79] For more on the concept of authenticity or narrative truth in the relationship between Turner and Gray, see: Daniel S. Fabricant's "Thomas R. Gray and William Styron: Finally, A Critical Look at the 1831 Confessions of Nat Turner" (1993) and Tony Horwitz's "Untrue Confessions: Is Most of What We Know About the Rebel Slave Nat Turner Wrong?" which both argue against the reliability of the confessions; and David F. Allmendinger, Jr.'s "The Construction of The Confessions of Nat Turner" (2003) and Christopher Tomlins' "The Confessions of Nat Turner: A Paratextual Analysis" (2014), which both complicate such ideas and maintain that the Confessions might be more reliable than previous scholars have supposed.

Much of the extant scholarship on Turner's authorship focuses on Gray's involvement—particularly his motives, which Kenneth S. Greenberg speculates were financial and public-service-oriented—as well as his "intrusion" into the alleged narrative of Turner's confessions (8). Greenberg has detailed the conditions under which Turner's confessions came to be recorded and published by Gray. He maintains that Gray leveraged his stature as a well-known local lawyer and businessman (i.e. slave owner) in order to gain access to Turner's cell ten days before his scheduled execution, then proceeded to interview, transcribe, and annotate Turner's so-called "confessions" (8). During this process, Turner's imminent death bore down upon the production of the text; not only did this create a hasty timeframe in which to produce the text, but it also presented an unconventional environment in which to procure Turner's account. Beyond the complications presented to the notion of "narrative truth" by the transcription and white mediation process, there was the implicit question of what kind of narration could be obtained from an uneducated black murderer on death row. Death is central to the struggle between Turner and Gray for authority and authorship, but also crucial to Turner's struggle to define his black authorship in a text that he would undoubtedly not live to see enter the literary marketplace.

Gray procured a copyright the day before Turner's execution, and by month's end, *Confessions* was published in Baltimore with a hefty circulation of 40,000–50,000 copies sold (Greenberg 8). It contained Gray's prefatory editorial "To the Public," the alleged verbatim transcript of Nat Turner's confession, and Gray's dramatic version of a trial transcript including a condemnation of Turner and the pronouncement that he shall be hung, ending with lists of the dead whites and the accused blacks involved in the rebellion. Greenberg details some of the central questions concerning Gray's "interpretive presence":

> He sets the stage in his opening note to the public, characterizing Nat Turner and his companions in ways which indicate his hostility…Gray's touch extends even into the section of the document which he presents as a verbatim transcript of Nat Turner's confession. In addition to Gray's overt editorial comments in parentheses and interjected questions, certain phrases seem unlikely to have been uttered by Turner…It is also likely that Gray intentionally or inadvertently organized Turner's confession so that it confirmed his own interpretation of the rebellion. (8–9)

Due to the nature of Gray's involvement, scholars have wrestled with the complexity of the text's authorship. As Patrick H. Breen argues, "The problematic nature of the authorial voice in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* poses the single most significant interpretative problem for people interested in the revolt" (169). William L. Andrews considers it necessary that we must approach it as a text with two authorial voices that cannot be distinguished from one another, which "may do more justice to the significance of the *Confessions* than has been done by anyone who claimed to have recuperated the real Nat Turner from history" (77). Scot French cautions that "we will have to confront and embrace uncertainty rather than imposing a false order on it" (qtd. in Horowitz 89).

After meticulous scrutiny of both the text and extant historical and literary scholarship, Breen concludes, “The most reasonable reading of this document is that Gray faithfully transmitted the confessions of America’s most famous slave rebel” (180). Greenberg disagrees, concluding that Gray’s intention was to represent Turner as insane and pander to a white Southern readership: “Gray probably thought the *Confessions* showed the causal connection between the maniacal religious fanaticism of one man and the brutality of the rebellion” (10). Nevertheless, Greenberg concedes that the voice of Nat Turner—the black voice inscribed in the creation of a space of black authorship by Turner himself—can be heard in his description of his early childhood, his religious visions, and the planning meeting at Cabin Pond; moreover, parallel to Prince’s “use” of Strickland’s serves as a transcriptionist, Turner managed the seemingly impossible feat of self-representation by influencing Gray’s voice and his representation of Turner, specifically by convincing Gray of his humanity, that he was “intelligent and capable” (Greenberg 10). The valuable and necessary debates on where Gray’s voice ends and Turner’s voice begins (or does not begin) nonetheless neglect to acknowledge Turner’s evident interiority trying to assert itself amidst these unconventional narrative circumstances. I contend that, in the nuances of these descriptive passages that Greenberg attributes to Turner, xenotopia and deathscapes can be found that subtly and subversively establish his vexed position of black authorship and work to reveal Turner as both placed and displaced as author and subject.

One of the foremost methods by which Turner seemingly guides the direction and exerts some manner of control over his narrative is through his self-representation as a prophet motivated by divine intervention. While it is admittedly impossible to determine intentionality (on either the part of Gray or Turner), this trope appears to allow Turner to establish himself—

and thus define his black authorship—by a mode that is simultaneously agentive and non-agentive. Though Turner certainly seeks no absolution from either Gray or his white readers, he nevertheless extends control over the viability of his narrative, and the likelihood that his narrative will be considered as more than the ranting of a murderous lunatic, by representing himself as a divinely-controlled agent and aligning his actions, like Prince, with familiar Christian dogma (an assertion of the dominant symbolic order), then subverting that representation. Careful not to appear a charlatan, Turner dictates that, upon overhearing him at age 3 or 4 speak of something that had happened before he was born, other people announced that Turner "would surely be a prophet, as the Lord had shewn me things that had happened before my birth" (44). He cleverly assigns the responsibility of declaring himself a prophet to other people, implying the likelihood of its truth while nevertheless distancing himself from it by stating, "And my father and mother strengthened me in this my first impression, saying in my presence, I was intended for some great purpose, which they had always thought from certain marks on my head and breast" (44). Turner raises the question of the veracity of his prophethood, instead ascribing accountability to his parents who introduced upon Turner's impressionable young mind the idea that he might be prescient, as well as to other people in his community, both black and white.

Turner never overtly declares himself either prophet or impostor. Instead, he engages with both positions throughout the narrative, often blurring the lines between the two. Whether such vacillation reveals rhetorical strategy or the inherent tension of his divided psyche, by suggesting the possibility that he might be a prophet, or, conversely, that he once faithfully believed that he was a prophet in vain, he intimates that his post-rebellion position of black authorship is one of a more evolved percipience than the one in which he devised and carried out the rebellion. Recalling the day he was praying at his plough and heard the voice of "the Spirit that spoke to the prophets in former days," Turner testifies, "then again I had the same revelation, which fully confirmed me in the impression that I was ordained for some great purpose in the hands of the Almighty" (46). Here Turner cleverly straddles the line between declaring himself a prophet and distancing himself from that initial belief. While definitively reiterating—amidst Gray's interrupting questions—that he (Turner) was indeed spoken to by the Holy Spirit, and thus divinely influenced, Turner nonetheless indicates that it was his *impression* at the time, rather than the absolute truth, that he was indeed a prophet. Turner uses his post-rebellion hindsight to revisit the idea of prophecy in retrospect, manipulating this term to achieve authority.

Whether subconscious or strategic, such subversive maneuvers bolster Turner's position as author and authority from whom an accounting of his own murderous deeds can be trusted by the very audience his rebellion targeted, displacing himself from "Nat Turner the character" of his own narrative and defining his own authorship in opposition to the rebellion, without discrediting the efficacy or necessity for that rebellion. Turner also ascribes blame for the discrepancy in epistemologies between his pre-rebellion prophethood and post-rebellion narration/black authorship to slavery, noting that it was after he "arrived to man's estate, and was a slave" that these revelations occurred to him, at which point, he states, "…I began to direct my attention to this great object, to fulfil the purpose for which, by this time, I felt assured I was intended" (46). Again, Turner affirms the significance of his prophethood without ultimately denying it, while simultaneously distancing himself from it through rhetorical maneuvers, such as temporally positioning his (possibly misguided) belief in his own prophethood at a particular historical moment in the past, and portraying that belief as a production of his emotional self ("I felt assured") rather than of his logical intelligence.

The portrayal of Turner's above-average intelligence is a central concern for the self-fashioning of his black authorship, a characteristic he seemingly manages to induce Gray into perpetuating in Gray's explanatory editorial notes. In his confession, Turner once again ascribes the discovery of his exceptional intellect to other sources, both black and white, attempting to establish their credibility as respected figures of the community in the process:

> My grandmother, who was very religious, and to whom I was much attached—my master, who belonged to the church, and other religious persons who visited the house, and whom I often saw at prayers, noticing the singularity of my manners, I suppose, and my uncommon intelligence for a child, remarked I had too much sense to be raised, and if I was, I would never be of any service to any one as a slave— (44–45)

Calling on the witnesses of his black grandmother and white master, both legitimized by their associations with Christianity, Turner grafts an authorial persona upon an established history of high intelligence, once again juxtaposing this characteristic against slavery, testifying that the two—an uncommonly high intelligence and being in service to someone—were mutually exclusive.

As opposed to his possible prophethood, Turner never questions his singularly innate intelligence that he attributes to "a mind like mine, restless, inquisitive and observant of every thing that was passing," and to which he credits the spontaneous acquisition of literacy:

> The manner in which I learned to read and write, not only had great influence on my own mind, as I acquired it with the most perfect ease, so much so, that I have no recollection whatever of learning the alphabet—but to the astonishment of the family, one day, when a book was shewn me to keep me from crying, I began spelling the names of different objects—this was a source of wonder to all in the neighborhood, particularly the blacks—and this learning was constantly improved at all opportunities… (45)

While conceding that the *manner* in which he acquired literacy may have influenced him toward believing he was destined for a larger purpose, Turner nonetheless does not dissociate himself from the attribute of intelligence, which becomes important to framing his black authorship in terms of both placement and displacement. As an author alienated from his readers physically (by authoring from within a jail cell), mentally (as he continues to reiterate the singularity of his mind), and, likely both racially and politically, Turner seemingly understands that to exert some control over his own text and establish himself as an authorial figure, he must appeal to his readers with the currencies valued in the contemporary literary marketplace: religious proficiency and intellectual capacity. Furthermore, as Turner awaits certain execution, his authorship must be resolutely established enough to transcend the ultimate displacement, his impending death, which looms large over both strains of Turner's and Gray's voices in the *Confessions*.

What transpired in the undocumented margins of the encounter between Gray and Turner must be left open to question and debate. However, unless Gray—in a very unlikely stylistic turn—effects a satirical tone, somehow Turner managed to persuade Gray of this extraordinary intelligence, or at least convinced him that a representation of Turner's intelligence was of benefit to the production and distribution of Gray's text. Gray's motives will here remain open for debate. However, it is significant that a jailed ex-slave stripped of any agency or power, isolated from any support, and facing certain execution, manages to assert some sort of authorial control beyond the barriers of white mediation and even induces the white editor to validate that position of authority. Throughout the document, Gray confirms Turner's intellectual capacity, stating, "…for natural intelligence and quickness of apprehension, is surpassed by few men I have ever seen…He is a complete fanatic, or plays his part most admirably. On other subjects he possesses an uncommon share of intelligence, with a mind capable of attaining any thing; but warped and perverted by the influence of early impressions" (54). Since a common justification for slavery in the South was the denial of black humanity, Gray’s acknowledgement of Turner’s intelligence— not only on par with but surpassing that of most whites—seems to indicate Turner’s great influence over Gray or possibly Gray’s desire to sensationalize aspects of Turner’s own account. Either way, it is Turner who seemingly first expresses the notion of his intelligence in service of the construction of his own agentive black voice, and Gray, for whatever motive, perpetuates the proposition of Turner’s intelligence in his own description of Turner, preserving the notion of authorial control and independence established by Turner himself.

As Turner dictates the events leading up to the rebellion, his black authorship grows more complex through his xenotopic depiction of the land that portends the coming deaths: those of the whites slaughtered in the rebellion, as well as the coming execution of Turner himself. Just as Turner seemingly manipulated the concept of prophecy in order to achieve authority, here a similar maneuver can be detected: the xenotopia acts as a retrospective device that Turner employs to establish and exercise control over the narrative. The natural world is first introduced in Turner’s testimony in a familiar paradigm from the slave narrative genre, as Turner narrates his escape from an overseer and seclusion in the woods for thirty days, a typical experience of the escaping slave that Ian Finseth describes as a “‘remove’ to a space in nature” during which “the narrator’s experience of the immediate natural environment has affective, ethical, and ideological force” (“Geographic” 245). For Turner’s purposes, this “remove” serves three functions. First, it establishes the normalcy of the landscape soon to be defamiliarized. Second, it aligns Turner (and therefore blackness) with nature in contrast to whites. And, third, it trades on the established trope from slave narratives (that a remove precedes an attempted escape) in order to disrupt that convention and suggest that his return to slavery in order to lead the rebellion, in spite of his ability to escape, was potentially providentially guided. Turner states, “But the reason of my return was, that the Spirit appeared to me and said I had my wishes directed to the things of this world, and not to the kingdom of Heaven, and that I should return to the service of my earthly master” (46).

Turner’s voluntary return to slavery immediately precedes the xenotopic visions that are ultimately the catalysts for the rebellion, scenes of extreme defamiliarization in which he draws upon Biblical mythos to construct preternatural landscapes that are all at once ominous, aberrant, and marked by violent imagery. Turner explains, “And about this time I had a vision—and I saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened—the thunder rolled in the Heavens, and blood flowed in streams” (46). He further asserts that it was the Holy Spirit that revealed to him “the knowledge of the elements, the revolution of the planets, the operation of tides, and changes of the seasons” (47). After this episode, and in a sort of post-baptismal reverie, Turner sees another xenotopic vision of strange lights in the sky, followed by “drops of blood on the corn as though it were dew from heaven,” a defamiliarized scene in which both death and life—corporeal destruction and agrarian production—commingle (47). The apocalyptic fantasy, as any contemporary reader would likely ascertain, was a direct portent of the literalization of the bloody rebellion, in which the orderly agrarian landscape marked by plantation slavery was upended by black-on-white violence and transformed into a chaotic scene of war. Here, Turner exaggerates the scene further by amplifying the effect created by uncanny natural phenomena akin to the Biblical plagues, a maneuver that disrupts the dominant symbolic order. The land that was once *terra incognita* for Turner, as he was denied geographical knowledge under slavery, is now rendered *terra incognita* for the white reader. Through the narration of this xenotopic vision, Turner establishes his black authorship as both geographically attuned to the natural environment and spiritually attuned to Christian prophecy (or at least to the language of Christian prophecy), thus revealing his ability to penetrate the borders of the white slaveholders' religion ("white" Christianity) and geographical/natural knowledge, just as he invaded their homes in the rebellion.

In the same manner, and on a larger scale, Turner's ability to transcend the confines of slavery on the local level reveals the subversive infiltration of Turner's voice into the public sphere, seemingly conveying his awareness of the existence of the literary marketplace and his ability to exist therein. Other contemporary accounts of Nat Turner's insurrection in newspapers represented it, as what Goddu identifies, as a "scene of slavery…through gothic images and a romantic rhetoric" that turned Turner's rebellion into "a gothic narrative of dread and retribution" (*Gothic* 133–34). Whether Turner was aware of how his own story had been appropriated in the public sphere is uncertain. What does seem evident, however, is that Turner guided the shaping of his own narrative into a text that incorporated gothic conventions in order to attract an audience, exerting authorial control either in tandem with or in spite of Gray's intervention. Nevertheless, just as in Prince's *History*, there exists in Turner's narrative a struggle for a particular kind of authority regarding the meaning of death, a meaning that is transposed from both the sentimental and gothic modes into one determined by black agency. The resulting text is neither wholly gothic nor sentimental but rather a competing mode representing a reworking of the dominant symbolic order and a foray into a new space of black authorship.

Once again, Gray supports Turner's authorial self-representation, perpetuating the idea of Turner being attuned to the natural world by likening Turner's own psychological condition to a dark xenotopic landscape inscribed with death. Gray acknowledges, "It will thus appear, that whilst every thing upon the surface of society wore a calm and peaceful aspect; whilst not one note of preparation was heard to warn the devoted inhabitants of woe and death, a gloomy fanatic was revolving in the recesses of his own dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind, schemes of indiscriminate massacre to the whites" (41). Gray echoes Turner's juxtaposition of the pre-rebellion agrarian landscape of plantation slavery—which Gray's white slaveholding perspective deems "peaceful"—with the dark and mournful xenotopic deathscape associated with Turner's rebellion and impending execution. Turner himself portrays his own mind via descriptive rhetoric evocative of a landscape, describing its "fertility" in terms of agrarian possibility (45). Thus, it can be argued that, rather than detracting from Turner's xenotopic symbolism, Gray unwittingly collaborates in Turner's production of black authorship as agentive and capable of both disrupting and accommodating the dominant symbolic order, infiltrating the institutions and ideologies at the center of white antebellum American life: Christianity, the American landscape, and the public sphere.

While his xenotopic descriptions of the Virginia landscape work as devices of authorial placement, Turner nevertheless frames black authorship to be a space equally of displacement. Turner drew from his experience with displacement in slavery, in which access to an unimpeded landscape meant life, contrasted to the denial of the land or enclosure, which equated to literal and/or metaphorical death. Providing his testimonial account from a xenotopic space of enclosure, Turner focuses on the denial or absence of space, calling his present condition in jail "the dungeon" (44), in which he is "loaded with chains, and willing to suffer the fate that awaits me" (53). For his part, Gray substantiates this paradigm, noting "the condemned hole of the prison" (54), a microcosm and literalization of the denial of access to land under slavery. Stephanie M. H. Camp defines the phenomenon of white slaveholding control over black mobility “geographies of containment,” in which “laws, customs, and ideals had come together into a systematic constriction of slave movement that helped establish slaveholders’ sense of mastery” (6). Camp demonstrates that in the antebellum South, the “control of slave movement” was even more important to maintaining white hegemony than access to consumer goods, trade, medical knowledge, or even literacy (15). Strategically limiting geographical knowledge was a means for quelling rebellions and runaways, but even more so to legitimizing the institution of slavery and white hegemony. Camp explains, “Enslaved people’s inferior and subjected position within the framework of antebellum southern society, their social ‘place,’ was reflected and affirmed by white control over their location in space, their literal place” (16–17). Turner implicitly frames the landscapes he must navigate—the American land, the literary marketplace, and his own authorship—as *terra incognita*, places unknown, full of both denial and possibility, placement and displacement.

In so doing, Turner thus proposes a relationship between the displacement associated with slavery, the displacement of his narrating situation inside a jailhouse, and the denial of access to his readers and the public sphere, especially since he will ultimately be displaced permanently through his execution. Death saturates the text as the ultimate displacement, and Turner rarely goes far without mentioning it, portraying himself as either the precipitating agent of the deaths of the white slaveholders, or as the passive recipient awaiting execution in his space of literal and figurative enclosure. Nevertheless, Turner routinely frames the massacres of the rebellion as the “work of death,” which Gray later affirms in his portion of the text. By portraying death as a duty or labor to be performed at the bequest of an external force—some work to be routinely carried out—the rebellion and the deaths become casualties of the institution of slavery, rather than agentive actions on the part of Turner, and Turner downplays his agency as both actor and author in the text. What is significant is that Turner, in spite of the exceptional circumstances that imposed authorship upon him, reveals himself to be remarkably attuned to the demands of his readership and manages to communicate both his mobility and his limitations as author in the manifestation of his black authorship. Turner's black authorship thus registers the struggle between death and the defamiliarized space of his extraordinary authorship, the placement and displacement of a man and slave entering the public sphere just as he is awaiting his own certain death.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this tension between placement and displacement is what antebellum black authors communicated through their formulations of black authorship: their knowledge that the *terra incognita* of the literary marketplace could be charted and traversed by black voices, but that those voices, affected by slavery, displacement, and alienation, must always register a struggle between death and grief—an ever-present reality for antebellum blacks—and the duty or opportunity of authorship. Death and grief, the landscape, and the inaccessibility of the white public sphere were all spaces that necessitated transcendence by the black author. By defamiliarizing these as conceptual spaces capable of black manipulation and control, Turner and Prince were able to define for themselves—and for subsequent black authors—a black authorship that was agentive and powerful, even while illuminating their own alienation from American society, generally, and the literary marketplace, specifically.

A black authorship of alienation and displacement can therefore be taken as representative of a distinct mode of self-reflexively accessing the public sphere and existing therein, emerging within (but not necessarily limited to) the 1830s. Such a mode is often attributed to later works: Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), Brown's *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave* (1847) and *Clotel* (1853); Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861); Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901); W. E. B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903); the poetry of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay; Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching* God (1937); James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* (1955); and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), to name just a few. Even when taking into account the scholarly issues of intention and authenticity, Turner and Prince thus stand at the head of a long tradition of black authorship that continues today. Decrying—and taking advantage of—the state of authorial alienation that slavery and white editorial mediation created, Turner and Prince invoke their individual representations of xenotopia and deathscapes to reveal the unique subjectivity of the black voice and its ability to co-exist alongside that of white authors and editors in the nascent public sphere of antebellum America.

CHAPTER 4

THE "RUSH OF THE AGE": ANTI-MODERNITY AND SUSTAINABLE AUTHORSHIP IN THE 1840s

In 1846, after the initial burst of success from "The Raven" found him still hustling for literary authority and juggling careers as both author and critic, Edgar Allan Poe summarized 1840s society in an article for *Graham's Magazine* with one earnest phrase: "'the *rush* of the age'" (*Essays* 1414). Poe demarcated the "ponderosity" of the previous generation's literary marketplace, which valued "the verbose, the detailed, the voluminous, the inaccessible," from the current "Magazine-ward" era that esteemed the "curt, the condensed, the pointed, the readily diffused" (*Essays* 1414–15). Taken at face value, Poe's assessment implies his submission to—or even celebration of—the phenomenon of modernity that was transforming the nation. Modernity, maintains Anthony Giddens, is indicated by a "sheer *pace of change*" (6) that reshapes traditional civilizations into modern societies, and Hilde Heynen marks modernity's underlying "attitude toward life that is associated with a continuous process of…transformation" (11). The 1840s were a time of unprecedented transformation: no longer in the tenuous postcolonial mode of the early national period, the newly confident and rapidly changing American democracy was gripped by what historian Chris Jennings calls a "surge of utopian energy" based on the "impression of endless and inevitable progress" and the anticipated modernization of the continent: "Countless people on both sides of the Atlantic believed that a new and wondrous society was about to take form in the American wilderness," a society defined by expansion, development, and acquisition (3). A restive literary generation arose eager to shed the retrospective vision that Emerson decried in *Nature* (1836) and embrace a future defined by an "original relation to the universe" (35). The modernization of the literary marketplace led to a glut of published works, as print culture adapted to the commodity culture of antebellum America.[80] The emergence of literary piracy, the explosion of magazine culture, the professionalization of literary critics, and the meteoric development of a middle class readership saw the dramatic evolution of the print sphere, greatly expanded from the relatively modest frontier traversed by Irving and Bryant only a few years earlier.[81]

From an aerial view, such rapid growth suggests a vigorous systemization of American print culture in the 1840s, obscuring the reality of, in Kennedy's words, the "messiness, complexity, and volatility of the antebellum literary world" (Introduction 3). Some Americans began questioning modernity and its potentially detrimental effect on the nascent national literature. In 1837, William Ellery Channing declared,

> The calmness, sobriety, plodding industry of our fathers, have been succeeded by a feverish restlessness. The books that are read are not the great, standard, immortal works of genius, which require calm thought, and inspire deep feeling; but ephemeral works, which are run through with a railroad rapidity, and which give a pleasure not unlike that produced by exhilarating draughts. ("On Temperance" 316)[82]

Channing articulates a sort of anti-modernity that is as much moral imperative as it is cultural nostalgia for classical (i.e. European) literature. The ephemerality that Channing identifies is, as Heynen explains, a defining quality of nineteenth-century modernity: "The notion of the modern then acquired the connotation of what is *momentary*, of the transient" (9–10). Channing's brief diatribe demarcates the parameters of how nineteenth-century thinkers defined modernity. As he conflates restlessness and transience with the railroad and all that it represents, Channing's wary eye bears witness to what Heynen calls the process of modernization, the main features of which are "technological advances and industrialization, urbanization and population explosions, the rise of bureaucracy and increasingly powerful nation states, an enormous expansion of mass communications systems, democratization, and an expanding (capitalist) world market" (11). As a theologian, Channing's stake in the issue was social and cultural: he was able to criticize his contemporary literary culture for overproducing transitory, unsophisticated refuse without having to participate in it. But for authors attempting to establish a national literature and define a space of authorship therein, anti-modernity was a more complex issue with personal implications.

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[80] Dowling's Capital Letters (2009) tracks the vast increase in "the production, distribution, and consumption of consumer goods, including printed material" in the 1840s and 1850s (1). He argues that "proliferation and diversification" of the book market "developed more open laissez-faire competition" in the literary marketplace by midcentury (6).

[81] For more on print media's technological advances that led to the rapid growth of the antebellum literary marketplace, see Dowling's Capital Letters (2009) and Charles Sellers' The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846 (1991).

[82] This quote is from respected Unitarian preacher and speaker Dr. William Ellery Channing (1780–1842), not to be confused with his nephew, Transcendentalist poet and Thoreau confidante William Ellery Channing (1817–1901).

This chapter examines the ways in which major authors—Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—engaged with the notion of anti-modernity in their works of the 1840s, grappling with the "*rush* of the age" as they explored the ruinous potentiality of modernity: the excesses, wastefulness, and fragmentation that threatened a sustainable authorship. Now past the postcolonial predicament of Irving and Bryant, and with unparalleled publishing opportunities not available to Prince and Turner, the authorial displacement of Poe and Longfellow was a consequence of modernity: they conceptualized the author's plight in relation to major transitional shifts in the modern world that they found both compelling and unnerving, and that seemed to present the serious author with opportunities as well as dangers. Heynen asserts that modernity is "constantly in conflict with tradition, elevating the struggle for change to the status of purveyor of meaning par excellence" (10). Both genuine innovators and ambitious, career-minded writers invested in the progress of the nation's literary future, paradoxically, Poe and Longfellow shared a backward-looking fascination with bygone traditions, things long dead and the uncanny persistence of those things, and aesthetic forms that express a continuity between past and present. Such interests put them in direct conflict with their rapidly modernizing society.

In a continued effort to recenter the author within antebellum authorship, I contend that Poe and Longfellow exhibited an ethic of ecoconsciousness toward both natural and cultural environments that I call "sustainable authorship," an ambivalent paradigm of anti-modernity and authorial resistance to the excesses of progress in the pursuit of a new American literature. A proto-ecological orientation toward what Whalen calls the "crisis of surplus" in the 1840s literary marketplace, this anti-modernity extended outward toward the conservation of the American land, as both authors framed an idealized nature operating ecosystemically as *terra omnis*, a unified, integrated "whole earth" unscathed by modernity (11). But, more importantly, the anti-modernity of Poe and Longfellow collapsed inward to an ecological authorial interiority that was recorded in xenotopic depictions of American land and defamiliarized death. Within the milieu of literary modernity, the xenotopic deathscapes of Poe and Longfellow were spaces of strange, ruinous excesses and fragmentation that recorded their unique anxieties over 1840s authorship and the consequences of modernization threatening their own individual authorship.

Furthermore, I argue that the ethos behind Poe's and Longfellow's sustainable authorship is an early demonstration of systems thinking,[83] an ecosystemic paradigm for understanding both the natural American environment and the environment of the 1840s literary marketplace as larger systems or constellations of thinking and being that were potentially sustainable. In this view, ecological and literary sustainability acted as homologies for one another, continuous or allied parts of a single coherent endeavor: imagining sustainability in one sphere (the conservation of the natural environment) was entirely operative in another sphere (the preservation of American literary culture and/or authorial integrity and legacy). Long before scholars identify a formal ecological movement in American literature, Poe and Longfellow exhibited ecoconsciousness in their views of both natural and cultural ecosystems—the American environment or the 1840s literary ecosystem—being threatened or consumed by the waste and excess endemic to modernization. In identifying such problems, Poe and Longfellow, in early displays of systems thinking, provide separate ecosystemic solutions defined in opposition to one another: Poe envisions an elite ecosystem of transregional American writers transcending geographical and ideological restrictions and Boston cronyism in a web of mutual support, while Longfellow imagines a transnational, non-hierarchical, and referential ecosystem of authors, readers, forms, and themes that is global in scale and chronological in scope. The development of sustainable authorship not only marks the late 1840s as a space of authorial preservationism, but it also positions Poe and Longfellow as the vanguard of a sustainability movement, specific to American literature but with broader cultural implications extending to the land and commodity culture, with which later authors—Melville, Hawthorne, and Whitman more contemporaneously, but also Frost, Muir, and Leopold—are conventionally linked. While continuing or further developing the tropes of xenotopia and deathscapes, Poe and Longfellow were nonetheless evolving into a new space of viewing American authorship as its own ecological sphere requiring an ethos of conservation and an ethic of sustainability.

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[83] Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi define the characteristics of systems thinking as: a shift in perspective from the parts to the whole, from objects to relationships, from measuring to mapping, from quantities to qualities, from structures to processes, and from Cartesian certainty to approximate knowledge (80–82).

The Place of Ecocriticism in Antebellum Authorship Studies

By examining the ecoconsciousness of Poe and Longfellow, this chapter works at the juncture of authorship studies and ecocriticism, two fields that are rarely synthesized, and seeks to present this juncture as an important methodology for further development. More specifically, I contend that sustainability studies provides a fresh interpretive angle via which to consider these authors' anxieties over the problematic effects of modernity on their contemporary natural and cultural environments. Scholars have begun to call for a more forceful integration of sustainability studies into literary studies in general.[84] Jayne Archer appeals to scholars to "move beyond studies of the representation of the environment in literature and instead foster a two-way conversation" about how "the environment authors its writers and those writers author their environment" (1–3). Gillen Wood argues that the entire sustainability enterprise is dependent on humanists raising and answering questions about "the historical and material interdependence of human and natural systems" (13–14). Without this historical understanding, Wood concludes, scientific data alone will never be able to bring about the necessary social changes implicit in the endeavor of the study of sustainability (10). There have been significant recent developments toward integrating sustainability studies into literary criticism.[85] However, there is yet to be a theory of antebellum authorship that unites both ecocritical and authorship angles, particularly as it represents an evolution from the democratic and hemispheric authorship of the 1820s and 1830s to a more ecologically-determined and conservative conception of the authorial role.

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[84] See John P. O'Grady's "How Sustainable is the Idea of Sustainability?" (2003), Olli Loukola and Simo Kyllönen's "The Philosophies of Sustainability" (2005), and Sacha Kagan's Art and Sustainability: Connecting Patterns for a Culture of Complexity (2011).

[85] For a provocative integration of scientific data with literary criticism, see Marcus Rockoff and Simon Meisch's examination of the little ice age of 1400-1850 in "Climate Change in Early Modern Literature. Which Place for Humanities in the Sustainability Sciences?" (2015). Rob Friedman models a paradigm of literary ecology rooted in American Studies that questions how ecocriticism can fully engage with ecology in "Metaphors of Measurement: Indirection and the Sublime" (2013). Jesse Curran's "Transcendental Meditation" (2013) applies the sustainability movement to Dickinson and Thoreau, arguing for a tradition of American meditative ecological awareness.

Moreover, this chapter operates at another unconventional juncture in American Studies. Though as authors they rose to prominence along the same chronological arc, Poe and Longfellow (born only two years apart) are rarely considered together unless in discussion of what Kent Ljungquist and Buford Jones call the "Poe–Longfellow War" (402), a one-sided affair in which Poe publicly denounced Longfellow on charges of plagiarism, didacticism, and nepotism, and about which Longfellow upheld "a dignified silence" (Meyers 173).[86] Until Poe's death in 1849, however, they were as much contemporaries as competitors. Both began publishing minor poems in the mid–1820s, then more extensively in the 1830s and 1840s.[87] Both maintained what Jackson calls "multi-vocational profiles," a continuous combination of both writing and other forms of income, such as Longfellow's professorships at Bowdoin and Harvard and Poe's various editorships (*Business* 17). And, though both enjoyed some measure of success at the time, they lamented the economic woes of the overcrowded, progressive 1840s literary marketplace.[88] At a personal level, both were significantly haunted by losses, most notably the tragic deaths of their wives. In many ways, they were more similar than not.

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[86] In the 1840s, Poe repeatedly accused Longfellow of plagiarism. Even though 1845 was, as Jackson estimates, his own annus mirabilis ("'Rage'" 53), Poe continuously criticized Longfellow, calling him the "GREAT MOGUL of the Imitators" and declaring him "vastly overrated" ("Longfellow's Poems" 131). For more on the Poe–Longfellow War, see Ljungquist and Jones' "The Identity of 'Outis': A Further Chapter in the Poe–Longfellow War" (1988), Edward J. Piacentino's "The Poe–Longfellow Plagiarism Controversy: A New Critical Notice in The Southern Chronicle" (1989), and Paul Lewis's "Longfellow's Serenity and Poe's Prediction: An Antebellum Turning Point" (2012).

[87] While working as a reviewer/critic for various magazines in the 1830s and 1840s, Poe became increasingly visible as a writer, peaking in 1845: "The publication of 'The Raven' in January and of Tales and The Raven and Other Poems by Wiley and Putnam later in the year, control of the Broadway Journal, and the sensation made by the publication, at the end of the year, of 'Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar' put Poe in the public's eye as never before" (Jackson, "'Rage'" 53). As early as 1842, Longfellow was considered among the top American poets, selected as one of only five poets for the frontispiece of Griswold's The Poets and Poetry of America (1842), along with William Cullen Bryant, Richard Henry Dana, Sr., Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Charles Sprague (Velella 145). By the mid–1840s, Longfellow had published poetry, plays, travel essays, textbooks, and a novel (Velella 145–46).

[88] In 1841, Poe derided the "horrid laws of political economy [that] cannot be evaded even by the inspired" (Works 410), and Whalen argues that Poe was "entangled in [a] web of economic distress" (21). Though Longfellow fared better financially due to his teaching income, this divided attention created what Rob Velella says was a "substantial

Though traversing the same cultural sphere in much the same manner, Poe and Longfellow were nonetheless vastly different figures,[89] and yet many of those differences indicate their contemporaneousness as much as do their similarities. As we now well know, during the antebellum era, Poe and Longfellow were both very attuned to the rising professionalization of literature, though they occupied quite different positions vis-à-vis the literary marketplace. Poe struggled for recognition, respect, and dollars, damaging his reputation among his contemporaries by waging a cantankerous and unrelenting battle in the public sphere against the powerful Boston literary establishment (P. Lewis 146). Conversely, Longfellow was tremendously successful and held, as Mary Louise Kete advises, "considerable cultural authority" in mid–nineteenth century America (134). Stylistically, as Poe was keen to point out, they employed quite different poetics.[90] Perhaps owing to these differences, they were well versed in one another's work by the early 1840s. Prior to his many excoriating reviews of Longfellow's work, an ambivalent (or perhaps politic or calculated) Poe wrote to Longfellow in 1841 of his "fervent admiration which [your] genius has inspired in me," and in 1842 he declared Longfellow "unquestionably the best poet in America" (qtd. in Meyers 171). Longfellow reciprocated, writing Poe, "You are mistaken in supposing that you are not 'favorably known to me.' On the contrary, all that I have read from your pen has inspired me with a high idea of your power; and I think you are destined to stand among the first romance-writers of the country, if

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drain on his personal time" (143). Longfellow complained in 1840 that Nathaniel Parker Willis "'says he has made ten thousand dollars the last year by his writings. I wish I had made ten hundred'" (qtd. in Velella 145).

[89] In terms of their personalities, Longfellow was well known for his gentle spirit and placid demeanor, with James Russell Lowell taking note of his "absolute sweetness, simplicity, and modesty" (qtd. in Scudder 84). Poe, on the other hand, though intellectually fascinating and sometimes charming and gentile, was nonetheless noted for being melancholic, erratic in conversation, and particularly coarse and vulgar when drinking (Alfriend 491).

[90] In his review of Longfellow's Ballads, Poe censored Longfellow for his "aim of instruction, or truth," when the pure aim of poetry should be "the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty…With the Intellect or with the Conscience it has only collateral relations" (249–50).

such be your aim" (*Life* 1: 390–91). Upon Poe's death, Longfellow (perhaps equally politic or calculated) wrote to a friend, "What a melancholy death is that of Mr. Poe,—a man so richly endowed with genius!" and dismissed Poe's public censure as "the irritation of a sensitive nature chafed by some indefinite sense of wrong" (*Life* 2: 161). Though rooted in their aesthetic differences, Poe's animosity toward Longfellow was undoubtedly informed by Longfellow's financial success and what Jeffrey Meyers calls his "secure but inflated reputation" (172).[91] As George Rex Graham wrote to Longfellow, "'Your wealth is sufficient to settle your damnation so far as Mr. Poe may be presumed capable of effecting it'" (qtd. in Frank and Magistrale 210).

In an interesting inversion, the twentieth century saw a rise in the valuation of Poe's work just as Longfellow fell out of favor sometime in the late nineteenth century, perhaps around the time Henry James dismissed him as "bland and mildly anecdotical [sic]…not quite a Tintoretto of verse" (47). In the academy, Kete observes, Longfellow soon came to function "as the antitype (the not-Poe and the not-Whitman) of the American poet" (133), denounced, as Christoph Irmscher notes, for being "shallow, unoriginal, predictable…relentlessly accessible" (Introduction 1). Only within the last decade or so has a resurgence of Longfellow scholarship reinserted him into critical conversations (much due to Irmscher's efforts),[92] though with one key caveat: as Irmscher firmly declares, "…we all agree that we no longer want a Longfellow who comes to us festooned with the garlands of respectability" (Introduction 2). Instead, such works are shedding important new light on Longfellow as a man connected to and opinionated about his own era: analyzing his relationship to and consideration of his readers, reconfiguring the terms of his success through his representation by his critics and publishers and his own shrewd financial management, and placing him within the currents of important social and political issues of his time such as Native American removal, labor rights, and slavery.[93] Longfellow is being re-placed both in his own time and our own critical moment.

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[91] In the early 1840s, Longfellow was consistently selling poems for $15 to $20 each to magazines like the Knickerbocker, and in just a few short years, his national reputation had increased significantly enough that Graham's was paying him $50 per poem (Velella 145).

[92] See Charles Calhoun's Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life (2004), Irmscher's Longfellow Redux (2006) and Public Poet, Private Man: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at 200 (2009), and Irmscher and Arbour's anthology Reconsidering Longfellow (2014).

Contributing to the critical recovery of Longfellow, this chapter continues in recentering the author within authorship studies, focusing on Longfellow's (as well as Poe's) conception and navigation of authorship in the burgeoning modernity of the 1840s. And, though he is much better represented in American Studies scholarship, this chapter nonetheless contributes new work to Poe studies in two ways: first, by looking at Poe through an ecocritical approach, and second, by interrogating some of Poe's lesser known or less critically examined works: *The Journal of Julius Rodman* (1840), "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" (1841), the "Autography" series (1842), the *Doings of Gotham* series (1844), "The Valley of Unrest" (1845), "The Living Writers of America" manuscripts (1846–47), and "The Domain of Arnheim" (1847). And, most importantly, this chapter analyzes the synthesis between these two authors, illuminating their anxiety over literary sustainability informed by a shared anti-modernity and an ecosystemic approach to the 1840s literary marketplace.

Despite their contemporaneous intersections, contradictions, and exchanges, and regardless of the resurgence in Longfellow scholarship, scholars find little commonality between Poe and Longfellow. In one of the most important (of only a handful) of treatments on Poe and Longfellow, Paul Lewis compares their "dueling poetics," making the case that the "serene singing" of Longfellow's poetry "served to goad Poe to push beyond the confines of established literary practice and craft new genres at the nexus of mystery, humor, and fear" (146). In Lewis's estimation, so entangled were these authors that we have Longfellow to thank for the most salient innovations of Poe. It is Poe's "career-long engagement with his far more admired and successful contemporary [Longfellow]," declares Lewis, that marks a "turning point in United States literary history: a dramatic shift toward modernity" (145). Of course, Lewis refers here to twentieth-century literary or epistemological modernity, "with its deep suspicions about objectivity, truth, and piety," but his argument rests on modernity as a line of demarcation between a pre-modern or traditional Longfellow and a modern-reaching Poe (151). I argue, however, that it is precisely modernity that unifies Poe and Longfellow and their conception of American authorship; more precisely, it was their shared *anti-modernity*—anxiety over the ruinous potential to both author and environment of industrialization, urbanization, commodification, and the philosophical shift brought on by the age of Jacksonian expansionism and progress—that they expressed through xenotopia and deathscapes.

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[93] In "Feeling, Controlling, and Transcending: The Negotiation of Sentiment in Longfellow, Poe, and Whitman" (2014), Lloyd Willis argues that the antebellum reading audience hijacked Longfellow's political agency of sentimentalism in The Song of Hiawatha. Velella's "Figures Other Than Figures of Speech: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Pursuit of Financial Success" (2014) looks at Longfellow's shrewd management of his career and finances, while John Morton tracks the ways in which Longfellow courted celebrity culture in "Longfellow, Tennyson, and Transatlantic Celebrity" (2015).

Scholars have indeed noted Poe's and Longfellow's skepticism of modernity, albeit separately. Critics have long identified in Poe the decidedly *non*-American—an attraction to ancient/European settings and a fascination with aristocracy and gentility—which has cast Poe as backward looking, out of synch with the forward momentum of Transcendentalism and democracy and disconnected from his own era. New work is updating the way we view Poe's resistance to modernity, particularly in relationship to the publishing industry. Erkkilä asserts that he was engaged in a "deeply moral, philosophical, and ultimately metaphysical critique not only of the culture and politics of democracy in the Age of Jackson but of modernity and a whole view of Western progressive history grounded in Enlightenment reason" ("Perverting" 69). As she affirms, Poe developed an aesthetic and cultural value system that pushed against the didactic and democratic imperatives of the 1840s, one that is "essentially conservative, hierarchical, and agrarian in its fear of democracy, the mob, the city, and modernity" (90).[94] Though noted as a more market-savvy purveyor of American literary nationalism, Longfellow has also been rendered as out of step with the post-Jacksonian era, "detached from contemporary America, more effectively insulated against the electric currents of the times" (Parrington 440). Twentieth-century scholars discussed his derivation from European folklore and mythology and his intention to connect America with European cultures. Recent Longfellow scholarship has sought to prove him as a more engaged observer, recorder, and critic of antebellum political and social culture, reading an ethic of anti-expansionism in his treatment of Native American removal and the Mexican–American War.[95] Despite these studies, Poe and Longfellow have yet to be collated in a treatment of anti-modernity as an epistemological trend, particularly as it relates to authorship as a broad category of being rather than merely the circumstances of their individual authorial encounters. This chapter addresses this critical juncture.

Ecoconsciousness and Poe's Authorial Ecosystem

There may be no single author who was more thoroughly engaged with—nor better suited to exemplify—American authorship and the inner workings of the literary marketplace in the 1840s than Edgar Allan Poe. Beginning his career exclusively as a poet, he adapted to the market's rapid evolution throughout the 1830s and early 1840s, trying his hand at most available genres and forms as he increasingly withdrew from the expansion and excess of the modernizing nation. During the last decade of his career, an enterprising and hungry Poe continued to perfect and disseminate his two defining genres (poetry and short stories) while ever seeking new methods and manners of publication. Poe's career, declares McGill, "inscribes a circular path from anonymity to notoriety that encompasses virtually all the forms of publishing that were prevalent in this era" (151).[96] But Poe could never fully sustain himself economically or professionally on writing alone, and the specific concept of sustainability became a self-referential watchword for his later career. In order to survive, he extended his reach into the publishing sphere by working in sundry editorial positions at the most influential magazines of the day (most notably the *Southern Literary Messenger, Burton's Gentleman's Magazine,* and *Graham's Magazine*), all the while attempting to secure funding to launch and edit his own journal. Rather than perpetuate the "fundamental misrepresentation" of Poe as "separate…from the American scene," or his poetry and fiction as "inherently disconnected from antebellum culture," Kennedy proposes that we should view Poe as the preeminent "shrewd, peripatetic author-journalist" of his day, "immersed in and responsive to the magazine market as well as the national pressures and preoccupations it embodied" (Introduction 2–3). This resulted in Poe coming to "know the landscape, the odd geography of the cultural space he inhabited, better than any other litterateur of his time" (Kennedy, "Inventing" 29). It was out of Poe's vast authorial and editorial experience that he was provided a front row seat to the changes and excesses wrought by modernity, and thus out of which his anti-modernity evolved, a slow and continuous withdrawal into an ever-narrowing ethic of sustainability that was applicable to both natural and cultural/literary environments. Just as the deleterious effects of modernity threatened the natural landscape of America, Poe stressed, so did it similarly threaten the author.

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[94] For more on Poe's anti-modernism, see James M. Hutchisson's discussion of Poe's Southern affiliations and Gregory Hays's look at Poe in the context of "Ancient Classics" in Edgar Allan Poe in Context (2013); and Darlene Harbour Unrue's "Edgar Allan Poe: The Romantic as Classicist" (1995).

[95] For example, Lauren Simek's "The Sounds of Narrative in Longfellow's Evangeline" (2014) reads Longfellow's gesture of resistance against American exceptionalism, while Irmscher's anthology seeks to correct abiding myths that an aloof Longfellow lived a life removed from the political and social challenges of his time (Introduction 4).

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[96] Besides his many critical reviews and well-known works of literary criticism, Poe extended his reach into genres running the gamut from philosophy ("The Philosophy of Furniture," 1840) to journalistic hoax ("The Balloon-Hoax," 1844), fictionalized journal/adventure story (The Journal of Julius Rodman, 1840), history ("Some Account of Stonehenge," 1840), metaphysical treatise and political satire (Eureka: A Prose Poem, 1848), travel essay ("Morning on the Wissahiccon," 1844), collected marginalia ("Marginalia," 1845–49), literary gossip ("The Literati of New York City," 1846), literary history ("The Living Writers of America," 1847), various adaptations of extant works, assorted plate articles, and even a textbook on seashells (The Conchologist's First Book, 1839).

By the 1840s, Poe exhibited an ecoconsciousness that was at once personal, intellectual, and even experiential, rooted in his admiration of nature, his fascination with science and natural history, and his authorial imagination. Poe has not been conventionally associated with the predictable cadre of nineteenth-century nature writers and philosophers like Emerson and Thoreau. While he has been well represented within recent authorship studies,[97] there is, as Matthew A. Taylor asserts, a continued exclusion of Poe from ecocritical discourse (363).[98] And, yet, Poe was a self-professed nature enthusiast, and not just from behind the pen; in a line that could be lifted from Thoreau's "Walking," Poe describes to a friend his "customary *passions*…for vagabondizing through the woods for a week or a month together" (qtd. in Meyers 75). In "Unpublished Recollections of Edgar Allan Poe" (1901), Edward M. Alfriend declared that "Poe's love of nature amounted to a passion," recording Poe as stating, "'Nature rests me, I always find a calm with nature that I seek in vain everywhere else, and no matter how great my perturbation, she never fails to bring me peace'" (491).

Even if such secondhand accounts may seem dubious or apocryphal, Poe's regard for nature can be traced throughout his work, as well. Associated more with his dark depictions of ancient landscapes or urban dystopias, Poe’s work also abounds with elaborate descriptions of venerated landscapes and reverence toward the natural sublime. Such can be found in his story/essay “The Island of the Fay” (1841), wherein Poe’s narrator recalls the “happiness experienced in the contemplation of natural scenery” (285). He goes on to juxtapose nature with a humankind framed as both burden to and aesthetic blight upon the land: “To me, at least, the presence—not of human life only, but of life in any other form than that of the green things which grow upon the soil and are voiceless—is a stain upon the landscape—is at war with the genius of the scene” (285). Due to the ambiguous essay-like nature of the story, parsing out Poe’s ideologies from the narrator’s panegyric proves impossible. Nonetheless, whether denoting his true beliefs, a function of his literary imagination, or strategic narration, Poe articulates a systems-thinking-based view of venerated nature:

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[97] See McGill's American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting (2003); Whalen's Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America (1999); and Kennedy and McGann's anthology, Poe and the Remapping of Antebellum Print Culture (2012).

[98] There have been a few ecocritical advances directed at Poe in the last decade, including: Lee Rozelle's Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Oddworld (2006); Tom J. Hillard's "'Deep into That Darkness Peering': An Essay on Gothic Nature" (2009); and Taylor's "The Nature of Fear: Edgar Allan Poe and Posthuman Ecology" (2012).

> I love, indeed, to regard the dark valleys, and the gray rocks, and the waters that silently smile, and the forests that sigh in uneasy slumbers, and the proud watchful mountains that look down upon all,—I love to regard these as themselves but the colossal members of one vast animate and sentient whole—a whole whose form (that of the sphere) is the most perfect and most inclusive of all… (285)

Systems theory, as defined by Capra and Luisi, is a way of thinking in terms of connectedness, relationships, patterns, and context: from parts to the whole, from objects to relationships, from objective knowledge to contextual knowledge, from structure to process, and from contents to patterns (10). In this passage, Poe emphasizes the circularity patterned in the natural world. He elevates the individual components of nature, but only insofar as they contribute to and operate as a sum of interconnected parts that perpetuate as a sentient whole with a single, shared center, a “cycle within cycle without end,—yet all revolving around one far-distant centre…” (286). In this essay/story, which bears no trace of a satirical tone or intent, Poe demonstrates his ecoconsciousness as both an admiration for nature, as well as an ecosystemic view of an interconnected universe—views which he replicated in 1848's *Eureka*.

As he continually expressed his anti-modernity, Poe's ecoconsciousness expanded beyond a purported love of nature and evidenced what we now think of as ecological sustainability, an ethos that undergirded his interest in the concept of literary sustainability. Poe's view of the modernizing American landscape provided an appropriate analog to the American literary marketplace as an environment being threatened or consumed by modernity. In "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" (1841), Poe takes a more generic analogical approach as he critiques the modernization of a society undergoing an industrial capitalist shift, noting the "great 'movement'" leading to the "most evil of all our evil days" in which beauty and taste are consumed by the utilitarianism of an "omni-prevalent Democracy" (451). Poe first evinces a conservationist attitude when describing a pre-modern, undefiled landscape absent of the impress of humankind: "holy, august and blissful days, when blue rivers ran undammed, between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes, primæval, odorous, and unexplored" (451). He suggests this pristine pastoral *terra omnis* is the environment in which the "poetic intellect—that intellect…most exalted of all" is best nurtured and proceeds into the realm of philosophy (450).

However, decries Poe, modernity threatens both natural and literary environments. He portrays the mores undergirding modernity as wreaking both psychologically and physiologically harmful effects upon the poets, as they began "living and perishing amid the scorn of the 'utilitarians'" (450). In Poe's estimation, modernization impairs that interior space of authorship in which a creative genius must marshal his resources to produce pure aesthetic beauty and art, but it also manifests in corporeal harm and/or the starvation or death of the artist. Poe marks a concomitant modern phenomenon he calls "*gradation*" in which humankind "grew infected with system, and with abstraction" and developed a "childish exultation at his acquired and still-increasing dominion over [Nature's] elements" (451). While the "huge smoking cities arose, innumerable" as the inherent outcome of urbanization, Poe effects the mournful tone of an ecologist, noting the very real ecological degradation accompanying industrialization and resulting in nature's xenotopic transformation: "Green leaves shrank before the hot breath of furnaces. The fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease" (451). As man seizes hegemonic control over Nature, claims Poe, so do the inherent values of Art (taste, beauty, purity) correspondingly decrease in gradations: "…we had worked out our own destruction in the perversion of our *taste,* or rather in the blind neglect of its culture" (451). At this point in time, Poe's ecoconsciousness pushes against the industrial spirit of post-Jacksonian America, and he begins to define his authorial consciousness in opposition to that ethos, suggesting that the sustainability of the natural environment is intricately bound with the sustainability of both the integrity of American literature and the psychology and even mortality of the author. In short, both the author and the landscape necessitate protection from modernity.

Invoking the term "sustainability" in relation to Poe and Longfellow is a complex issue. Such use risks imposing an anachronistic paradigm on a nineteenth century point of view. Complicating use of the term "sustainability" is the general lack of agreement among ecocritics over a definition of sustainability in twenty-first century scholarship. As O'Grady points out, the only real consensus among scientists is that the notion of sustainability itself "is riddled with uncertainty" (3). Buell advises that sustainability as an ethical position is problematic, as it makes assumptions about how future generations will operate and what they will want or need, as well the idea that an ethic of sustainability runs contrary to the fact that nature itself does not remain stable (*Future* 85). Nonetheless, many scholars begin with and return to the "'social scientific' approach" to defining sustainability, first issued in the 1987 Brundtland Report: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to met their own needs" (qtd. in Norton 169). A second off-cited definition operates from a perspective deeply rooted in scientific ecology:

> Sustainability is a relationship between dynamic human economic systems and larger dynamic but, normally, slower-changing ecological systems in which (a) human life can continue indefinitely; (b) human individuals can flourish; (c) human cultures can develop; but in which (d) effects of human activities remain within bounds, so as not to destroy the diversity, complexity, and function of the ecological life support system. (Costanza 332–33)

Within the last decade, scholars have begun to envision the interdisciplinary potential of sustainability studies and have relaxed the rigid boundaries of a hard-and-fast scientific definition, positing sustainability as: "…long-term survival and wellbeing [sic] in general, both for human civilization and the rest of nature" (Atkisson 304); "…merely justice with respect to future generations" (Costanza 332); and a "dynamic process of coevolution rather than a static state" (Capra and Luisi 353). Such inclusive formulations allow for sustainability as a concept (and sustainability studies as an organized approach) to be adapted to the humanities without fully disregarding the ecological core on which it was first constructed and still depends.

I propose to adopt Tim Delaney's interdisciplinary definition of sustainability, with one critical caveat. Delaney explains sustainability as "the ability of an ecosystem to hold, endure, or bear the weight of a wide variety of social and natural forces which could compromise its healthy operation" (4); I argue that if we take the term "ecosystem" out of the realm of the science of ecology and broaden it to refer to any complex network or interconnected system, then his definition provides the baseline for what Poe and Longfellow envisioned in terms of sustainable authorship: the ability of the various cultural ecosystems—the ecosystem of authorship, the ecosystem of the literary marketplace, and the ecosystem of American literature—to maintain a healthy, vital operation amidst the changes of modernization. Systems thinking thus underlies the concept of sustainable authorship in that it provides these authors a way of defining the ideal of American authorship as an integrated whole, a mode or philosophy of preservational thinking beyond the sum of individual parts, i.e. the contributions of single texts by authors disconnected from one another and/or the environment.

With this in mind, we see Poe's emerging ecological thought grow more specific and concentrated—rooted in actual North American geography—as the 1840s progressed. Like most popular writers of his time, Scott Peeples finds, Poe "was a city dweller throughout his career," and either in spite of or because of this fact, he was uniquely positioned to comment on the excesses of urbanization from his experiences in five of America's largest cities (101). His darkly imaginative scenes of urban decay and anonymity figured heavily in his work, from the gritty melancholy of Paris in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) to the Gothic dystopia of "The City in the Sea" (1845). Poe's career, maintains Jonathan Arac, "depended on a primary fact of modern American life: the growth of cities," and the new conditions of crowded, fast-paced, and impersonal modern life established a "heightened sense of personal interiority and a need to define and cherish particularity" (71, 73). For Poe, the modernization of cities illuminated the need for sustainability, as applied to the natural environment but also to self-preservationism of authorial agency and longevity.

In 1844's *Doings of Gotham* series, his journalistic account of New York City for the *Columbia Spy*, Poe identifies the rapid changes to Manhattan being wrought by urbanization. After first noting the "picturesque" Manhattan shore, he remarks with wistful conservationism, "I could not look on the magnificent cliffs, and stately trees, which at every moment met my view, without a sigh for their inevitable doom—inevitable and swift. In twenty years, or thirty at farthest, we shall see here nothing more romantic than shipping, warehouses, and wharves" ("Letter III"). Here Poe laments modernization's consumption of the natural environment. Imagining himself as a natural adventurer–philosopher who had "been roaming far and wide over this island of Mannahatta," Poe marks the "certain air of rocky sterility" that "to me conveys the sublime," a romanticization of the unique natural features of the American landscape ("Letter I"). Poe further eulogizes the old wooden mansions on the eastern face of the island, inveighing against the "spirit of Improvement" that has "withered them with its acrid breath" and found streets "already 'mapped' through them" and reduced to mere "'town-lots'" ("Letter I").

Poe distinguishes the cartographer's utilitarian interpretation of land from the poet's perspective, imbued with a reverence for beauty. Identifying an imbalance between the commodification at the heart of urban sprawl and both the natural and cultural heritage of America's recent historical past, Poe criticizes the utilitarianism and anti-aestheticism of post-Jacksonian mores that regarded function and use value over preservation and beauty: "In some thirty years every noble cliff will be a pier, and the whole island will be densely desecrated by buildings of brick, with portentous *facades* of brown-stone" ("Letter I"). Here Poe's interest in sustainability comes to the fore. Peeples identifies the "socially conservative outlook" that Poe conveys in the *Doings of Gotham* series, as he "seems sympathetic to the mythical 'Great Unmoved' amidst the constant motion of New York" (109). And while observing the constant motion of cities firsthand provided him an ecological sensibility, logging time in the nation's major publishing centers, both North and South—from Richmond to Boston to Baltimore back to Richmond to New York to Philadelphia and back to New York—allowed Poe to contextualize the effects of modernization on the author and the fragmented and oversaturated antebellum publishing sphere (not just from one insulated regional perspective) and continually refine his conception of what American literature should be and the author’s role therein. I argue that the social conservatism that Peeples identifies reflects Poe’s overarching interest in sustainability that extends to the American literary marketplace specifically and the North American landscape in general.

It is important not to overstate Poe’s ecoconsciousness as an isolated focus on natural sustainability. For Poe, the fate of the American land provided a metaphorical conduit for his more urgent, philosophical concern over the fate and sustainability of the American author, and it is necessary to keep his notion of sustainable authorship in the foreground. Erkkilä maintains that the ecoconsciousness exhibited in “The Colloquy of Monos and Una”—the “tone of mournfulness and the theme of disintegration”—should be read as Poe’s “melancholic response to the loss of a whole way of southern life…under the pressure of democratic and specifically northern industrial transformation” (“Perverting” 72). Poe did watch the breakdown of the South with sadness, marking the havoc wreaked by the changes of modernization upon endangered Southern culture, stating in 1835, “…the glory of the Ancient Dominion is in a fainting—is in a dying condition” (“Minor’s” 66). But I contend that, while Poe’s connection to the land was both ecologically and ideologically driven, his emphasis on sustainability was less geographically sentimental than it was epistemologically and personally threatening. While he exhibited concern over the conservation of Southern land and culture, the same ethic of anti-modernity—an anxiety over Northern industrialization, urbanization, and wasteful excess driven ideologically by progress and expansionism—extended to the preservation of the Southern (or Western or non-Bostonian) American author. The anxieties behind Poe’s notion of sustainable authorship were thus multi-faceted, involving resentment of Northern intrusion, a general sense of the threat of modernity, a possibly authentic environmentalism, and his own ambitions and fears as an author.

It is through his engagement with Longfellow, the archetype of Bostonian literary elitism, that Poe most forcefully defined sustainable authorship and its importance to a future American literature. In the early 1840s, Poe variously censured Longfellow for not creating literature that was viable beyond the present moment. In reviewing *Voices of the Night*, Poe declared him incapable of sustaining "any well-founded monument—any enduring reputation" due to his being "singularly deficient in all those important faculties which give artistical power, and without which never was immortality effected" (100). As Poe saw it, the aim of an undertaking of American literature was literary sustainability that could only be accomplished through a systems-thinking based methodology, and Longfellow operated outside of the ideal ecosystemic paradigm of a unified authorship and/or literary endeavor: "He has no combining force. He has absolutely nothing of unity" (100). In his review of *Hyperion*, Poe further charged, "We grant him high qualities, but deny him *the Future*. In the present instance, without design, without shape, without beginning, middle, or end, what earthly object has his book accomplished? —what definite impression has it left?" (227). As the various parts of his work (in Poe's estimation) did not cohere into a compelling and significant whole, Poe insists that Longfellow will not uphold beyond the immediate literary generation. Sustainability of one's work—succeeding into "*the Future*"—was the ultimate goal of authorship, i.e. the self-preservation of the author. But just as modernity posed a threat to ecological sustainability, so did it threaten literary sustainability. In Poe's estimation, Longfellow had fallen victim to modernity's effects.

Poe's personal struggles in the literary marketplace have been well documented, and he directed his acerbic criticism variously toward individuals and individual publications. But by the mid–1840s, he ascribed his authorial problems and the lack of a definitive American literature to an overarching culture of modernization occurring during the Jacksonian era: its ideological push toward progress and expansion, and the potentially uncontainable excesses it created. As early as “Tales of the Folio Club” of 1832–33, Erkkilä claims, Poe was undertaking a “dark and at times savagely comic critique of some of the worst excesses of barbarism, violence, and genocide that were committed under the regime of Jackson in the name of democratic progress, the will of the people, and westward advance” (“Perverting” 74–75). Eventually Poe began to view those excesses as a direct threat to authorship (the methodological practice and psychological state) and the individual author. “To be appreciated you must be *read*,” Poe remarked, and several factors endemic to modernity endangered that fundamental quality of authorial survival. Due to advances in print and transportation technologies, as well as population growth and geographic expansion, there was an explosion of new journals and magazines in the 1840s. An excess of literary texts soon flooded the marketplace and brought with them a “vast increase in the thinking material…more facts, more to think about,” Poe bemoaned in 1845 (*Works* 404). He pondered the “illimitable” power and province of the “magazine prison-house” (*Essays* 1036) and later expressed the scope of large newspapers’ influence “probably beyond all calculation” (qtd. in Lee 237). In Poe’s eyes, the increase in printed material corresponded to a decrease in quality standards, as he derided “the *cheap* literature of the day” (“Stylus” 3).[99] The crisis of literary surplus introduced market competition to the literary marketplace, creating what Poe identified as the “sad poverty & the thousand consequent contumelies & other ills” for “poor-devil authors” who suffered from insufficient remuneration and critical hostility (qtd. in Whalen 21). Maurice S. Lee explains the quantitative and organizational problem Poe confronted when trying to “make sense of the vastness of print culture” that threatened to “increase, not organize, the information chaos of the age” (236). As Poe expressed it, the byproduct of an excess of both literary works and publications was to render print culture “obfuscating and unknowable” (Lee 237). Without tangible, finite parameters to navigate the literary marketplace, authorship became less of an actionable vocation and more a vague, devalued, and threatened space of interiority.

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[99] It was not just American works over-saturating the market; as Andrew Levy argues, due to a lack of copyright protection, Poe conducted an intensive campaign in the mid–1840s against “the international copyright laws that created penurious conditions for American authors by allowing publishers legally to pirate British work” and thus reduce publishing opportunities for legitimate and meritorious American literature (18–19).

Poe also saw the modernization of the literary marketplace negatively affecting critical responses and reviews meant to sustain the values of art and good taste. The mass middle-class readership—the “mob,” the “demagogue-ridden public,” the “rabble,” Poe scorned (qtd. in Whalen 9)—grew more powerful, feeding a celebrity culture he obsessed over, both drawn to and repelled its “illusion of vitality and validity…sustained through legerdemain, machinery, smoke, and mirrors” (Jackson, “‘Rage’” 46). With more works to review and a rise in literary nationalism, there appeared to Poe to be a lack of objective critical response and the unjustifiable elevation of his less talented peers (like Longfellow): “We do our Literature grosser wrong in over-praising our authors than the British cd. [could] possibly do in over-abusing them. We shd. [should] drop the gross folly of forcing our readers to relish a stupid book the better because sure enough its stupidity was American” (“Living”). Poe knew that behind the voices praising new American authorship was a tightly construed network of critical puffery and cronyism that he called the “spirit of *cliquerie*” and which he identified as the “worst feature we have, next to the want of International [copyright] Law” (“Living”).[100] Perhaps ironically, this was a point on which Longfellow agreed, as he declared, “Many are deceived into a misconception of their talents by the indiscreet and indiscriminate praise of friends" ("Defence" 77). To Poe, puffery was a symptom of modernity, reflecting the ideology of excess: wasteful, superfluous, undeserving credit swelling the literary marketplace beyond what was justifiable and necessary.

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[100] Jackson expands: “Literary celebrity, Poe claimed again and again, was orchestrated by a ‘clique,’ or series of cliques, who talked up their favored subjects and would ‘write . . . down’ those who opposed them. They previewed, promoted, published, and puffed their authors, producing their works in handsome and expensive editions. They rigged competitions to help their proteges win and provided them with sinecures when they needed employment. In short, they manufactured celebrities” (“Rage” 46–47).

His experience with both writing and editing made Poe aware (and wary) of modernity's introduction of capitalism to the literary marketplace: he often referred to "literary commodities' and 'literary enterprises'" while decrying "'the general market for literary wares,' and 'the sale-ableness of literature'" (qtd. in Whalen 7). Poe romanticized a balanced system (perhaps of the previous literary generation) in which he presumed merit and organic growth organized the social response to both literature and nature. Instead, a modernized marketplace was imbalanced by greed and commodification that emphasized economic gain to the detriment of aestheticism in both art and nature and the valuation of pure beauty as its own ideal. In "The Philosophy of Furniture" (1840), Poe bemoaned an "aristocracy of dollars" in which "the display of wealth has here to take the place, and perform the office, of the heraldic display in monarchical countries" ("Furniture"). In 1846, he remarked on the "depreciating effect" of economic superabundance, which led, he argued, to literary "imitativeness" and "a natural bias toward utilitarianism" ("Living"). This ethos of avarice, declared Poe, has a deleterious effect upon authorship, tending to "depress genius which, as a general rule, is poor, for the reason that it seeks especially the unpurchasable pleasures. — Just as wealth is — worshipped, so is poverty despised, and in every way depressed. A poor genius may triumph in England — rarely here" ("Living").[101] Such a system, Poe averred, led to a cycle of inordinate waste. Out of greed or necessity, authors squandered their talents by submitting detritus to the system just to get published, only to lead to their literal and figurative demise: the "result is men of genius send their refuse — worse than the refuse of men of talent…finally finding themselves in danger of ruining their reputations, they drop off or starve" ("Living"). To abide by modernity's excess, contends Poe, devalues American literature collectively and metaphorically kills the author by suppressing authorial originality and integrity. Beyond this, however, Poe also suggests the literal death of the author through a process that robs him of his livelihood, leading to his ultimate starvation and demise. For Poe, the literary marketplace and his own authorship were threatened by the artificiality and hollowness of modernity's wasteful excesses and artificialities: published works, publications, greed, critical puffery, imitation, celebrity, and authorial self-depreciation.

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[101] When discussing authors who benefited from this system, Poe brashly called his peers to the carpet: "Publishers here seldom glance at the work of a poor author, while our rich dillettanti have little trouble in getting a (of course temporary and factitious) fame. Neal, Willis, Hawthorne (the three best) have been abused or neglected — Osborn also — Benjamin, Kennedy, Paulding, Cooper, Longfellow, Calvert, Sprague, Doane, Wilde, succeed. Wealth or social position determines an author's success here very emphatically" ("Living").

Poe's vision of sustainable authorship and the threat of modernity were most forcefully presented in his 1845 revision of "The Valley of Unrest,"[102] in which the fate of the author plays out against a mournful, xenotopic deathscape. Poe depicts a symbiotic relationship of interconnectivity between nature and author effected by reciprocal mourning and renders a xenotopic scenario of a strange, windless valley of ceaseless motion upon which a single unmarked grave is mourned by nature. The poet/speaker and the natural environment both acknowledge and mourn for the losses sustained by one another within an endless and irresolvable cycle of excess that threatens sustainability and the survival of the natural world, American literature, and the poet/author specifically. The xenotopia takes shape as Poe's speaker delivers an impressionistic vignette of death upon a defamiliarized valley landscape. At the literal and local levels, the twenty-seven-line poem, written as a single stanza, can nonetheless be ordered into two sections: a pre-modern past and a modernized present. In the first eight lines, the speaker describes a past Edenic moment in the valley in which it "*Once*…smiled a silent dell / Where the people did not dwell" (1–2), a moment prior to urbanization when humankind was engaged elsewhere in wartime matters and entrusted the guardianship of the land (and, particularly, the flowers) to the "mild-eyed stars" (4). In this first section, representing the pre-modern, Poe creates a formal space of metrical consistency matched by perfectly rhymed couplets. The syntax is tidy, and each line represents its own complete clause or thought. The effect is one of simplicity, euphony, symmetry, and resolve, much like the idyllic natural scene it describes. Here Poe intimates that the removal of human aggression allows for a self-regulating ecosystem, a *terra omnis* in which the higher elements of a gentle, irenic nature—the "mild-eyed stars" (4) and the lazy "red sunlight" (8)—can tend to the lower elements, peaceably control the order of the ecosystem, and set a tone for long-term environmental sustainability.

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[102] This peculiar poem has been largely neglected in the last fifty years of Poe scholarship. Originally published as "The Valley of Nis" in Poems (1831), Poe revised in 1836 and then later made significant thematic and formal emendations, resulting in three separate publications of "The Valley of Unrest" in 1845 (Mabbott 190). The revisions that Poe made over its fourteen-year life span relocated the poem from the realm of the particular, nominal, and local to the abstract and ambiguous.

At line nine, the speaker abruptly and emphatically turns to the present (i.e. modern) moment. The mood noticeably changes along with the topographical and atmospheric conditions of the valley in which natural law has now been upended:

> *Now* each visitor shall confess
> The sad valley's restlessness.
> Nothing there is motionless—
> Nothing save the airs that brood
> Over the magic solitude. (9–13)

The speaker italicizes the present "*Now*" (9) in order to mark the temporal shift, explaining that the valley is now "sad" and characterized by "restlessness" (10), a quality indicative of modernity. The once idyllic valley has been transformed into a xenotopic scene of strange space, presumably due to the reintegration of humankind and an ethos of modernization into the environment. The syntax in line nine also intimates that, since the speaker has clearly established this turn as the present moment, the word "shall" is an imperative (rather than future tense) imposed upon "each visitor" who must now bear witness to the valley's restlessness caused by its occupants/citizens, as though the visitors are compelled to "confess" what has happened to the "sad valley" (9–10). Each visitor that witnesses the valley's transformation *must* acknowledge the culpability of human intrusion for the downfall of the environment and for altering the once peaceful landscape into a space of excessive, ceaseless motion reminiscent of Poe's notion of the "*rush* of the age" of the 1840s. The only thing not in motion is the atmosphere itself, depicted as polluted "airs that brood" dolefully over the scene. The land is strange, and modernization is harmful, not restorative or ultimately productive.

As the scene further develops, the speaker anxiously contemplates the preternatural state of the landscape transformed by the effects of modernity. He or she juxtaposes the restless motion of the natural world—the stirring and palpitating trees, the rustling clouds, and the waving and weeping flowers—against the uncanny stagnancy of the "airs that brood" (12) mournfully over a land marked by superabundance, an image that evokes the idea of the increasingly heavy, polluted atmosphere above the rush and motion of Northern industrialized cities.[103] Suggestions of oppositional forces (motion and stagnancy, inhabitation and solitude) coexist and create a cocoon-like xenotopia of irreconcilable features:

> Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
> That palpitate like the chill seas

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[103] Mark Roskill notes that nineteenth-century industrialization wrought such noticeable changes to English landscapes that authors began crafting cautionary tales, such as Dickens's scene of urban blight, Coketown, in Hard Times: "…industry had become concentrated and crowded so that—in metropolis and mill towns alike—it darkened the sky with massively looming shapes, wasted the environment with its pollution, and reduced the contribution of human activity to what seemed like mere rote" (102). Martin V. Melosi argues for a coincident phenomenon of the perceivable effects of urban industrialization in America: "As the sites for rapid industrial expansion, [America's early industrial cities'] economies thrived, indeed depended, on the burgeoning factories, retail stores, and railroad lines, while their physical surroundings continued to deteriorate…By midcentury factories were concentrating in mill towns and other urban areas at an increasingly rapid pace" (24).

> Around the misty Hebrides!
> Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
> That rustle through the unquiet Heaven (14–18)

The restlessness of the environment cannot be explained by natural law, as the speaker repeatedly remarks on the lack of wind causing the movement. Instead, restlessness appears to be its own self-perpetuating momentum set in motion by modernization. The introduction of the speaker's emotional reaction to the landscape works to personalize him or her as a feeling, contemporary individual with experiential knowledge of the xenotopia, rather than an impersonal and distanced narrator relating a fantastical tale of another time and place. This personalization of the speaker renders the aberrant scene contemporaneous and all the more uncanny, as it conflates the melancholy dreamscape of the imaginative and fantastic with the actual and possible present landscape of modern 1840s America, as well as replicating the conservationist ethic from the external interpretation of the landscape to a more interior space of self-reflexivity.

The surface of the landscape is perhaps the most defamiliarized and visually excessive component of Poe's reimagined xenotopic valley, creating an irresolvable cycle of excess of which neither nature nor the speaker can transcend. The ground is effaced by violets and lilies in "myriad types of the human eye," and the effusion of aesthetic beauty is so overwhelming as to verge on the grotesque (21). The flowers wave and weep voluntarily without the wind to stir them, imbuing the anthropomorphized nature with agentive force. The only obstruction to this homogeneous landscape lies at the epicenter of the environmental and aesthetic superabundance: a single "nameless grave" which the flowers surround and weep over (23). The speaker directs the uncanny mood that has developed throughout the poem toward a literal marker of death, an anonymous and acontextual space of mourning.

From Fortunato and the Ushers to Lenore and Annabel Lee, most of Poe's dealings in death are highly characterized and mourning is specific and focused outward toward a named individual. Here, however, the space of mourning deviates in its strangely simultaneous movement toward interiority and anonymity and its reciprocal exchange of mournful sentiment with nature. In the seemingly repopulated—perhaps, Poe suggests, overpopulated—valley, only nature, even in its defamiliarized state, has the capacity to mourn the death of a human individual. Whatever human population exists seems to be enfolded into the uncanny shuffle and momentum of the restless landscape, perhaps bearing a causal relationship to the death of the individual but certainly distanced from the mourning process. Grief becomes externalized and naturalized, as the "Eternal dews come down in drops" (25) and descend from out of the "fragrant tops" (24) of the flowers, leading to the final—and perpetual—crescendo of grief in the poem: "They weep:—from off their delicate stems / Perennial tears descend in gems" (26–27). Just as the speaker has mourned the losses nature has sustained at the hands of urban excess, so does nature mourn for the fate of the human individual. By conflating mourning with the land, particularly perennial flora like violets and lilies, the grief process becomes circular, continuous, and unrelenting. The elegiac act, shared by nature and the speaker/poet but incapable of being realized by humankind generally, fails to achieve a sense of resolution. In a paradoxical image of both oblivion and permanence, the loss of the nameless individual is mourned in perpetuity.

Poe's fictive Valley of Unrest can be read as a complex homology for the literary marketplace of the 1840s. As the only sustainable concepts in Poe's restless valley landscape are grief and the excess that feeds it, Poe intimates the pervasive threat to both the natural environment and the individual American author to be swallowed up amidst the superabundance and chaos of modernity. Drawing on the individual American's identification with the landscape, Poe effects a social displacement for the author parallel to the land itself being disrupted by motionlessness and effacement. The suggestion of the land being inhabited creates an uncanny loop that cannot reconcile a feeling of solitude coexistent with the populous space of excess. The perpetual grief established by the xenotopia for the occupant of the nameless grave reverberates outward into a figurative, philosophical space: here Poe exploits the atmosphere of mourning to bemoan the uncertainty—and, ultimately, the fatality—sustained by the American author attempting to establish and support himself in the oversaturated, modern literary marketplace. The nameless grave belongs to the individual author—the ambassador of poetic art—who lies unnoticed amidst the ceaseless movement and flux of the surrounding social order, effaced (much like the effaced ground) in name and memory by the restless chaos of the xenotopic public sphere. The existence of opposing natural forces (motion and stagnancy) becomes transmuted into the realm of the dialectic, as community and "magic solitude" coexist in the same space but produce only wasteful excess and can sustain nothing organic or artistic (13). Around the burial/memorial site, an effusion of beautiful flowers surround and nearly swallow up the grave, futilely awaiting amplification by the lone poet capable of immortalizing their beauty. But no human soul—not even the speaker, whose sole function seems to be to observe and experience the xenotopic deathscape—stops to mourn or elegize the individual, nor properly ritualize the burial site.

But the failure of the restless community to stop and recognize the lost poet, who remains anonymous in perpetuity, prompts nature to mourn for authorial mortality, as there is an acknowledgement on nature's part of both the transience of the author's mortal body and the equally impermanent nature of authorial legacy; nature thus adopts and exhibits a corresponding sustainability ethic directed toward the literary culture of a modernizing society that fails to embrace original artistic achievement. In the last three lines of the poem, Poe self-consciously nods to the loss, as "Eternal dews come down in drops. / They weep:—from off their delicate stems / Perennial tears descend in gems" (25–27), suggesting that the loss of potential for poetic art is both monetary and cultural. Grief *can* be made quantifiably valuable and productive, as "drops" (ink) and "stems" (pens) can transform grief into "gems" (monetary value). Yet, it is not the lone, nameless poet of artistic integrity (i.e., Poe) who benefits from such poetic production, but rather the cliquish, insular community of idealists and elegists, the purveyors of didacticism, nationalism, Transcendentalism, and idealism that Poe reviled. The lone poet–artist is mourned perpetually by nature only, and the sustainability of a meritorious American literature proves elusive. Within the cycle of excess, there is no resolve to the mourning of the poet, nor is there resolve to the pathological state of excess endemic to 1840s American literary culture.

While he illuminated the problem of modernity's threat to literary sustainability in "The Valley of Unrest," Poe elsewhere invoked an early articulation of systems thinking in offering an ecosystemic solution toward preserving both author and American literature that was ecologically grounded and theoretically sustainable. Drawing on the same anti-modern values underlying his ecoconsciousness, Poe envisioned authorship as a cultural ecosystem in need of balance and preservation, thus rooting American literature in ecological values. Just as the land and cultural heritage of America's old cities needed protection from modernization and the oppressive, relentless, and impersonal power of progress, so did the American authorial ecosystem. McGill argues that Poe's ideal of American authorship developed consistently with "his interest in extravagant and autonomous aesthetic environments," resulting in his rejection of both the civic authorship of literary nationalism and the "gentlemanly cosmopolitanism" of Longfellow's ilk in favor of a decentralization of the author from the value of literary achievement (170). I maintain that Poe's decentering of the author was an effort toward a very particular and focused model of sustainable authorship rooted in a systems thinking-based solution, and one that was, paradoxically, meant to protect the viability of the individual author. Poe envisioned a cohesive coterie of preeminent writers forming an integrated and uniform whole—an ecosystem of geographically and epistemologically diverse authors connected only by meritorious and authentic literary endeavor—which, by transcending and devaluing the extant detritus of the literary marketplace excesses, would achieve the long-term sustainability of American literature and Poe's authorship.

The sum of the parts—the parts being the individual achievements of America's best writers—was to be greater and more globally competitive and recognizable than what existed or could be imagined in the contemporary marketplace bloated by excesses of artificial elitism and disjointed publishing practices. As Kennedy explains, Poe had a "panoramic" vision of American letters (Introduction 6): "no other contemporary American literary figure worked so tirelessly or so ingeniously to overcome the anomalous disjunction of national culture and to construct an idea of American literature that transcended geographical distance and regional diversity" ("Inventing" 18).[104] Perhaps informed by his nomadic and geographically diverse background, Poe detested sectionalism and regional isolationism, particularly as it fragmented the literary marketplace and promoted the cronyism and cliquism magnified by America's growing "vast sectional animosities" ("Living"). Censuring magazines as "organs of *cliques*," he particularly railed against the insularity and exclusivity of New England Transcendentalism, which he termed the "Humanity *clique*," whose primacy in the 1840s literary marketplace led to a "depreciation of Southern & Western talent" and a biased corruption of literary criticism ("Living"). Regardless of their shared ethos of anti-modernity, Poe placed Longfellow at the center of the problematic new modernized literary marketplace, inveighing against the "Longfellow junto" that he defined as "the small coterie of abolitionists, transcendentalists and fanatics in general" controlling the 1840s literary marketplace from Boston ("Longfellow's Poems" 130). The "Frogpondians," as Poe dubbed them, "are getting worse and worse, and pretend not to be aware that there *are* any literary people out of Boston" (*Collected* 770). A system that elevated Longfellow, suggested Poe, was not founded in organic evolution and the sustainability of literary art and beauty but rather rooted in the modern concepts of nepotism, commodification, and industry.

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[104] In "Inventing the Literati," Kennedy provides an expansive account of Poe's career-long ambitions toward an American republic of letters that transcended boundaries of region, gender, or profession. Poe's satirical pieces of the early 1830s were conceived of as effusions of a fictionalized "Folio Club" that he framed as a "diabolical association" of eleven members; furthermore, his "Junto of Dunderheadism…figures the author as belonging to a madcap coterie that will change the system of literary production altogether" (19).

Proposing a new magazine in 1843 called *The Stylus*, dedicated to "Independence, Truth, Originality," Poe projected an author-supported syndicate of transregional literary artists—the "most distinguished pens (of America) *exclusively*" (*Collected* 169) and "the *true* intellect of the land" (*Essays* 1035). Kennedy asserts that it was Poe who truly first anticipated "a community imaginable across boundaries of region, party, and clique, and beyond differences of gender" (Introduction 9).[105] And within an elite authorial ecosystem, Poe maintained, "continuity, definitiveness, and a marked certainty of purpose, are requisities [sic] of vital importance" (*Essays* 1034). Far from the cliquish Longfellow junto, Poe envisioned a clearly delineated and sustainable literature led by a coterie of singularly focused authors whose mutually supportive equipoise was self-sustaining and transcended the excess of the 1840s literary marketplace. Such a balanced and symbiotic authorial ecosystem, Poe proposed, was essential to literary sustainability and the survival of the author. Poe declared, “If we do *not* defend ourselves by some such coalition, we shall be devoured, without mercy” (*Letters* 247). Thus, Poe exhibited an ethic of sustainability that, while informed by an ecoconsciousness focused on the conservation of the American landscape, extended to a more intimate and interior space of authorship vulnerable to modernity and the marketplace excesses of the 1840s.

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[105] Kennedy further notes that Poe "long resisted centralized cultural authority and construed the American republic of letters as a network of littérateurs stretching from Maine to Georgia and from New York to Louisiana" (Introduction 3). Kennedy details the fully national scope of Poe's vision in his "Autography" series: "The interregional representation remains conspicuous—Poe even cites among his literati several frontier magazinists or poets, including one John Tomlin, identified as the postmaster of Jackson, Tennessee—and this list adds several new literary personalities from the South (such as Thomas Holley Chivers), from New England (notably James Russell Lowell), and from New York and Philadelphia as well" ("Inventing" 23).

Throughout Poe’s oeuvre are cautionary tales of myopic insularity that can be easily translated to the isolationism of the 1840s literary marketplace. For example, the fate of hubristic Prospero in “The Masque of the Red Death” or the ruinous consequences of inbred seclusion to both man and nature in “The Fall of the House of Usher” provides insight into Poe’s recognition of a causal connection between self-sequestering and excess that leads to death. Images of Prospero’s palatial life of segregated immoderation and/or the Ushers’ descent into psychic and synesthetic superabundance provide metaphorical import for the nationalistic rhetoric of literary isolationism echoing in the modernizing public sphere. In Poe’s view, the major writing centers in America with which he was intimately familiar—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Richmond—operated as discrete, independent entities in competition with one another in a capitalist mad scrabble that privileged economics and efficiency over artistic integrity and literary sustainability. In the “Autography” series (1842), an experienced and jaded Poe overtly calls out the insularity and lack of originality in the cultural bubble of literary Boston, and, as Jennifer Rae Greeson observes, it is no coincidence that Poe’s “anger at being marginalized by the Boston literary establishment” corresponds temporally to modernization, operating during an “unprecedented peak of expansionist sentiment in U.S. culture more broadly” (125).

As an alternative, Poe conceived the ideal American literary marketplace as an ecosystem that entailed a delicate balance of meritorious production and artistic equipoise for optimal and organic functioning. In the literary ecosystem of Poe's imagination, New England publishing epicenters Boston and New York were connected to and on an equal footing with the oft-maligned South and even the virtually ignored frontier in a sort of systems thinking-based webwork of interconnectivity and reciprocity. Poe, Kennedy argues, "constructs literary America as a network of newspapers and magazines, provisioned by a contingent of mostly white male authors scattered across the land but primarily aggregated in a half-dozen cultural hubs" ("Inventing" 23). In his manuscript for "The Living Writers of America" (1846), Poe intended to "expose the wires" of the "[c]ircular battle of authors" and the elevation of the "rich dillettanti" (sic) of 1840s literary America that fractured the idea of a symbiotic network and placed authors in hostile relationships with publishers, editors, readers, and each other ("Living"). In this competitive, modernized model, Poe found a lack of equilibrium or a common methodology or goal that produced sustainable capital-A "Art" within American literary achievement. Declaring that "there should be *no* nationality in our writing, which should rather aim for global appeal," Poe envisioned a broad and interconnected coterie of independent, elite authors representing what Lewis P. Simpson calls "an authoritative community in America" (133) and what Kennedy identifies as "a constellation of American authors exalted for the individuality of their achievement" ("Inventing" 28) that would be (in Poe's words) "self-sustained" ("Living"). Working toward a common "precision in…purpose" by utilizing a synchronous methodology that was interregional, mutually beneficial, and supportive, Poe contended, the "[m]en of truest genius" and "honesty" would avoid and even "despise ambition" and instead work harmoniously within an authorial ecosystem beyond “prejudices and partialities” with a central operating value of artistic achievement and a common goal of American literary sustainability (“Living”).

By the mid–1840s, Poe fully envisioned himself, as Kennedy suggests, the “self-appointed guardian of literary America” and endeavored to define the parameters of a new American literature (“Inventing” 29). In his “Prospectus of the Penn Magazine,” Poe provides a manifesto for an exemplary literary journal (one he repeatedly tried to fund and helm) that focused on “*individuality*” in American authorship, administered a “criticism self-sustained” guided only by “the purest rules of Art,” and served the “general interests of the republic of letters, without reference to particular regions” (307–08). And, although his literary ecosystem and idealized journal had yet to come to fruition, Poe recognizes the foundation of support and interdependence he found in the South, which he felt would make such an endeavor possible: “For assurance that I will fulfill [these purposes] in the best spirit and to the very letter, I appeal with confidence to the many thousands of my friends, and especially of my Southern friends, who sustained me in the Messenger, where I had but a very partial opportunity of completing my own plans” (307). Here, Poe confronts a bitter truth about modern 1840s literary life. In spite of his passion, motivation, and remarkable productivity, as Evelev maintains, Poe’s inability to secure a stable literary career “reveals how difficult it was to be a self-sustaining literary professional” (“Literary” 160). To sustain, one needed not operate as an individual but as part of an interconnected cooperative of writers (theoretically) transcending geographical, political, cultural, genric, and/or ideological difference in the common goal of launching an exemplary American literature for a global audience. Authorial sustainability is possible, he argues (and as his own history proves), but only through an ecosystemic model of sustainable authorship.

The concept of a self-sustaining authorial ecosystem is perhaps most efectively rendered in Poe's 1847 short story "The Domain of Arnheim." Its narrator tells of his friend Ellison, a man who embodies economic and political liberalism (i.e. a market economy, private property and public goods, and the separation of private and public spheres).[106] Allied with "superabundance" by way of extreme wealth, high society, personal beauty, intelligence, and ample commodities, Ellison's life is a mirror of the "supreme excess" and "fashionable extravagances of his time" (606). A modern post-Enlightenment man, Ellison is nonetheless immersed in excess more by chance than by choice. His unique situation—being "thrown back, in very great measure, upon self"—afforded him the perspective and ability to exercise a free-thinking, original philosophy of artistic purity, as he "[i]n the widest and noblest sense" was a poet who "comprehended, moreover, the true character, the august aims, this supreme majesty and dignity of the poetic sentiment" (606). Ellison's poetic philosophy is easily reduced to the concepts of originality and beauty, as the narrator notes that Ellison believes that the "sole proper satisfaction of this sentiment he instinctively felt to lie in the creation of novel forms of beauty," which he goes on to specify as "the creation of novel moods of purely *physical* loveliness" (606).

As the narrator elucidates Ellison's poetic philosophy, it becomes apparent that his ideas are simple mirrors of Poe's own aesthetic philosophy.[107] For Ellison, as for Poe, the height of aesthetic achievement was attained through the interpretive lens of one possessing the poetic sentiment. Leonard Cassuto states, “For Poe, poetry was more magnificent artifice than natural freedom, more crafted and disciplined than organic and spontaneous,” and this methodology holds for Ellison’s application of the poetic sentiment to his chosen artistic field, landscape gardening (174). The narrator elaborates,

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[106] The speaker aligns Ellison with some of the more liberal philosophers whose works foreshadowed the American Revolution, such as English Liberal political theorist Joseph Priestley, French liberal economist Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Welsh nonconformist Richard Price, and French liberal economist Nicolas de Condorcet (604).

[107] Just one year earlier in "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846), Poe wrote of the necessity of the poet "[k]eeping originality always in view" (101) and concluded that "Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem" (103). In "The Poetic Principle" (1850), Poe's artistic philosophy narrowed, as he defines literary poetry "The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty" (180), which he elevates over logic and emotion: "That pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, of the soul, which we recognise as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the Heart" (180–81).

> In the multiform and multicolor of the flower and the trees, [Ellison] recognized the most direct and energetic efforts of Nature at physical loveliness. And in the direction or concentration of this effort—or, more properly, in its adaptation to the eyes which were to behold it on earth—he perceived that he should be employing the best means—laboring to the greatest advantage—in the fulfilment, not only of his own destiny as poet, but of the august purposes for which the Deity had implanted the poetic sentiment in man. (607)

The interpretive process of the natural/organic leads to the attainment of the poetic ideal. The narrator adds his authority to Ellison’s/Poe’s poetic philosophy, supporting Ellison’s notion that nature requires the interpreting and managing hand of an elevated artist/poet figure: “no such combination of scenery exists in nature as the painter of genius may produce” (607). Even the most seemingly functional and pleasing natural ecosystem is subject to the problem of excess that necessitates intervention by an elevated species of interpreter, the principled poet:

> In the most enchanting of natural landscapes there will always be found a defect or an excess—many excesses and defects. While the component parts may defy, individually, the highest skill of the artist, the arrangement of these parts will always be susceptible of improvement. In short, no position can be attained on the wide surface of the *natural* earth, from which an artistical eye, looking steadily, will not find matter of offence in what is termed the ‘composition’ of the landscape. (607–08)

Just as the natural world is susceptible to “excesses and defects,” so is the human ecosystem; any organized system, declares Poe/Ellison, is at risk of fragmentation into its discrete and incoherent “component parts,” and in order to become an integrated whole or “arrangement,” it must necessarily be governed by the “artistical eye” of one with the poetic sentiment.

The systems thinking underscoring Poe's (by way of Ellison's) poetic philosophy manifests in two key concepts here. First is the poetic production and the idea that only the poet/artist has the ability to control and arrange the individual elements of a landscape or ecosystem and reproduce them as a whole, integrated artistic piece that transcends its isolated parts. As Stephen Railton reminds us, Poe was deeply preoccupied with the concept of authorial control, insistent that "great art must demonstrate…perfect control over its material, and perfect control over its reader" and the poet must be the agent of that "psychological law and order" (133). But Poe is less interested in the actual representation of the natural environment by the poet than he is invested in the controlling force of the authorial coterie and its ability to influence and superintend the ethos of the American literary marketplace, preserving and protecting that which is being threatened by modernity and its excesses. Second, the poet himself inhabits a literary ecosystem encompassing other authors, publishers, editors, and readers, an ecosystem that is also in need of management and control by the artist/poet, bringing all the individual elements harmoniously together through an ideal philosophy of aesthetic beauty and composition and coalescing into one unified, sustainable authorship.

In the typically belabored style of Poe's writings on literary theory, Ellison goes on to delineate his philosophy of the ideal poetic sentiment as applied to landscape gardening, in which can be seen a readily applicable analogy to the American landscape and the 1840s literary marketplace, as well as Poe's own theory of sustainable authorship:

> A poet, having very unusual pecuniary resources, might, while retaining the necessary idea of art, or culture…so imbue his designs at once with extent and novelty of beauty, as to convey the sentiment of spiritual interference. It will be seen that, in bringing about such result, he secures all the advantages of interest or *design*, while relieving his work of the harshness or technicality of the worldly *art*. In the most rugged of wildernesses—in the most savage of the scenes of pure nature—there is apparent the *art* of a Creator; yet this art is apparent to reflection only; in no respect has it the obvious force of a feeling. Now let us suppose this sense of the Almighty design to be *one step depressed*—to be

> brought into something like harmony or consistency with the sense of human art—to form an intermedium between the two:—let us imagine, for example, a landscape whose combined vastness and definitiveness—whose united beauty, magnificence, and *strangeness*, shall convey the idea of care, or culture, or superintendence, on the part of beings superior, yet akin to humanity—then the sentiment of *interest* is preserved, while the art intervolved is made to assume the air of an intermediate or secondary nature—a nature which is not God, not an emanation from God, but which still is nature in the sense of the handiwork of the angels that hover between man and God. (610–11)

In the rugged wilderness described by Ellison, the American landscape takes shape, a space of which artistic representation necessitates being brought into "harmony or consistency with the sense of human art" by the "superintendence" of a suprahuman race of artists: "beings superior, yet akin to humanity…the angels that hover between man and God" (611). These unique beings, a class that was "human once, but now invisible to humanity," alone are capable of stepping beyond the excess and "disorder" of the present modernity and effecting an aerial, poetic point of view, thus interpreting the individual elements of the environment and reproducing them as a cohesive piece of art (609). Through a "death-refined appreciation of the beautiful," these angel/poets are uniquely qualified to capture the "vastness and definitiveness" of the American landscape and translate that into a cohesive artistic production simultaneously conveying "beauty, magnificence, and *strangeness*," resulting in art that transcends its current moment and whose "*interest* is preserved" in perpetuity, sustainable beyond its immediate generation.

Ambivalent Anti-Modernity in Longfellow's Sustainable Authorship

While Poe's anti-modernity and his interest in sustainability were seemingly animated by his struggles in the 1840s literary marketplace, the same cannot be said for Longfellow, who enjoyed a successful (if not entirely lucrative) literary career in the 1840s. To the contrary, offers Charvat, it was his financial interests outside of writing—his professorship and being beneficiary of Appleton stocks—that "fostered rather than inhibited his career," particularly his ability to resist the social current urging writers toward modernity (117). While some authors were forced to write from hunger, Longfellow's independence from his craft, insists Charvat, provided the "material security" that he "need not yield to the pressures of the literary market place in order to survive," allowing him a "serene indifference to popular fads" and indulging him in poetics that "could not possibly attract a wide audience" (117–18). Whereas we think of Poe's anti-modernity as bitterly chafing against American modernization, Longfellow's anti-modernity has been seen as meditative, romantic, even self-indulgent. For example, in "The Spirit of Poetry" (1827), he rhapsodizes about the "quiet spirit" (1) of a pre-modern, pastoral American environment: the "green valley" and "silver brook" (13), the "Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale, / The distant lake, fountains, — and mighty trees" (33–34). From the implicit position of poet/observer, Longfellow listens as the various components of nature are "[i]n many a lazy syllable, repeating / Their old poetic legends to the wind" (35–36). The poem's mournfulness is sentimental, and any melancholy expressed for things long past skims the surface as the poet luxuriates in a dreamy, nostalgic haze. This is the Longfellow whose anti-modernity saw him cast by the next literary generations as a "tame and timid traditionalist" (Irmscher, *Redux* 48) and a "maudlin sentimentalist" (Willis, "Feeling" 35). But Charvat's vision of an indifferently serene Longfellow does not tell the entire story. This same Longfellow was deeply engaged with the social and political currents of his era, himself soon forced to confront modernity in its full force, especially as it bore upon the province of the author.

In many ways Longfellow was a man of his time—modern, even. Velella tracks Longfellow's shrewd head for finance and business, particularly as it applied to the publishing industry, "always sure to leverage himself for further financial success" in his professorships and authorial career (144).[108] He navigated the literary marketplace with the business acumen of a seasoned capitalist: purchasing the stereotype plates of his books, he then sold the rights to print, thereby doubling his financial returns over conventional royalty arrangements (Newcomb 24). He was firmly entrenched in the political and social issues of the day, as well, and read the newspapers religiously. An active abolitionist, he published *Poems on Slavery* in 1842 and donated money to fugitive slaves and black churches. Longfellow's politics, remarks Calhoun, were "cautiously progressive," reflective of the liberal New England circle in which he was established (246). His second marriage to Fanny Appleton, daughter of wealthy industrialist Nathan Appleton, made his livelihood ideologically intertwined with modernization. When they married in 1843, Appleton gifted the couple a furnished $10,000 Cambridge home, Castle Craigie, plus provided Fanny an income of nearly $2000 a year, about equal to Longfellow's own yearly salary (Velella 147). Owing to the comforts provided by modernity and a prosperous marriage supported by industrialist money, Longfellow, free of rent and unburdened financially, could now in the 1840s dictate terms to his publisher and seize more control over his authorial situation (Charvat 158). As anecdotal evidence of a "thoroughly modern man," Irmscher reports that Longfellow was "the first in Cambridge to have a shower bath in his house" (*Redux* 48).

The image of an "aloof Longfellow," declares Irmscher, is entirely inaccurate: "One of the most abiding myths in Longfellow scholarship is that Longfellow lived a life mostly removed from the political and social challenges of his own time, writing sentimental poems rather than participating in the major debates of his time" (Introduction 4). As "modern" as current scholars are reframing him, there is a persistent impulse within Longfellow's work (in his own words, to "summon from the shadowy Past" the "forms that once have been" [1–4])[109] that creates a significant and fruitful tension between tradition and modernity, past and present. Due to his financial security and popular reception, scholars have generally cast the backward-looking nature of Longfellow's work as "the melancholy luxury of nostalgia," rather than a response to or engagement with his contemporary cultural milieu (Newcomb 25). But, much like Poe, Longfellow's active engagement with the modernization occurring in the 1840s provided him the margins against which he defined and situated his anti-modernity and out of which his ethic of sustainability emerged. The more he encountered (or, as some maintain, encouraged)[110] the trappings and excesses of modernity, it seems the more Longfellow sensed the threat to the author and withdrew into his ethic of sustainability.

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[108] Through shrewd negotiation, foresight, and/or maneuvering, at twenty-five cents per copy for Evangeline (1847), Longfellow received the highest royalty yet for any American poet in history; by 1857, Evangeline had earned him at least $9000, equivalent to over $240,000 today (Velella 149).

In a seeming paradox, it was the very backward-looking nature of Longfellow's poetry in which he most reflected his forward-thinking vision of sustainable authorship. Svetlana Boym observes, "Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future" (xvi). The anti-modernity of Longfellow—a backward-looking nostalgia for tradition, mythology, folklore, inherited forms, pastoralism and/or ancient scenes—was nonetheless determined by the authorial anxieties and needs of the present era (i.e. 1840s modernity) as they impacted the future of American authorship. As Kete indicates, Longfellow found in the "antecedents of European Romanticism" a powerful anti-modern aesthetic that he could "coopt…to the task of celebrating and constituting America and its culture" (136); however, I further argue that this “Old World” aesthetic provided a model of sustainability that Longfellow feared American modernity could or would not achieve. Furthermore, I contend that Longfellow’s anti-modernity, in a time when post-Jacksonian America was seized by a fanatic attachment to progress and expansionism, was in many ways an act of literary rebellion and its own paradoxically progressive aesthetic of conservatism. In this way, we see both Poe and Longfellow operating within the same register of anti-modernity in an effort to define the parameters of a new American literature.

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[109] From "A Gleam of Sunshine" (1846).

[110] See Morton, "Longfellow, Tennyson, and Transatlantic Celebrity" (2015).

Longfellow provided an early articulation of his anti-modernity in “Defence of Poetry” (1832), in which he idealizes the bygone era of Sir Philip Sidney as a contrast for his own rapidly modernizing age. Although his own career was just beginning, Longfellow issues a sort of social jeremiad/literary manifesto and outlines his vision for an ideal of American literature. He first establishes the importance of the natural landscape of America, inciting his fellow writers to keep to the geographical particularities of America: “…when they sing under an American sky, and describe a native landscape, let the description be graphic, as if it had been seen and not imagined” (75). Longfellow then attacks the many aspects of modernity that he finds degrading and excessive: utilitarianism, capitalist greed, expansionism, urbanization, and commerce. He declares, “the spirit of the age is clamorous for…bare, brawny, muscular utility,” then notes that his countrymen are lost amidst the restlessness and excess of modernization, what Poe would soon identify as the “*rush* of the age”: “roused to action” by “the sounds of the crowded mart,” “swallowed up in schemes for gain,” and glorifying in the “extent of our territory,” the “rapidly increasing population,” “our agricultural and our commercial advantages,” and “populous cities breaking the silence and solitude of our western territories” (59). Longfellow identifies the hypocrisy in Americans boasting of “the magnificence and beauty of our natural scenery” that through industrialization and commodification transforms into “various products of our soil…corruptible, transitory, and perishable forms of matter” (59). In a suggestion of his ecoconsciousness that would become more forceful in the 1840s, here he laments the environmental changes wrought by a colonizing, triumphalist ethos: “plantations conquered from the forest, and gardens springing up in the wilderness” (59). Rather than fueling a nation’s westward progress and global ambition, a young Longfellow asserts, Americans should conserve the “pomp of its forests, the majesty of its rivers, the height of its mountains,” which do not define the glory of a nation but rather inspire the “incorruptible, the permanent, the imperishable mind” (59), and result in the “song of the bard” (61).

Here Longfellow’s ecoconsciousness paves the way for his view of modernity’s effect on poetry. Poetry and the fine arts, avows Longfellow, lie at odds with modernization, as they will not “till our lands, nor freight our ships, nor fill our granaries and coffers” (61). As it threatens the environment, so does modern society elicit a “cry so loud” against poetry, its “enemies pretend[ing], that it is injurious both to the mind and the heart” and “unfits us for the common duties of life, and the intercourse of this matter-of-fact world” (62). The biggest problem with American poetry thus far, decries Longfellow, is that poets have “imbibed the degenerate spirit of modern English poetry,” careful to distinguish “modern” models as the problem (75). Just as modernity has a degenerative effect upon the environment, Longfellow argues, like felled forests, so modernity “lopped off the luxuriance of poetic feeling, which once lent its grateful shade to the haunts of song” (77). The metaphorical poetic stream has now, in the modern era, “spread itself into stagnant pools, which exhale an unhealthy atmosphere, whilst the parti-colored bubbles that glitter on its surface, show the corruption from which they spring” (77). Implying that pre-modern poetry was fruitful, pure, and healthy, modernization has now transformed poetry into a xenotopic scene of polluted excess that does not constitute a healthy, functioning, and productive ecosystem, but rather stagnates motionlessly, stuck in both time and place. Nothing in such a modernizing environment can sustain or survive.

Longfellow provides a sort of origin story for ideal poetry, placing it as an ancient, pre-modern form developed from “the shades of a remote and fabulous age…amid the scenes of pastoral life, and in the quiet and repose of a golden age” (66). This pre-modern pastoral, with its “soft melancholy of the groves,” kindles the poetic imagination and nurtures the “musings of the poetic mind” (66). While at first singling out the “trees that waved their leafy branches to the summer wind, or heaved and groaned beneath the passing storm,” Longfellow then enfolds them into an ecosystemic view of the land as *terra omnis*, an interconnected environment conducive to poetic inspiration: “the shadow moving on the grass,—the bubbling brook,—the insect skimming on its surface,—the receding valley and the distant mountain,” all of which create one cohesive whole, the sum of whose parts become the “pastoral song,” analogous to the ideal poetic creation (66). Like the environment, such a poetry requires a sustainability ethic, suggests Longfellow: the “poetry of successive epochs,” aside from being “more interesting,” better reflects the “manners, customs, and characters of nations” than historical or academic record, which is more prone to “erroneous impressions” (67). In an ecosystemic cycle of perpetual regeneration, this ideal poetry produces impressions upon the national character of a period, which then are “again re-produced, and give a more pronounced and individual character to the poetry of a subsequent period” (67). Poetry illuminates the historical past and provides margins for a sustainable future, Longfellow proposes, but only when unpolluted by modernity. History is like the static, acontextual marks left by nature: “the blasted tree” after a thunderstorm or the “track of the ocean on its shore” (68). Poetry, on the other hand, is a dynamic, ecosystemic process that is constantly revealing and sustaining, like the "continual movement and murmur of the sea" (68). Here at the start of his own career, Longfellow's musings about the effects of modernity stay in the realm of the broad and philosophical. As Calhoun observes, Longfellow "has a poetics before he has a poetry" (81). In the 1840s, his ecosystemic view of poetry would narrow and grow more focused, as he contemplated authorial sustainability and his own personal stake in modernity.

Like Poe, and in spite of a reputation for being bookish, reserved, and even effete, Longfellow exhibited a love of nature that was experiential. His letters reveal that he was an avid perambulator, roaming Massachusetts on foot and recording his observations. "P.S. I hurry this note, because the morning is so lovely, that I long to be out of doors, and take my walk under the trees on the old familiar road townward" (*Letters* 88), he wrote to George Washington Greene, to whom he also confessed that Charles Sumner "complains that I walk too fast" and too often (*Letters* 455). Such experiences out-of-doors afforded Longfellow a prime view of the rapid changes occurring in Boston and Cambridge. Perhaps this was on his mind when he penned 1841's "To the River Charles," in which he romanticized the eastern Massachusetts river that flowed through Boston and Cambridge in its pre-modern, pastoral state, noting that it "in silence windest / Through the meadows, bright and free" (1–2), eventually disappearing behind the "shadowy woodlands" (25). Evoking a sense of an interconnected natural ecosystem, the speaker effaces the surrounding cities of Boston and Cambridge, which were exploding in population and industrial changes, instead depicting in present tense the "Silent River" (9) whose "waves of blue / From celestial seas above thee / Take their own celestial hue" (22–24). Such images lie at odds with the facts of Longfellow's experience of the Charles River, as Betty Farrell notes the rapid modernization of the Boston–Cambridge metropolitan area in which Longfellow was writing: "The combined effects of population growth, land scarcity, and the impingement of ethnic neighborhoods placed substantial residential pressures on the Boston elite" (25). Longfellow's pastoral vision of the river was surely obscuring urbanization or purposely displacing it.

John Timberman Newcomb contends that it was customary in nineteenth-century "genteel literature" to depict the American countryside and forest as evocations of a "preindustrial past as refuge," a way to "contain the threat of uncontrollable cultural change" (25). Probably the most recognizable instance of this in Longfellow's work is in *Evangeline* (1847), as scholars have thoroughly covered the poem's implicit contrast between the speaker's modern perspective and the "mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest" (20) that tells of the exiled Acadians, who represent a pre-modern, idyllic, non-capitalistic mode displaced by British/modern intrusion on the North American landscape.[111] Newcomb argues that the Fireside poets created what he calls "agoraphobic poetics" that established "oppositions between past and present [that] keep the discomfitures of modern urban experience at a tolerable distance, or displace them into more palatable forms" (25–27). In his image of an idyllic Charles River, Longfellow's anti-modernity is gently nostalgic, if not clichéd, though interesting in its omission of such obvious surrounding urbanization. Rather than a demonization of encroaching cities and industrialism around the Charles River, Longfellow instead chooses to simply ignore modernity.

But Longfellow's sustainability ethic developed throughout the 1840s and resonated more forcefully as he confronted the degrading effects of modernity, for example in "The Building of the Ship" (1849). Constructed as a nationalistic metaphor for the ship of state, the speaker triumphantly references the diverse indigenous American trees that variously combine to make up the ship named *Union*: the "Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine" (105), the "chestnut, and elm, and oak" (59) from "Pascagoula's sunny bay, / And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!" (63–64). However, he ultimately pivots into a space of ecoconscious regret, mourning the sacrifice of the fallen "lordly pines! / Those grand, majestic pines!" (245–46). Against a quintessential American backdrop of "mountain and plain" in New England, Longfellow conflates biblical allusions to degraded heroes—the fall of mighty Samson and the sacrifice of Christ—with the displacement of slaves and Native Americans in his xenotopic depiction of the violent, even immoral deforestation of the "deer-haunted forests of Maine" (242):

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[111] See Naomi Griffiths' "Longfellow's Evangeline: The Birth and Acceptance of a Legend" (1982); Lloyd Willis's Environmental Evasion: The Literary, Critical, and Cultural Politics of "Nature's Nation" (2011); and Simek's "The Sounds of Narrative in Longfellow's Evangeline" (2014).

> Dragged down the wearing, winding road
> Those captive kings so straight and tall,
> To be shorn of their streaming hair,
> And naked and bare,
> To feel the stress and the strain
> Of the wind and the reeling main,
> Whose roar
> Would remind them forevermore
> Of their native forests they should not see again. (250–58)

In this passage, Longfellow personifies the trees, exalts them as the rightful inheritors of the North American continent, and briefly elegizes their demise as the tragic result of modernity. Deforestation is a thematic preoccupation for Longfellow, as he mournfully contemplates lost forests in other works like *Evangeline* (1847). Here it exemplifies a modern problem born out of greed, capitalism, expansion, and commodification, and it represents an ethos of wastefulness and wanton consumption with which Longfellow was growing progressively uncomfortable.

Such ecoconscious ideas were emerging more and more in America, albeit still somewhat radical at the time. In 1834, compatible with the expansionist rhetoric of the Jacksonian era used to justify Native American removal policies, a common view was George Bancroft's idea of a pre-contact American continent as an "unproductive waste" (3). Reflecting the utilitarian spirit of a rapidly modernizing nation, Bancroft moralizes about improper land use prior to European colonization, as the continent's "only inhabitants were a few scattered tribes of feeble barbarians, destitute of commerce and of political connection. The axe and the ploughshare were unknown. The soil…was lavishing its strength in magnificent but useless vegetation. In the view of civilization the immense domain was a solitude" (3–4). Waste, as defined by Bancroft, was "unused" land waiting for modernization. A market economy, a political system, and large-scale agriculture were the systems to be inscribed upon the landscape to remedy such abuses, and deforestation (the "axe") was a necessary component of righting these wrongs. In the coming decade, such views would be challenged and paradigms inverted. In 1847, early ecologist George Perkins Marsh argued against the "evil" effects of modernization on the American land, decrying the "injudicious destruction of the woods" and other "tokens of improvident waste" ("Address"). Marsh redefined wastefulness in terms of ecological destruction, noting the gains made by modern land practices were "sad substitutes for the pleasant groves and brooks and broad meadows of [the] ancient paternal domain" ("Address"). It was in this context that Longfellow was reorganizing a vision of waste and excess as endemic to modernity, using deforestation as an example in the above passage from "The Building of the Ship."

However, Longfellow felt the tension between the deleterious effects of modernization and the concepts of duty and noble sacrifice underwriting the nation's progress. In a dichotomy of ideological commitments, Longfellow suggests only one mode can be sustained: either the pre-modern American landscape or the modern American nation. Longfellow admits that deforestation is necessary for the nation's progression, but he remains dubious about its long-term viability. Though ultimately useful (and necessary) in the construction of the ship of state, the felled timber nonetheless necessitates an elegy, as Longfellow mournfully tracks what is lost in modernity and the process of nation building. With the hesitant voice of a conservationist, the speaker implies the need to turn an eye toward sustainability and a more measured approach to the consumption of natural resources. As modernization violently disrupts the sustainability of the American environment, there is a later suggestion of its inability to support the national project, as the speaker effects a tone of trepidation when discussing America's future: "Sail on, O Union, strong and great! / Humanity with all its fears, / With all the hopes of future years, / Is hanging breathless on thy fate!" (400–03). Here there is no triumphalist vision of an assured future, but rather the almost doubtful apprehension of a fatalist, reflecting what Alan Shucard calls "the pervasive darkness of Longfellow's vision" (84). Whereas in his earlier poems, such moral didacticism over America's fate was leveled at slavery,[112] here Longfellow cautions over the problems inherent within modernization and their ultimate threat to the fate of the nation.

A similar anxiety over environmental degradation occurs in his perpetuation of the vanishing Indian trope in "To the Driving Cloud" (1845), in which Longfellow juxtaposes scenes of undeveloped pre-modern landscapes—"the green turf of the prairies" (7), "the sweet air of the mountains" (8)—against scenes of "Gloomy and dark" (1) urbanization. In an apostrophe to the Native American, the speaker apologetically decries the polluted air of "the city's / Narrow and populous streets" (3–4) representing the "breath of these Saxons and Celts" (35) that drives "evermore to the west the scanty smokes of thy wigwams!" (36). The city is depicted as crowded, busy, and excessive, as overpopulation and urbanization collide and create a problem specific to modernity that Longfellow's claustrophobic speaker finds stifling. In contrast, he celebrates what in twenty-first century terms we call a small carbon footprint, noting that Native Americans have "left us only their footprints," and he incredulously questions the impossibility of synthesizing pre-modern life with his contemporary industrialized society: “How canst thou walk these streets, who hast trod the green turf of the prairies?” (7) “…and question these walls and these pavements” (10). An idealized, pre-modern mode of living, Longfellow declares, is one in which the environment is sustained with only a small trace of human impress.

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[112] See "The Warning" (1842), in which Longfellow's speaker cautions that the "vast Temple of our liberties" (19) (i.e. the American republic) might soon become "A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish" (20) when the evils of slavery become fully manifest.

For Longfellow, thoughts of ecological sustainability consistently gave rise to meditations on literary or authorial sustainability that exhibited an early expression of systems thinking. A functioning, sustainable natural ecosystem was for Longfellow a homology for American authorship, and both required protection from oppressive and burdensome modernity that threatened the author and the environment. In “The Builders” (1850), Longfellow depicts the ecosystemic view of a connected earth as a highly developed sense of perception accorded only the evolved mind: “Thus alone can we attain / To those turrets, where the eye / Sees the world as one vast plain, / And one boundless reach of sky” (33–36). Individual human deeds conflate with the components of nature, as the speaker moralizes over the importance of a functioning whole:

> Nothing useless is, or low;
> Each thing in its place is best;
> And what seems but idle show
> Strengthens and supports the rest. (5–8)

In systems thinking, Peter Horsley explains, one takes “an ‘ecological’ or ‘holistic’ world view” that sees the world as “an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts” (93). In Longfellow’s view of an integrated environment, there is no hierarchy or division: all parts contribute to one complete whole—*terra omnis*—that depends on those parts for function and sustainability. The rigid iambic tetrameter and perfect rhyme of Longfellow’s verse, bearing no wasted syllables and functioning in perfect symmetry, provide visual and aural evidence of his ecosystemic theory of poetry: the poem itself exemplifies his systems thinking by operating as a self-sustained whole in which the components operate in perfect symbiosis and symmetry.

A systems thinking-based view of the world, Longfellow consistently implies, is the purview of the poet, for whom such an ecosystemic model proves particularly important or relevant, but it ultimately reveals the vexed interiority of his authorship. In “Rain in Summer” (1845), Longfellow records a scene of summer rain, contrasting the narrow vision of the farmer, who singles out the stalks of grain and raindrops that make him think of “Only his own thrift and gain” (59), from the perspective of the capital-P “Poet,” whose systems thinking allows him a view that takes in the entirety of the ecosystem: “These, and far more than these, / The Poet sees!” (60–61). The farmer’s perspective, implies the speaker, is skewed by a forward-thinking capitalist ethos that commodifies and fragments the scene. The Poet’s view, however, encompasses past and present, nature and human, and dead and living into one cohesive whole:

> He can behold
> Things manifold
> That have not yet been wholly told,—
> Have not been wholly sung nor said.
> For his thought, that never stops,
> Follows the water-drops
> Down to the graves of the dead,
> Down through chasms and gulfs profound…. (70–77)

Due to his remarkable perspective, the Poet does not isolate the raindrops in stasis, as the farmer does, but rather follows the dynamic cycle of the rain as part of an ecosystem as it penetrates the soil. Beneath the scene of modernity on top of the ground, the rain integrates into a deathscape as it commingles with corpses, then becomes a part of a larger, xenotopic ecosystem beneath or beyond the surface of the earth, a generative and philosophical whole that both represents and transcends nature into the realm of the psychological or spiritual.

The ecosystemic nature of the rain, and the systems thinking it elicits, clears out or obscures traces of modernity, elevating the Poet to a “…Seer, / With vision clear” (84–85). The

Poet bears witness to the cyclicality of life, a perpetual system of renewal, regeneration, and interconnectedness, as he

> Sees forms appear and disappear
> In the perpetual round of strange
> Mysterious change
> From birth to death, from death to birth,
> From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth;
> Till glimpses more sublime
> Of things, unseen before,
> Unto his wondering eyes reveal
> The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel
> Turning for evermore
> In the rapid and rushing river of Time. (86–96)

As conceived by the Poet, nature is a circular, interconnected ecosystem of reincarnation and perpetual change that is all at once beautiful, strange, and enigmatic. The ability to acknowledge and visualize the changes of an ecosystem—birth and death, dynamic rain and decaying corpses—defines and separates the Poet's vision from the modern view of the farmer, as beyond these organic changes he can now witness the sublime, transcendent, and spiritual elements of the universe, a larger and more expansive vision than simply narrating the components of a landscape. Surpassing pre-modernity and modernity, the Poet's singular omniscient perspective suggests a vision of the future and yet seems to exist outside of time altogether, as he sees and registers things that have never before been witnessed. Thus the Poet-as-witness bears both the privilege of an ennobled position and the burden of isolation as he records the scene for posterity from his lone aerial perspective. Shucard maintains that Longfellow is "closest to his true self" when imparting "a sense of sad, gentle, cosmic abandonment that anticipates the brutal isolation of the naturalists at the end of the century," and that sense of abandonment is most palpable in his mournful view of the Poet's sacrifice, as he is often omitted from the community of readers created by his poetic endeavor (84). The Poet's privileged ecosystemic view, Longfellow implies, is the mode in which a representation of American life can be recorded and sustained beyond the strictures imposed by one's current moment, and yet it is solitary, even disconsolate.

Moreover, the notion of change that the Poet identifies in the natural environment yields the same tension as Longfellow's anxiety over modernization. As opposed to the unnatural changes occurring due to 1840s modernization, here change is depicted as organic, natural progression, but that sense of perpetual organic change nonetheless makes the Poet equally uneasy. Change, whether it is endemic to the natural environment or to the literary environment of the 1840s, is threatening for the Poet, as he is excluded from either ecosystem by virtue of his privileged perspective and thus his duty to bear witness. As he stands outside of time and place, the Poet sees the ecosystem sustaining in perpetuity, but he can also see the individual components of the ecosystem disappear and fade into the enduring progression of perpetual renewal. What is left to question is the Poet's fate in "the rapid and rushing river of Time" and whether or not his poem or his legacy sustains beyond this contemporary narrating moment (96).

For all his rhetoric of anti-modernity, Longfellow had a paradoxical relationship to his own contemporary narrating moment in the 1840s literary marketplace. On the one hand, he embraced the expanding literary marketplace and was operatively modern: a shrewd manager of his finances, an ambitious advocate for his work, and a voice in support of literary nationalism. Theoretically, however, he was uncomfortable with certain aspects of the modernization of literature—literary nationalism, literary property, and celebrity—that he felt threatened his own ability to function sustainably as an author. In Longfellow's view, the expansion of modernity—the forward momentum of progress and nationalism—was coincident with an inverse contraction and fragmentation in which the component parts of a larger system (the American literary marketplace, authors, and their literary works) were isolated, desynthesized from community or integration, sequestered from outside influence or interaction, and then hierarchized as commodities. The self-created insularity of literary nationalism closed off an isolationist American literary sphere from historical and international communion or influence, resulting in a stagnant, sterile bubble in which no growth occurred. Further fragmentation occurred within this bubble as authors were commodified and artificially inflated beyond and outside of the community as celebrities, thus removed from a sense of communion or synthesis with their readers. And literary works were commodified in static isolation from authors' bodies of works or from a dynamic, heterogeneous whole of American literature. Once isolated, these individual parts were threatened to be consumed by the abstract machine of modernity. Such a system of fragmentation was diametrically opposed to Longfellow's ecosystemic idea of authorship.

Longfellow represented these anti-modern anxieties in terms of oppressive, monolithic forces bearing down upon the speaker. In "Birds of Passage" (1847), Longfellow offers a view of his anxiety over the encroachment of a strong and suffocating force, which he represents in the first xenotopic image of natural excess:

> Black shadows fall
> From the lindens tall,
> That lift aloft their massive wall
>   Against the southern sky;
>
> And from the realms
> Of the shadowy elms
> A tide-like darkness overwhelms
>   The fields that round us lie.

The idyllic natural environment Longfellow's readers would have expected is not merely transformed into dystopic darkness but rather a strange topography of shadows and enclosure, a space of mixed natural metaphor in which the American forest bears an oceanic threat of drowning or consuming the speaker. Here the natural environment is not a pre-modern pastoral of synthesized rivers and meadows but a vague and oppressive symbolic reduplication of the claustrophobia and intrusion that Longfellow recorded elsewhere when exploring the effects of modernity, such as urbanization and industrialization. Longfellow reinforces this sense of oppression by disrupting the meter in the third line of each stanza. He doubles the meter from the previous two lines and creates a ponderous feeling of both disconnection and submersion beneath a heavy force. The poem's speaker is closed off from any community or influence outside of the small, xenotopic plot of insularity created by the looming linden shadows (and evidenced by the plural pronoun "us"), suggestive of the insularity of the American literary marketplace cut off from any outside influence. From his presumed authorial position in the upper northeast corner of the nation, the speaker, enclosed within the shadows, has been cut off from the southern sky and thus equally insulated from the rest of the nation. Here the natural environment is not working ecosystemically in harmony with the poet, but rather collapses inward in a threatening posture, modeling a disruptive and even violent mode of existence in which Longfellow finds analog with the literary marketplace. Like modernity, the nebulous force of the poem bears the threat of isolation, violence, and erasure against the author.

The strange sense of personal isolation the speaker expresses, in spite of belonging to a community (albeit an insular one), is perhaps indicative of Longfellow's increasing discomfiture with his relationship to readers created by the modernized marketplace and the strains of literary celebrity. Like Poe, Longfellow was consistently preoccupied with authorship, particularly his own self-fashioning and the role of the poet in society.[113] In the early stages of his career in the 1830s, as Charvat has noted, Longfellow felt compelled to campaign on behalf of the poet in an effort to prove him socially respectable, recording his sense of the “hostility of the world to the Poet” (130) in works like *Hyperion* (1839) and “Excelsior” (1841) and resulting in such elevated depictions as the Poet/Seer from “Rain in Summer” (1845). But modernity entangled Longfellow in a conundrum. Owing to his savvy business acumen, there was a growing demand among magazines for his work, which Charvat argues made Longfellow “feel that he might be exempt from the nineteenth century’s separation of Poet and Public, and that he need not be limited to the frustratingly small and (abnormally) exclusive audience of the Romantics” (130). In the 1840s, at the same time that his celebrity was blossoming, Longfellow began envisioning a more egalitarian vision of the poet of the people. More than just ideologically democratic, Longfellow’s vision of authorship entailed an intimate relationship with his readers, as evidenced by the “Dedication” to his 1850 collection *The Seaside and the Fireside*, in which he wished to “have my place reserved” (43) at his reader’s “warm fireside” (42) in an imagined community of reciprocal, ecosystemic exchange. The importance Longfellow placed on community can be seen biographically in what Calhoun identifies as Longfellow’s “sustaining circle of intimates in Cambridge” (142), as well as the refuge he found from the changes of modernity in “his own extended family” (247). Throughout this era, Longfellow consistently returns to the image of community, for example in “To the River Charles” (1841), wherein the speaker’s ecoconscious vision of the Charles River reminds him of the ecosystem of friendship provided him in his Massachusetts community as he references those who lived on the river’s “margin dear” (28), likely other authors and/or academics: “…thy name reminds me / Of three friends, all true and tried / And that name, like magic, binds me / Closer, closer to thy side” (29–32). The sustainability of the river leads Longfellow to the same conclusion about the sustainability of the ecosystem of friendship, as all three entities—the poet, his community, and the natural environment—are intimately united in a transcendent ecosystem bound by the author's imagination and sustained by the poem and the interconnected relationship they share within.

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[113] Poe was, indeed, obsessed with literary fame, but as Jackson argues, Poe's ambivalent relationship to the culture of celebrity proved generative and fueled his engagement with the literary marketplace ("'Rage'" 38–39).

As his career progressed, however, Longfellow grew anxious over modernity's threat to this communion between author and readers, and he began incorporating images of endangered communities into his work, such as the displaced Acadians in *Evangeline* (1847) and the circle of friends menaced by an outside storm and the metaphorical violence to community, memory, and mortality in "The Fire of Drift-Wood" (1850). His sense of authorship grew less hopeful and more vexed, exhibiting what Irmscher identifies as Longfellow's "deflated view of authorship" (*Public* 10). Longfellow found that literary celebrity, while creating the means for closer communion with readers, instead artificially abstracted him from the community and burdened him with duties outside of the task of writing. Andrew Hilen maintains that Longfellow "felt obliged to answer all but the most outrageous demands on his good nature" from readers, and he grew to consider his correspondence with strangers "a penance for his fame" (6). Literary celebrity, for Longfellow, became a suffocating and alienating part of modern authorship that he could not reconcile. Jill Anderson contends that, for Longfellow, "the title 'poet' was a kind of dream identity, something to be wished for and worked toward, but also to be disclaimed even as he began to achieve it in the late 1830s and 1840s" (3). Ultimately, he enacted strategies to attempt to navigate this paradox and mitigate his celebrity, such as avoiding public speaking, but he always felt beholden to the duty of public poet and his commitment to a vision of authorship as communion with his readers. According to Calhoun, Longfellow's burgeoning fame coincided with a period in which his journals "present a self-portrait of a man who frequently is miserable and almost always a little depressed" (142). The more famous he became, the less Longfellow felt a part of the community he craved, fragmented and isolated as capital-P "Poet" outside of the organic system of literary communion and insulated from meaningful exchange.

Such images of the distanced Poet/speaker abound in Longfellow's work, such as in "The Day is Done" (1844), the proem to his anthology, *The Waif*. As the poet introducing the fragmented collection of others' works, Longfellow imagines his speaker standing outside of a village at nightfall, watching with "A feeling of sadness and longing" (9) as he contemplates poetry's antithetical relationship to the "restless feeling" of modernity (15). While the poem of "some humbler poet" (25) might "quiet / The restless pulse of care" (33–34), it does not rescue the alienated speaker nor lead to permanence or sustainability, lasting only as long as the time it takes to read the poem, much like "the benediction / That follows after prayer" (35–36).

These representations of authorial displacement reflect Longfellow's anti-modernity as it retracted inward and expressed his unique psychological response to modernity. Returning to "Birds of Passage" (1847), Longfellow specifically explores the concept of authorial alienation as his speaker, operating within the xenotopic enclosure of the lindens, is also strangely disconnected from other poets whose works pass by him on the wind in an ephemeral rush of motion and sound, alluding to the rush of modernity. At first, the speaker thinks he hears the pleasant sounds of "birds of passage" (15) winging through the "dewy atmosphere" (16), the musical beating of their wings and voices falling "dreamily through the sky" (23). But the sounds turn out to be a trick of the speaker's ear, as he must admit "their forms I cannot see" (24). In a tonal shift, the speaker turns mournful, lamenting, "O, say not so!" (25), the sounds revealed to be both "murmurs of delight and woe" (27) emerging from "poet's songs" (30):

> Murmurs of pleasures, and pains, and wrongs,
>   The sound of winged words.
> This is the cry
> Of souls, that high

On toiling, beating pinions, fly,
  Seeking a warmer clime,
From their distant flight
Through realms of light
It falls into our world of night,
  With the murmuring sound of rhyme. (31–40)

Resulting from much labor and emotional toiling, the poets' works are cast to the wind in hopes of being heard in a "warmer clime" beyond the insular sphere enclosed by the lindens, but in vain. The poems reach the speaker's ears only in indistinct fragments, as he repeats three times that the sounds are "murmurs/murmuring" (27, 31, 40). Longfellow implies the unintelligibility of the poems that prove so ephemeral and disjointed (and the poet's individual expressions of mourning so weak and ineffectual) that they are conflated or confused with the superficially happy (i.e. indifferent) sounds of birds, suppressing the poets' authorial anxieties and subverting literary sustainability. The sounds are cacophonous and disconnected, and the poet and his poetry are not synthesized into any meaningful, sustainable whole but rather fragmented and fleeting.

With a keen eye on literary sustainability, Longfellow articulated an ecosystemic solution to the problems he identified in the modern 1840s literary marketplace. Like Poe, Longfellow's ideal literary ecosystem ironically decentered the author/poet in an effort to protect the individual author. He envisioned a large-scale, transcultural ecosystem of interconnected and non-hierarchical authors, readers, genres, forms, and themes that transcended one place or time and continuously informed one another, an egalitarian paradigm that stretched as much into the past as it heralded a future. In "Seaweed" (1845), Longfellow marks the problems faced by the poet as he navigates the "desolate, rainy seas" (18) of authorship amidst the "currents of the restless main" (21) and the "vastness" (29) of the poetic endeavor. As "storms of wild emotion" (25) strike "the poet's soul" (27), he finds strength and inspiration in "some fragment of a song" (30) emerging from the "drifting, drifting, drifting" (43) seaweeds that represent the various cultures of the Atlantic, from the coast of Scotland to the “Silver-flashing / Surges” (11) of the Bahamas, each bearing the echoes of the mythology and culture of its native climes. By expanding his view from an insular, national perspective into one of transcultural influence and connection, the poet can transform his own ambition—“…the strong Will, and the Endeavor / That forever / Wrestle with the tides of Fate” (37–39)—and the “Floating waste” (42) of the fragmented literary marketplace into coherent, sustainable poetry: “Till at length in books recorded, / They, like hoarded / Household words, no more depart” (46-8). Authorship (American or otherwise) should be informed by other cultures as much as by the past, Longfellow suggests. His anti-modernity was partially informed by the insularity of an increasingly autonomous and seemingly self-sustaining nation that disdained its own cultural heritage. As Irmscher proposes, rather than self-aggrandizement, “Longfellow’s constant allusions and quotations draw attention to the fact that a literary work is never anyone’s personal property but part of a continuum of shared words and ideas” (*Redux* 100). Longfellow’s backward-looking nature revealed his conceptualization of literary inheritance as a perpetual cycle of progression and a vicarious ecosystem of cultural influence that could sustain beyond the changes of modernity.

As Americans were narrowing their views on what a native literature should entail, Longfellow’s sustainable authorship was a methodology of open, referential, and transnational exchange. These ideas came to the fore in what many read as Longfellow’s most triumphalist expression of literary nationalism in *Kavanagh: A Tale* (1849). In the exchange between the brash nationalist Hathaway and the more refined and traditional Churchill, Longfellow records the unique problems of the call for a national literature as adapted to the age of modernity. In an oft-excerpted section, an impassioned Hathaway declares,

> . . . we want a national literature commensurate with our mountains and rivers,—commensurate with Niagara, and the Alleghenies, and the Great Lakes! . . . We want a

> national epic that shall correspond to the size of the country . . . the largest in the world! . . . We want a national drama in which scope enough shall be given to our gigantic ideas, and to the unparalleled activity and progress of our people! . . . In a word, we want a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies! (84–85)

This section, Charvat insists, is "often reprinted but never seen in…its proper context" (146). R. W. B. Lewis interprets it as "in some small degree confessional," but also satiric: "there is a little wistful sincerity in the otherwise clownish exaggeration of the nationalist's table-thumping conclusion" (80). While there may be shades of hyperbole in Hathaway's speech, Longfellow uses the ensuing exchange to pronounce his views on American literature. Rather than reflecting Longfellow's literary nationalism, Hathaway acts as foil to Churchill, whom Hathaway comes to as a fan and entrepreneur, seeking him out based on reputation and literary fame alone: "…he could not deny himself the pleasure of calling on Mr. Churchill, whom he knew by his writings in the periodicals, though not personally," but he also wishes to secure Churchill's endorsement of his new magazine intended "to raise the character of American literature" (84). Furthermore, Hathaway's speech is an interruption of Churchill's authorship itself, "subject of so many resolves and so much remorse, so often determined upon but never begun" (84). The enthusiasm and progressive ethos of Hathaway's monologue have "[u]nluckily" disrupted the actual writing process, with Longfellow nodding to the ironic displacement of authorship due to literary celebrity (84). Much like Longfellow, Churchill's need for communion with his readers leads him to acquiesce: he "found it impossible to refuse himself" despite Hathaway's intrusion (84).

Churchill operates as an avatar for Longfellow's vision of sustainable authorship. Listening to Hathaway preach, Churchill punctuates Hathaway's dogged claims with patronizing interjections: "'Oh!'", "'Ah!'", and "'Of course.'" (85). He then questions Hathaway's model of literary nationalism that fragments the components of the American ecosystem and attempts to make them analogous to "'things that have no analogy'" (85). Churchill counters with a very different vision of how literature should operate ecosystemically and transculturally:

> Nationality is a good thing to a certain extent, but universality is better. All that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal. Their roots are in their national soil; but their branches wave in the unpatriotic air, that speaks the same language unto all men, and their leaves shine with the illimitable light that pervades all lands. Let us throw all the windows open; let us admit the light and air on all sides; that we may look towards the four corners of the heavens, and not always in the same direction. (85–86)

Again drawing on the metaphorical significance of trees, Longfellow likens poets to trees that must root into a native soil in an ecosystem of organic elemental exchange, needing the outside influence of light and air (universal, pervasive elements) in order to survive. Sustainable authorship, argues Churchill/Longfellow, occurs when poets, like trees, operate outside of the strictures of literary nationalism and embrace an ecosystemic network of organic transcultural exchange, integrating with other poets and permitting the influence of outside elements/cultures. Just as trees cannot survive without the ecosystem to sustain them, a sustainable national literature, he contends, cannot be forged within an insular bubble or as a fragmented entity.

As the conversation between Hathaway and Churchill continues, Hathaway's incredulous questions help tease out the contours of Churchill's/Longfellow's ideal of American literature and vision for sustainable authorship. Hathaway asks if Churchill finds nationality to be a "'good thing,'" to which Churchill replies, "'Yes, if not carried too far; still, I confess, it rather limits one's views of truth. I prefer what is natural'" (86). Literary nationalism, Longfellow suggests, is an artificial construct coincident with or resulting from modernity, whereas he envisions a different view of how to achieve a national literature that is more organic and ecosystemic. Churchill reminds Hathaway that nationalism abstracts America from its heritage and history, as "'we are…in fact, English under a different sky,'" prompting Hathaway to reply, "'Then you think our literature is never to be anything but an imitation of the English?'" (86). In the same way that Longfellow informed Poe's vision of sustainable authorship, here we see Longfellow defining his authorship in response to Poe's trenchant accusations of plagiarism. Through Churchill, Longfellow defends his transcultural poetic style that extends across the axes of contemporary nations as well as expands chronologically into cultures of the past as it serves an intended future purpose of defining American literature. Longfellow was a "chronic borrower—of European themes, of traditional European meters, of a poetic diction in which echoes of a hundred other poets sounded," advises Calhoun, who further states that Longfellow did not consider such borrowing to be plagiarism but rather a practice that the "previous century would have praised…as imitation, in the long-established Renaissance sense of the term" (159). The ecosystemic operation of transcultural exchange was, in Longfellow's view, the way that literature was sustainable, which he expresses in Churchill's reply to Hathaway: "'Not at all. It is not an imitation, but, as some one has said, a continuation'" (86). Like perpetual natural cycles, an American literature built transculturally in exchange with England fosters the kind of slow cultural progression that is truly evolutionary, not an artificial detachment of insular, instantaneous eruption, nor a fragmentation of individual parts operating in isolation.

Hathaway accuses Churchill of taking "'a very narrow view of the subject,'" to which Churchill retorts, "'On the contrary, a very broad one. No literature is complete until the language in which it is written is dead'" (86). Reiterating Longfellow's association of narrow perception with modernity, this passage records Longfellow's vision of sustainable authorship operating within a broad paradigm of systems thinking. Literature, declares Churchill/Longfellow, is not about teleology or completion but rather about process, cohesion, and expansion, moving with the currents of its culture in a slow forward progression that, like a natural ecosystem, is made up of many parts working in harmony and informed by the past:

> …a national literature is not the growth of a day. Centuries must contribute their dew and sunshine to it. Our own is growing slowly but surely, striking its roots downward, and its branches upward, as is natural; and I do not wish, for the sake of what some people call originality, to invert it, and try to make it grow with its roots in the air. And as for having it so savage and wild as you want it, I have only to say, that all literature, as well as all art, is the result of culture and intellectual refinement. (87)

Just as any component part of an ecosystem must be nourished, so must a national literature develop in the context of reciprocity, all elements working in tandem to mutually support one another. The growth of a natural literature, as Churchill/Longfellow conceives it, is a gradual evolutionary process akin to organic progression. Modernity, with its excesses and calls for acontextual "originality," inverts this paradigm and creates an artificial construct analogous to a tree attempting to grow upside down. And, yet, literary sustainability depends upon the protection of the individual author, whose integration of "'intellectual refinement'" into the literary ecosystem takes what Hathaway values as quintessentially American—the "'genius'" that is "'untutored, wild, original, free'"—and synthesizes it with the employment of "art," therefore allowing literature to find "expression" and sustain (87). Longfellow's decentering of the author and ecosystemic view of the ideal literary marketplace thus ironically serve as a self-protective mechanism for his own personal space of authorship in the 1840s literary milieu.

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, the problems that Poe and Longfellow attributed to modernity were much the same: the excess and waste resulting from industrialization, urbanization, commodification, and oversaturation of the literary marketplace. Both authors envisioned sustainable authorship as a possibility, though each ultimately devised an ecosystemic solution based on his unique authorial situation and the manner in which modernity affected him personally. As such, their similar expressions of literary sustainability were defined ironically against one another. For Poe, the cliquism and puffery of the "Longfellow junto" displaced him from an ideal coterie of transregional authors, while Longfellow identified literary nationalism and celebrity as detriments to his vision of a transcultural ecosystem and a literature not of plagiarism, as Poe accused, but rather "continuation" of other cultures and the past. In Longfellow's anxiety over literary celebrity, we see glimpses of what would grow into a more substantial problem and ultimately bedevil the authorship of Dickinson and Preston in the 1860s.

The vision of sustainable authorship individually conceived by Poe and Longfellow nonetheless unites them in an epistemological mode that is often attributed to other (and usually much later) writers or thinkers. Evincing early shades of systems thinking and imagining sustainability for both natural and cultural environments, these authors acted as forebears to twentieth-century conservationism and ecology. Looking at Poe and Longfellow at the juncture of ecocriticism and authorship studies allows us to see that their shared anti-modernity was underwritten by an ecoconsciousness most often attributed to later writers, primarily beginning with Thoreau in 1854, and enfolds them into a sustainability movement that gets cast as a twentieth century phenomenon. But, most importantly, we see that ecoconsciousness, rather than operating only outward toward the environment, provided a homology of protection/conservation that allowed them to express the vexed interiority of their psychological experiences of authorship in the 1840s, a space that both authors believed necessitated protection from an encroaching—and ultimately inescapable—modernity.

CHAPTER 5

THE “WEIRD PALIMPSEST” OF CIVIL WAR (RE)WRITING: EFFACEMENT AND ASOCIAL AUTHORSHIP

In one of the most iconic scenes from Civil War-era poetry, John Greenleaf Whittier’s *Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl* (1866) describes the New England countryside effaced by snow, cutting off a family from the outside world and making the quintessentially American landscape an unfamiliar wasteland. The whiteness of the snow symbolizes the absence of meaning and becomes a space for people to try to write themselves on the blankness, an apt metaphor for a post-Civil War America attempting to rebuild. At the end of the poem, Whittier represents the poet as the “Angel of the backward look” (715) holding a book that the speaker calls a “weird palimpsest old and vast” (719), a nod to both the effaced and rewritten landscape, as well as the ability of (and need for) the poet to participate in the rewriting process. In the post-Civil War milieu in which the poet finds himself, the cultural and moral order that was once so familiar, traditional, and expected has been violently displaced by the war. Rural death practices, political allegiances, divided families, domestic insularity, and pastoral landscapes have been rewritten over with new ethics that must define a disunited nation displaced by war. Whittier betrays skepticism of poetry’s adequacy in the task of narrating historical exigencies, but, more importantly, a philosophically complex and highly personalized anxiety over the poet’s ability to transcend that crisis of effacement and to control—or even survive—the rewriting process.

Because of the twentieth-century critical commonplace that Civil War literature was, to reference Edmund Wilson’s title, mere *Patriotic Gore*, Civil War studies have often decentered the author and instead approached the literature for its historical value as a collective response to the war and an external engagement with death on a social level. Such studies marginalize authors' and texts' material engagements with the marketplace and practically overlook altogether the kind of individual/psychic interpretation of Civil War authorship so palpably rendered in Whittier's poem. Many studies of American literature from 1861–1865 predictably deal with Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman as anomalies and/or revolutionaries who were disconnected from marketplace trends. Fahs's recent work on popular war literature marks a step forward as she reminds us of the "revelatory" quality of *all* literature during the Civil War, specifically defending popular literature against charges of being simplistic or unsophisticated, and exploring its social and economic implications: "The very fact that war poetry, for instance, was often 'concocted' for the market should alert us to the complex synergy between patriotism and commerce during the war" (15). But Civil War poetry provides value beyond a historical lesson in marketplace nationalism. In spite of the military conflict occurring between North and South, novels and short stories flooded the marketplace from both sides at an unprecedented rate and a parallel war persisted in the marketplace for control of the direction of American literature. Authors were *still* trying to define American literature and the role of the author or poet therein.

In just a few short years, the sustainable authorship of Poe and Longfellow was eclipsed by the explosion of narrative fiction in the early 1850s. As the nation hurtled forward toward an inevitable Civil War, the literary marketplace bifurcated physically/geographically and ideologically, and the systems thinking-based paradigm of Poe and Longfellow, which depended on viewing the literary marketplace as an ecosystemic whole, was no longer relevant. Authorial careers were either invigorated (think Louisa May Alcott, Walt Whitman, and Henry Timrod) or stymied (William Gilmore Simms, for example) by the North–South division. Scholars have written about the disruptive power of the war, particularly as it affected literature. Randall Fuller discusses the transformation that occurred among Northern writers who, "wracked by a pained ambivalence about the ensuing war," developed raw new forms in response to the epistemological transformation underway (9). While such work is shedding light on the crisis of literary representation unleashed by the Civil War, a more comprehensive assessment of Civil War authorship (and 1860s American literature, for that matter) is needed in American Studies, one that explores: the underlying marketplace dynamics, its evolution from the literary advancements of the 1850s, authors' further development of the concept and definition of American literature, and, most importantly, their unique formulations of what it meant to be an American author in a war-torn and uncertain America.

Furthermore, studies of Civil War literature need to move beyond such superficial matters of defending the texts' aesthetic and/or cultural value against charges of being unrefined and nonliterary. While there is merit to such considerations, there is important work to be done in regarding the Civil War era as a time of further literary innovation and expansion of American authorship. As many have identified, there was a significant shift in the early 1860s that marked an abrupt and necessary departure from the sentimentalism and Romanticism of the 1850s.[114] Writers' reliance on the "sprawling optimism" and "moral certainty" of antebellum literature were duly challenged by the war's "brutality and seemingly endless course…[which] strained existing literary modes and genres to their limits" (Lundberg xi, xiii). Something darker emerged that prefigured the realism and modernism movements that, as Finseth argues, challenged their culture's "pervasive ethic of martial heroism" (*Civil* 277), and in which the vantage of historical hindsight enabled a more fully contextualized and critical view of what the war did—or, rather, did not—accomplish. Beyond this, however, it is important to regard the Civil War era as not merely a literary interregnum but its own unique, historically valuable, and innovative moment in literary history. The Civil War disrupted American literature in profound ways, producing a range of literary responses. James M. Lundberg rightly describes the unique writing milieu of the 1860s as “a wartime culture at war with itself over how to represent and interpret the greatest catastrophe in American history” (viii). All of a sudden, form was under scrutiny, as authors mediated the safety and comfort found in familiar forms with the need to adapt an appropriate literary response to the raging and all-consuming war. Whitman proclaimed the clash of conflicting forms and themes in his poem “Eighteen Sixty-One”: “No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you terrible year” (2). Yet while crises of representation and form were certainly central problems, there was an equally significant crisis of authorial displacement that has been left out of the story of Civil War literary history.

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[114] See Fahs, The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861–1865 (2001); Lundberg's Foreword to The Poetry of the American Civil War (2013); and Faith Barrett's To Fight Aloud Is Very Brave: American Poetry and the Civil War (2012).

As one critical but underestimated response to the war’s disruption on American literature, this chapter examines authorial displacement within the Civil War represented in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and lesser-known Southern poet Margaret Junkin Preston. These two authors manipulated the poetic form and invoked the xenotopia trope and deathscapes to express the unique authorial issues of the 1860s: an encounter with the disruption and violence engendered by war on domestic soil, the accommodation of rapidly transforming death mores, and an understanding of the bifurcation of the national ethos as it affected authorship and a (dis)unified American literature. Specifically, I argue that Dickinson and Preston exemplify what I call “asocial authorship,” which registers authorial displacement in the form of effacement: displacement by way of erasure. Effacement was a unique problem within the Civil War milieu. The land was being effaced by violence and death; Lisa M. Brady catalogues the environmental destruction that war perpetrated upon the land, such as soil pollution from millions of lead projectiles, air and water pollution associated with massive, mobile armies and protracted battles, and the displacement and loss of trees, deer, fish, and other natural resources (4). Those bearing witness were deeply affected by the changing face of the land. Writing from a Union camp in Tennessee, Captain Thaddeus Minshall wrote, "[W]ar is a terrible thing. In its tread it desolates the fair face of nature" (qtd. in Brady 2). Both Dickinson and Preston presented in their poems a xenotopic effacement of landscape that signified the changing American land and nation being redefined by war and the mutating borders of political geography and American ideology. As the landscape in their poems is effaced, it is thus framed as *terra nullius*, a blank space that, like a palimpsest, can be reinscribed with something different and new—either positive or negative—but that also violently erases its past, emptied of symbolic potential and vexed by uncertainty. In this context rewriting is not the literal revision of a text but palimpsestic over-writing, the process of writing over the same surface with something entirely new and the threat of misinterpreting or disremembering that which was once there. A cycle of writing, erasure, and rewriting—and its replication of violent effacement—thus serves as a metaphor for the uncertain future of the war-torn nation and its landscape.

But asocial authorship also demonstrates a more complex, psychological, and individualized sense of effacement and rewriting: the author's anxiety over inscribing something meaningful—a lasting account of either the war or her authorial struggles therein—on the literary landscape. Rather than a communal, outward-facing sense of authorship of and for the masses, asocial authorship recedes into the interiority of self-effacement—a space in which the author has displaced herself from all parties exterior to the authorial act (i.e. readers, publishers, editors, etc.)—and thus registers a sense of hiding, self-obscuring, and agentively retreating from the public. Additionally, there is the figuratively asocial aspect to these authors' works.

Dickinson’s abstruse, philosophical poems defy serving a social agenda, and Preston subversively conveys her authorial anxieties through poems of Confederate literary nationalism.

I propose to read asocial authorship as a representation of authorial psychic development during the Civil War expressed through elegies that upend the traditional function of shared mourning. In his work on the American elegy, Cavitch illuminates the importance of elegies to a grieving society (and thus a particularly popular form in the Civil War era), stating that elegies help to “constitute the ‘work’ (both process and artifact) of mourning—a form of psychic labor that is also fundamental to the work of culture” (1). Because, as Cavitch further advises, the elegy is a “capricious, flexible, widely practiced poetic genre,” Dickinson and Preston both mobilize the power of traditional elegies honoring Civil War dead that they then turn into an uncanny inversion—a xenotopic deathscape on which loss is not reconciled—to express the inward-facing, individual/psychic trauma and/or metaphorical expressions of authorial loss amidst the chaos and realignment of the 1860s (1). In “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers” (c. 1861), one of her few published poems, Dickinson simultaneously describes the land above graves and the Civil War poet’s endeavor as “a Disc of Snow” (13), a space on which human history and time accrete and accumulate, but are nevertheless erased and rewritten by the hand of the poet as dots of ink on a blank white page that are inevitably “soundless” and ephemeral. As she generates a powerful image of the entombed dead hermetically sealed within this xenotopic panorama, she upends the traditional purpose of elegy by questioning the communal aspect of mourning and the poet’s ability to articulate the trauma occasioned by the Civil War. Similarly, using multiple frames of narration to efface the poet from the center of her work, Confederate poet Margaret Junkin Preston crafts a scene of mourning for an individual soldier that collapses inward upon the poet, speaker, and soldier as the social work of elegy fails to adhere and the mourning process must be picked up by a xenotopic nature. In so doing, Preston harnesses the power of the effacement crisis as a means for asserting poetic control in an unstable Confederate literary marketplace. Dickinson and Preston disrupt the teleological and linear aspects of both landscape and mourning. Land is represented as strange, purposeless, and disconnected from human society; grief is depicted as circular, unproductive, acommunal, perspectival, and perpetual. Scenes of death on a defamiliarized landscape create a feedback loop of irreconcilability that propels the poetic force of mourning into the realm of the abstract. Both author and the land, so clearly affected by war and the immediate historical moment, nevertheless ironically exist in a vacuum outside of both chronological time and geographical space in a non-teleological cycle of being continually erased and rewritten.

By identifying xenotopia at work in these authors' poems, Civil War poetry—and Dickinson and Preston specifically—can be understood in new ways. Asocial authorship emerges as a distinct and productive innovation in authorship that marks the transition from 1850s Romanticism to postwar realism; more importantly, asocial authorship provides us an understanding that even amidst war and the nation's uncertain future, authors were still striving to answer that call for an emergent "original genius" in American literature issued by Walter Channing almost fifty years prior during Irving's era (307). Poetry in the Civil War, claims Faith Barrett, had an "immediacy of impact," not just responding to or reflecting on the events of the war but rather helping to shape them (qtd. in Graham). I contend that poets' agentive shaping of the atmosphere around them was extended beyond the public, civic, and social milieu of war and collective mourning to the interior, self-reflexive, psychological, and theoretical realm of fleshing out the contours of the American author. Even in an atmosphere of chaos, violence, and uncertainty, the self-definition of American authorship and the forms and themes that American literature should embody were still evolving and as present in authors' minds as they ever were since the beginning of the American authorship debate.

Expanding Studies of Civil War Literature

This chapter seeks to contribute to a growing body of work on Civil War poetry that demonstrates, in Barrett's words, that "the Civil War was…a *poetry*-fueled war" (*To Fight* 3). Along with Barrett, other scholars are currently illuminating how and why, after the explosion of narrative/prose fiction in the 1850s, poetry was restored to a place of prominence in the 1860s.[115] Valued for its brevity, sincerity, intimacy, and adherence to strict rules of form and meter, poetry re-emerged as an essential genre for expressing concerns specific to the Civil War: violent loss and traumatic mourning, the ubiquity and universality of death, and the need for social unity. Barrett maintains that the war "heightened Americans' commitment to the discursive strategies of poetry," the form most readily able to capture the solemnity and severity of the subject in a succinct, sophisticated, and presumably elevated and artful form ("Words" 2). However much poetry rose to the demands and tastes of the common readers, its popularity was not matched by critical favor, either with contemporary critics or with modern scholars. In 1867, William Dean Howells, editor of *The Atlantic*, decried the lack of both realism and artistry in fictional representations of the war, stating, "Our war has not only left us the burden of a tremendous national debt, but has laid upon our literature a charge under which it has hitherto staggered very lamely" (qtd. in Goodman and Dawson 101).

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[115] See Elizabeth Bradford Frye and Coleman Hutchison's "What Remains Where: Civil War Poetry and Photography Across 150 Years" (2015); Elizabeth Renker's "Melville and the Worlds of Civil War Poetry" (2014); Lundberg's Foreword to The Poetry of the American Civil War (2013); Henry Hart's "For the Confederate and Union Dead: Reflections on Civil War Poetry" (2013); Vanessa Steinroetter's "'Reading the List': Casualty Lists and Civil War Poetry" (2013); and Barrett's To Fight Aloud (2012).

A critical attitude established in the realism movement immediately following the war was that Civil War literature was formulaic, maudlin, homogenous, and/or too political to be considered truly literary. This notion persisted throughout twentieth-century literary criticism as realism evolved into modernism, leading critics like Wilson to shrug off the "mediocre level of the poetry of the Civil War" as mere "versified journalism" and not the kind of introspective, ironic, private poetry valued in the twentieth century (474, 479). Lee Steinmetz concurred, disregarding Civil War poetry as "aesthetically inferior," valuable only as social commentary that one might find "interesting, frequently amusing, occasionally hilarious" (xxi). A decade later, Daniel Aaron dismissed all literary efforts made during the Civil War by denouncing it as an "unwritten war" (i), and even as late as 2005 in an introduction to his Civil War poetry anthology, J.D. McClatchy declared that most of the poetry written during and about the Civil War was "second-rate" (xvii). By looking at authorial effacement in the poetry of Dickinson and Preston, this chapter contributes to claims that not only is Civil War poetry worth scholarly pursuit for its historical value, but that centralizing author studies as a way of understanding the impact of the war reveals the highly complex epistemological underpinnings of negotiating the literary marketplace in the Civil War.

In addition to providing a new way of conceiving of authorial response to the war, this chapter builds on the recent upsurge in studies of Confederate literature, most notably Hutchison's *Apples and Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America* (2012). More studies need to engage antebellum Southern authorship as a whole, but particularly works of the Civil War era. Hutchison insists, "If southern literary studies has neglected its Confederate cousin, then nineteenth-century American literary studies has disowned it outright" (1–2). Perhaps the ultimate pariah of American Studies, Confederate literature is overlooked due to, as Hutchison contends, either the risk of being seen as endorsing its right to exist, or because military defeat caused literary historians to “see little reason to study in depth an abortive literature” (2–3). In the spirit of Giles’s deterritorialization, this chapter endeavors to avoid a retrospective assumption of Northern victory—to not read Confederate literature “proleptically or palinodically” (Hutchison 2). Jay Fliegelman reminds us that avoiding Confederate literature “not only embarrassingly reproduces a cultural history of winners, but cheats the student of confronting the discourse of paternalism and patriarchalism against which so many American texts…are written and for which others are nostalgic” (335). Moreover, such approaches abstract Union violence toward Confederate bodies and legitimize it via a righteous cause; as Fitzhugh Brundage states, “So much of the violence in the Civil War is laundered or sanctified by emancipation, but that result was by no means inevitable” (qtd. in Horwitz, “150”). Giles reiterates that it was only at the close of that war that America “consolidated [its] geography…into one political territory” (*Global* 9). To consider America as one “coherent political and economic entity” was an epistemological possibility only after the Reconstruction years (Giles, *Global* 9). As the war was raging, Confederate literature held just as much promise for longevity and for outlining the future of national literary culture as did Northern literature.

It is in this interest that this chapter gives equal attention to both Northern and Southern authorship, with particular focus on woman writers whose perspectives on the Civil War, and, specifically, authorship during the Civil War reveal a unique set of opportunities and constraints. To date, there is little scholarship specific to the Southern woman writer of the 1860s, and because of this, most of the work being done on Southern literature has to educate its readers on the existence of the authors in the study, displacing more complex considerations for historical explanations and contextual information.[116] Furthermore, I aim to justify further examination of Margaret Junkin Preston, not only on the basis of her popularity, but also on the illuminating power of her poetry. While Dickinson was relatively unknown in her own time, Preston struck a cultural nerve that deeply engaged Southerners during and after the war. But her poetry was also enriched by her Northern past, her husband's military commitments, and her own complicated anxieties regarding publication, all of which she registered in her work. For these reasons, Preston deserves a more thorough presence in future studies of antebellum female authorship, Confederate literature, and nineteenth-century authorship studies in general.

Agentive Asociality in Dickinson's Civil War Authorship

In *Patriotic Gore*, Wilson wrongly proclaims that Dickinson "never, so far as I know, refers to the war in her poetry" (488). Fast forward to twenty-first century scholarship and it has now been abundantly demonstrated that Dickinson's poetry was profoundly engaged with the war—and generally with the world around her—thanks to scholars like Cristanne Miller and Cody Marrs who have built on or extended Shira Wolosky's central claim in *A Voice of War* (1984): "There are in Dickinson's opus many poems that register, directly or indirectly, the civil conflagration raging around her….[A]lthough Dickinson centers attention on her private world, she does so in terms drawn from the public one" (xviii).[117] When reading within the context of the year it was written, it seems not only possible but probable that Dickinson is referencing the

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[116] See Carolyn Perry and Mary Weaks Baxter's anthology The History of Southern Women's Literature (2002) and Tiffany K. Wayne's Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America (2007).

[117] See Miller's Reading in Time: Emily Dickinson in the Nineteenth Century (2012) and Marrs's Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Long Civil War (2015).

Civil War dead when she writes in 1862, “It feels a shame to be Alive — / When Men so brave — are dead —” (1-2) and “I’m sorry for the Dead — Today —” (1).[118] When referencing the “Coy Dead” (12) who mutely pass through the phases of “Gravity — and Expectation — and Fear” (15), she seems to be struggling with the senselessness of the war’s massive death toll when she concludes, “A tremor just, that All’s not sure” (16).[119] The cold, indifferent construction of a personified “Cordiality of Death” (15), who arrives “after Horror” (1) and abruptly confronts the speaker with “a Face of Steel” (12) and “a metallic grin” (14), almost certainly rings of the machinery of war and its resulting death.[120]

At the very least, the war was a prolific time of writing for Dickinson. R. W. Franklin estimates that she wrote 937 poems between 1861 and 1865 (637), and Thomas H. Johnson called 1862–63 her “years of flood creativeness” (“The Vision” vii). Marrs thus resituates Dickinson as a bellum or transbellum writer, not the late addition to the “Renaissance” canon that has seen her pigeonholed as a disconnected outlier in the antebellum era (124). Barrett adds that, while deeply private, Dickinson was far from isolated and was, in fact, profoundly engaged with the events of the Civil War; she was a voracious reader of both literature and contemporary periodicals, while her father and brother were both esteemed intellectual and political figures in the Amherst community, thus importing talk of war into the home on a daily basis (“Words” 18). By reading Dickinson in the context of Civil War poetry, as Barrett advises we should, “we can begin to see not only the commitments which *separate* her work from that of her contemporaries but also the many interests and themes which *connect* her work to theirs" ("Words" 18). She was, in short, a product of her time as much as any American author can be said to be so.

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[118] Unless otherwise stated, all Dickinson poems referenced (and any numbering conventions) are taken from The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson edited by Thomas H. Johnson. These are respectively from [444] “It feels a shame to be Alive —” (c. 1862) and [529] “I’m sorry for the Dead — Today —” (c. 1862).

[119] From [408] “Unit, like Death, for Whom?” (c. 1862).

[120] From [286] “That after Horror — that ‘twas us —” (c. 1861).

In spite of the new work being done to exhibit her engagement with the world around her in the 1860s, however, Dickinson's fluid place in American Studies scholarship is proof of her elusive, often anomalous style, a characteristic obliquity that myriad scholars have offered to neatly summarize: "dense and hermetic" (Barrett, "Words" (17); "cryptically elusive" (Miller, *Poet's Grammar* 1); "a dialectical compound of repression and explosiveness" (Reynolds 427). In critical scholarship, Dickinson's reclusive personal nature is often conflated with her poetics: in both verse and life she seemed to value the indirect, distanced, and/or circuitous—the "certain Slant of light" that conceals more than it reveals (1).[121] And, yet, there are almost always moments of crisp clarity and austere directness in her poetry that complicate her ambiguities. There is nothing evasive about, for example, "I can wade Grief — / Whole Pools of it —" (1–2), nothing vague about "To die — takes just a little while — / They say it doesn't hurt —" (1–2).[122]

Demonstrating this in her correspondence with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Dickinson vacillated between metaphysical abstractions (of her personal feelings, life's transience, and her own disjointed psyche) and stark acknowledgements of the certainties of life as she saw them: deference to Higginson, apostasy, illness, war, and death. When Dickinson declares, "War feels to me an oblique place," it is often cited by scholars to evidence her self-distancing from current events, or, conversely, to attest that war was on her mind as she solicited Higginson for critical feedback on her poetry (Higginson 449). But scholars often omit this sentence's context. It appears in a paragraph about how war has complicated her correspondence with Higginson and an inquiry about whether or not he might visit her in the future: “I should have liked to see you before you became improbable. War feels to me an oblique place. Should there be other summers, would you perhaps come?” (Higginson 449). As she confesses her distance from both Higginson and the war, she implicitly invites both to come nearer to her, reflecting the variation of her poetry: all at once personal, direct, philosophical, bold, sincere, and, yes, evasive. Like the personified sea that “made as He would eat me up” (13) in “I started Early — Took my Dog” (1),[123] Dickinson’s poetry (and even her correspondence) often confronts and threatens to swallow before its inevitable withdrawal. It is this same ebb and flow that characterizes her relationship to authorship and the literary marketplace, never fully divorced nor committed. There is often a push and a pull to Dickinson as she both nears and retreats from that which she sees, knows, and/or desires. It is not in pure evasion but rather the nuanced interplay between presence and absence—between nearness and distance—characteristic of her elliptical style that can create interpretive complexities for definitive critical readings or neat categorization.

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[121] From [258] "There's a certain Slant of light," (c. 1861).

[122] From [252] "I can wade Grief —" (c. 1861) and [255] "To die — takes just a little while —" (c. 1861).

As Lena Holm Christensen observes, the quagmire of scholarship debating the textual history and “rightful” editions of Dickinson’s poetry demonstrates “how editors and critics appropriate the Dickinson text for various theoretical and practical purposes” (109). With full cognizance of the risk of appropriation, I argue that attention to the manuscript history and close reading of Dickinson’s “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers” strongly reveals her asocial authorship, the current of poetic innovation running through many of her Civil War-era poems. “Alabaster Chambers” is an irreconcilable elegy portraying a xenotopic scene of mourning, thus recording Dickinson’s engagement with the political and social milieus outside of the Dickinson homestead—specifically the literary marketplace and the Civil War—but also her consideration of authorial effacement in the Civil War era. As it evolved into its 1862 version, "Alabaster Chambers" transformed from a generic reflection on death into a meditation on the non-teleological aspects of both grief and rewriting in the 1860s. As the tombs of the anonymous dead fail to resolve into communal mourning, the grief cycle contracts inward into a space of self-conscious mourning for authorial effacement and the perpetual cycle of poetic insufficiency in responding to the trauma of the war. As with many of her Civil War-era poems, "Alabaster Chambers" executes a self-reflexive critique of both poet and public sphere, in this case a response to the fragile state of America during the war and a meditation on the problematic facets of literary culture occasioned by the necessity of revision/rewriting.

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[123] From [520] “I started Early — Took my Dog —” (c. 1862).

Though a full textual history of the evolution of "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" would be its own study, it is important to note that it was first published as "The Sleeping" (sometimes referred to as the "babbling bee" version) in the *Springfield Daily Republican* in March of 1862, then revised several times through epistolary exchanges with Dickinson's sister-in-law, Susan Huntington Dickinson, as well as Samuel Bowles and Higginson.[124] The version considered here reflects a handwritten copy sent to Higginson late in her arc of revisions (and after its publication as "The Sleeping") as chronicled in Johnson's *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*.[125] The poem's many iterations and revisions represent a process of rewriting that Dickinson continuously submitted herself to: expressing (or perhaps feigning) female modesty and/or inexperience, she solicited commentary by sending drafts of poems to those she respected for the purpose of refining and perhaps publishing, exposing herself to an exterior (albeit controlled) public sphere. Pushing her text outward for interpretation and revision, she ultimately withdrew to the interiority of the sanctity of her authorship and poem's originary integrity. Outside of a few small but meaningful changes, this version of "Alabaster Chambers" returns full circle, after new stanzas were inserted and removed in the rewriting process, to bearing a strong similarity to the original handwritten "first version" (an admittedly dubious concept in Dickinson studies). In the poem, Dickinson, in characteristically oblique fashion, delivers two stanzas of interrupted fragments that collectively appear to detail the burial site of a group of people—possibly Civil War casualties—and the peaceful state of removal from temporal and social disruption upon death. The poem's conception and the author's willing submission to a rewriting process immediately register her asocial authorship that she then further explores in the poem—and throughout her Civil War oeuvre—through xenotopia and an irreconcilable elegy.

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[124] For a more complete discussion of the composition history of this poem, see Thomas H. Johnson's The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Including Variant Readings Critically Compared with All Known Readings and/or Christensen's Editing Emily Dickinson: The Production of an Author (2008).

[125] This version is what R. W. Franklin calls version F in The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Volume I (Variorum Edition). Though scholars are safe to steer clear of words like "preferred" or "final," this version seems to represent some sort of evolution in Dickinson's pursuit of the poem. Based on when it was written and to whom it was sent (Higginson), version F contained some sort of significant development for Dickinson and most certainly an evolution in both form and theme from "The Sleeping" and other previous iterations.

In the first stanza, the authoritative, omniscient speaker frames a contemplative scene in which it would seem that some collective grouping of dead—the "meek members of the Resurrection" (4)—lie secure underground in their smooth white burial tombs, unobtruded temporally (i.e. by the passage of time) or physically by the elements of natural cycles, such as dew, sunlight, or excessive temperatures:

> Safe in their Alabaster Chambers —
> Untouched by Morning —
> And untouched by Noon —
> Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection,
> Rafter of Satin — and Roof of Stone — (1–5)

At first glance, the "Resurrection" presumably refers to the Protestant doctrine of either the reunification of body and soul or the reanimation of corporeal bodies upon the return of Christ on judgment day. An important component of Christian theology specifically, the preservation and objectification of the corpse was a commonplace of antebellum death rituals across religious and political divides, that is, until the war disrupted the intimate connection forged between a pristine body and grieving loved ones by way of a private, home-based ceremony.

Like democratic/hemispheric authorship, black authorship, and sustainable authorship before it, the asocial authorship of Dickinson and Preston depended upon and was expressed by way of death anxieties endemic to the period in which they were writing. The massive death toll attributable to both war and disease in the early 1860s—recently refigured by J. David Hacker to 752,000, a 20% increase over the conventional figure of 620,000 (338)—brought death to the fore in new and significant ways, and represented, as Drew Gilpin Faust concludes, a "violation of prevailing assumptions about life's proper end—about who should die, when and where, and under what circumstances" (xii). Gary Laderman explains that the conditions of war and the overwhelming number of bodies required an epistemological evolution: the formerly personalized, private, and home-based burial were supplanted by new standards for undertaking the obligations toward the dead (123–24).[126] There was a "growing public indifference to the corpse" as a photographic reality of death in newspapers domesticated and objectified the dead body (Laderman 124). The process of embalming, taboo in antebellum culture, was suddenly a valued method for transporting soldiers' bodies home for burial, albeit for the fortunate families who could afford it. The death industry was born: a "new and modern death specialist" emerged who validated an increasingly commodified and artificially treated dead body, and death practices were relocated from the realm of the personal and intimate to a cold and distanced domain of commodification and fetishization (Laderman 125). The body itself became a space of effacement, removed from the organic and natural and now a site of violence, invasion, disruption, and unnatural chemical preservation. As much as Americans "sought to manage battlefield deaths in a way that mitigated separation from kin and offered a substitute for the traditional stylized deathbed performance," the reality of war dictated a new approach to death that feigned intimacy where intimacy was lacking and rallied communal support for individual losses that were both abstracted and distanced from the loved ones left behind (Faust 11).

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[126] Laderman elaborates, "The funeral journey, so ingrained in Protestant culture before the war, was impossible for most soldiers who lost their lives in the conflict. Expiration in the home, surrounded by family members, friends, and neighbors; the final opportunity to view the remains before burial; the solemn procession from the home to the grave; and the careful, attentive rituals of corpse disposal—all of these traditions were shattered when soldiers fell in battle. In spite of enormous obstacles, efforts were made to adapt to the new circumstances and offer the dead as much respect and consideration as possible" (123).

Mangled and/or dismembered, the bodies of dead soldiers rarely made it back home; the few that received burial rites were usually quickly dispatched to shallow graves hastily dug. "In the face of such difficulties," observes Franny Nudelman, "wartime artists searched for a way to commemorate dead soldiers that reflected, even elevated, the corpse's absence and, by extension, the mass scale of death in war" (6). In "Alabaster Chambers," however, Dickinson's dead are not only present but have been given proper Christian burial, suggesting that they are either not Civil War soldiers or that there is a figurative component at work, perhaps ironically focusing on the violent upheaval of traditional death rituals. As she depicts "Safe" and "Untouched" bodies that are given the final resting place of an elite member of society, with a coffin lined in satin and a headstone, she draws attention to the aspects of burial that hierarchize society based upon financial privilege. A "good death" is valued in economic terms, as the religious context of death and burial is subsumed by commodification and industry. Certainly Dickinson could be describing the dead in an upscale Northern cemetery far from war, but that in and of itself would be an inversion (or perhaps subversion) of the Civil War elegy and northern readers' expectations of martial themes and forms.

Dickinson further upends the common elegiac construct of Civil War poetry: instead of a single specific loss inviting abstracted communal mourning, her “meek members” represent a collective of dead inspiring her singular grief and/or contemplation. In the violent disruption of the war, writers and readers alike turned to the traditional elegy in attempt to contain, express, share, and make sense of death on an inscrutable scale—death that was suddenly brutal, and yet removed, deritualized, and abstracted by its remoteness. Elegies, claims Lundberg, offered a familiar framework for finding “solace in imagining a meaningful death” through images of “spontaneous death rituals and funerals among distant strangers” and “a model for grieving and mourning” by connecting readers to larger causes of community and nation (xvi). The elegist utilized the death act, and, more importantly, the mourning process, to forge a coherent sense of national identity (either Union or Confederacy) in uncertain times. Barrett proposes that Civil War culture was a unique time for the conflation of public and private in literature: “when a poem represents the death of a son in battle, grieving becomes a process that is at once collective and individual, and the staged or dramatic quality of poetic expression enables a mingling of publicly expressed and privately felt emotions” (“Words” 2). Private grief expands outward into a public forum, allowing for a shared experience that serves a sociopolitical function.

Because of its ability to accommodate many discursive strategies, its flexibility in both civic and private modes, and its heterogeneous utility, elegiac poetry was in high demand and filled newspapers and journals in the 1860s. While war raged on, capitalism surged—as H. W. Brands reveals, “the war was just the beginning of the capitalist ascendance” (6)—and beyond their social function, elegies became commodities fueling the economic engines of the literary marketplace. However, as Buell maintains, Civil War poetry demonstrates that commodification “may unleash creative energies as well as impose self-censorship…literary commodity forms can act as focalizers and energizers as well as containers and constrictors" ("American Civil" 132–34). For writers, elegies presented a complex conflation of public and private worlds, mediating political allegiances simultaneously alongside expressions of personal grief and the achievement of collective mourning, but also navigating the process as a profession with monetary survival at stake. As writers sought to accommodate the demands of readers and possibly work through their own grief by participating in communal mourning, authorship became intricately bound in a complicated new relationship to a commodified ritualization of death practices. Civil War poetry served these two entangled purposes of process and product: (1) the social as communal mourning, and 2) the economic as commodity. This entanglement of conflicting purposes and competing registers impelled Dickinson to turn the opposite direction, innovating within the bounds of asocial authorship to record the productive and destructive aspects of effacement.

Thus Dickinson often inverted the elegiac paradigm (from communal mourning of a single loss to a group of dead being mourned by the lone author/poet) throughout her Civil War poetry. For example, in 1862, her speaker contemplates how "all the Dead, lie down" (2) in a xenotopic arrangement in which normal topographical and atmospheric conditions of a daytime landscape are strangely inverted and transmuted to the corporeal space of the poet's senses, demarcating a line between her ownership of the experience of the dead in contrast to the communal experience of social mourning she effaces.[127] Instead of feeling the "Frost" (5) of their death, the solitary poet singularly encounters their collective demise like "Siroccos" (6) that "crawl" (6) across her skin, and something she "tasted" (9). The strange landscape on which she encounters these dead abruptly inverts to a space "like Midnight" (16), literally and figuratively frozen and effaced by motionlessness: "When everything around that ticked — has stopped — /

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[127] From [510] "It was not Death, for I stood up," (c. 1862).

And Space stares all around — / Or grisly Frosts" (17–19). Only the poet captures the dead here in this xenotopic space of indifference and effacement: amidst the "Chaos — Stopless — cool" (21), nothing exists, mourns the poet, to "justify — Despair" (24). Grief is suspended to be either perpetually experienced or perpetually effaced, but there is no resolve or reconciliation to this strange pseudo-elegy. This irreconcilable elegy is one example of Dickinson's consistent preoccupation with groups of dead (for example, the dead "Neighbors" [3] for whom "There's no Geography" [9], or when she repeatedly asks, "What care the Dead" [1] in 1862)[128] that inhabit her poems as much as personified death or thoughts of her own mortality. Moreover, her groups of dead are not presented within the traditional elegy form or expanded outside the realm of the poet's psychological or metaphysical register or the ironic, distanced perspective of the poet who, in contemplating death, appreciates "a look of Agony" (1) because it represents truth and cannot be simulated or sentimentalized.[129] And whether intended for publication or not, the pervasiveness of the elegy form would have rendered her own Civil War poems discordant expressions of the problem with articulating the war or mourning the Civil War dead.

While some critics read a confident note of optimism (or, at worst, benign discomfort) in "Alabaster Chambers,"[130] a tone of irony should be detected in the first word of the poem ("Safe") and therefore direct the reader to the speaker's establishment of paradoxical tension. The safety of the dead is limited to the space in which they find themselves, though they submissively await "Resurrection" or reanimation of some kind. The homophonic play on

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[128] From [489] "We pray — to Heaven —" (c. 1862) and [592] "What care the Dead, for Chanticleer —" (c. 1862).

[129] From [241] "I like a look of Agony," (c. 1861).

[130] Inder Nath Kher reads the poem as a positive reflection on death as an escape from the suffering of life (192). Linda Freedman argues that the alabaster chambers represent a "gilded but impenetrable prison" preserved out of time (164). Barton Levi St. Armand considers the "arch tone" to be "that of a girl who has not been invited to the senior prom" yet notes Dickinson's "wry satire" compressed into the word "meek" (89).

“Morning”/mourning distances the dead from both time and human community, so they lie in an indeterminate interim space of “Sleep” in which they are hermetically sealed off from both the physical present and the metaphysical afterlife. This represents a key revision from the 1861 version of the poem, wherein the meek members “Lie” instead of “Sleep.” Whereas in the first iteration of the poem, the dead could be seen as corpses lying in graves, in the 1862 evolution, Dickinson’s dead now occupy a preternatural and undefined place of spiritual and psychic indeterminacy. The only contact experienced by the dead is within the walls of their colorless alabaster entombments concealed below ground, unable to be restored to society, transported into the afterlife, or to even decay and reintegrate into the soil. During the war, as Nudelman advises, “organic imagery described decay as a benevolent force,” and the decomposing soldier’s corpse became a powerful symbol of “the subordination of identity, indeed the sacrifice of life itself, in the name of national community” (6). However, Dickinson does not submit to this idea, effacing or even denying that decomposition is occurring in the safe and artificial but preternatural suspension within the alabaster chambers. There is a non-teleological current running throughout this stanza, as Dickinson’s plural “dead,” in the seemingly innocuous act of traditional burial, are denied the honors of national sacrifice and spiritual reward, effaced from achieving a social or spiritual function, trapped in their perfect, pristine tombs.

Dickinson displaces the teleological aspects of proper death and burial and interrupts the social function of mourning throughout many of her Civil War-era poems. In 1861, she wrote of the transformed American landscape: “I’ve known a Heaven, like a Tent” (1) to “Pluck up its stakes, and disappear” (3) without any noise of dismantling, the process of spatial change marked only by “the miles of Stare — / That signalize a Show’s Retreat — / In North America —” (6–

8).[131] Suggestive of the North she knew only one year prior—the “Figment of the Thing / That dazzled, Yesterday” (9–10)—she mourns for “Men, and Feats” (12) who have “Dissolved as utterly —” (13) as a bird who is “swallowed up, of View” (17) in a xenotopic wash of effaced, featureless sky. In this poem, there is no confirmation of the death but rather absorption into a xenotopic atmosphere, thus providing no justification for mourning or burial and leaving only the speaker’s remote and incongruous observation that enfolds the idea of wartime death into an odd carnivalesque scene. The following year, she used simple and beautifully serene natural imagery to anaphorically reiterate the massive amount of battlefield deaths for which no burial or collective mourning exists:

> They dropped like Flakes —
> They dropped like Stars —
> Like Petals from a Rose —
> When suddenly across the June
> A wind with fingers — goes —
>
> They perished in the Seamless Grass —
> No eye could find the place —
> But God can summon every face
> Of his Repealless — List.[132]

Here Dickinson effaces the violence by depicting death as a mild summer wind that almost caresses the bodies from life into death with gentle fingers. In this stark and efficient juxtaposition of brutal violence on a strange landscape of continuous grass interrupted only by corpses, mourning is distanced and removed, as no one can bear witness but God. Plural bodies that have perished in the grass in 1862 can scarcely be read as anything but the Civil War dead, but Dickinson displaces them from the purview of either her, the poet, or the grieving community. Unlike the lists of names filling the daily newspapers and notifying communities of dead soldiers, these dead appear on a cosmic list maintained by God, displaced far from the physical or spiritual understanding of the mourners. As this list is “Repealless,” Dickinson implies the finality and perpetuity of death, but there is also something homophonic in the notion of “peal” that recalls funeral bells. The prefix “re” appropriately registers that, were proper burial to occur, there would be multiple tolls necessitating a repeated “re-peal[ing]” that Dickinson denies by the suffix “less.” The strange homogeneity of grassy landscape is eerily quiet, unvisited by the eyes of the mourners or the sounds of burial. Through the xenotopic deathscape, Dickinson contemplates how the war perpetuates a violence against the author who becomes as displaced as both the dead and the grieving. Against the backdrop of the potential failure of the American experiment, Dickinson’s asocial authorship acknowledges—and at times mourns for—the displacement of a telos, the uncertainty and impermanence that come from erasure and effacement and the lack of an ultimate object, end, or purpose. Asocial authorship thus embodies circularity and impermanence: the perpetual erasure and rewriting of the land, the perpetual erasure and rewriting of the nation, and the perpetual erasure and rewriting of the author herself.

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[131] From [243] “I’ve known a Heaven, like a Tent —” (1861).

[132] From [409] “They dropped like Flakes —” (c. 1862).

Through Dickinson’s Civil War poems, the trauma engendered by war thus broadens beyond the physical into the public arena of the literary and the private realm of the individual authorial psyche. As “Alabaster Chambers” moves into the second stanza, the speaker depicts a xenotopic, accretive surface above the dead on which layers of time, movement, historical process, conflict, violence, and death accumulate in arcs, culminating in the complete effacement of both the individuals and the land:

> Grand go the Years,
> In the Crescent above them —
> Worlds scoop their Arcs —
> And Firmaments — row —
> Diadems — drop —
> And Doges — surrender —

> Soundless as Dots,
> On a Disc of Snow. (6–13)

The “Disc of Snow” in the final line of the poem is the defamiliarized topography of xenotopia (the total effacement of the land by a colorless, cold substance) and represents the largest outside circle at the end of a concentric chain of forces collapsing in upon humankind. Suggesting grand circular, temporal, and historical trajectories that stretch out in perpetuity, the immensity of this palimpsest obscures the individual. The surface of the land is depicted as blank and non-teleological—circular, non-linear, and unproductive—shrouded in snow and thus unable to sustain life or preserve societies.[133] The notion of the “blank” or “blankness” is a constant preoccupation for Dickinson: in 1862, she declares that “Pain — has an element of Blank — / It cannot recollect / When it Begun” (1–3) or where it ends, noting the non-teleological aspect of pain that “has no Future — but itself” (5).[134] In 1863, she writes of her “Mechanic feet” (3) that traverse “From Blank to Blank — / A Threadless Way” (1–2), marking a xenotopic landscape that is both absent of features or geographical division and is non-teleological.[135]

In “Alabaster Chambers,” the blank and empty surface of the land becomes *terra nullius*, land belonging to no one and serving no function. Purposeless and featureless, the land exists only as a receptacle for the corporeal remains of humanity. If those buried are indeed Civil War dead, then the land is perpetually marked by the war’s violence and death toll, achieving nothing productive or regenerative out of a war effort that was (by Northern standards) intended to unify.

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[133] Dickinson replicates the effacement of the land above graves in [411] “The Color of the Grave is Green —” (c. 1862). She devotes two stanzas to three separate gravesites: a literal grave in summer, a literal grave in winter, and a metaphorical internal grave representing her speaker’s interiority. The summer grave is effaced in a wash of “Green” (1) that covers the “infinite asleep” and would not be known to the viewer or mourner “Except it own a Stone —” (4). In an image not far from the “Disc of Snow” in “Alabaster Chambers,” the winter grave is effaced in snow that also obscures and interrupts the relationship between the living and the dead.

[134] From [650] “Pain — has an Element of Blank —” (c. 1862).

[135] From [761] “From Blank to Blank —” (c. 1863).

Firmaments—here bearing the import of both nature/sky, as well the figurative intimations of a collection of people/community—engage in the ambiguous verb "row," which may connote involvement in an acrimonious conflict or lining up in an accumulated order. In either formulation, some collection of forces above the surface of the land gathers energy that gets expended and replaced, either in conflict or natural progression. As generations succeed generations, political and military leaders rise and fall, and discord occurs, the mourning process, when seen from a panoptic, circular perspective, is itself only a small, soundless dot on the uncanny surface of the land, unable to converge with the dead and create something concrete and meaningful for the immediate social work of mourning. Cavitch claims that the elegy form traditionally contains a teleological trajectory, a "dynamic activity" that enervates the individual loss and redirects that force toward a communal purpose (20). Elegy is social work: collective laboring for some ultimate goal of reproduction, resolution, or reconciliation. Dickinson dismantles the social and reconciliatory functions of elegy, suggesting that mourning is both perpetual and futile, resolution impossible: in a later poem, she revisits the elliptical and perpetual aspects of death and mourning: "Oh for a Disc to the Distance / Between Ourselves and the Dead!" (15–16). Grief is a cycle of rewriting the same narrative with new details, an apt metaphor for the repetitious rewriting of both form and authorship in the literary marketplace.

With the disruption of both the land and the mourning process established in "Alabaster Chambers," Dickinson's irreconcilable elegy moves from the external and literal dead to an internal space of establishing asocial authorship, through which she articulates a series of authorial problems: how American society will reconcile the war and the poet's role therein, how her function as poet fails to mediate the trauma and violence, and the complicated synonymy between the commodified body of the dead soldier and the equally commodified effaced author in the 1860s marketplace. Once again, the second stanza begins with an ironic tone—"Grand go the Years"—and the speaker proceeds to roll the Civil War into the "grand" narrative of political supersessions and revolutions that mirrors the cycles of the natural world. He or she seems to be unsure of how to make sense of the political and philosophical present, regardless of what that present entails, which is a problem for a poet tasked with—and elevated for—his or her interpretive power. Lundberg contends that poets in the mid–nineteenth century enjoyed an elevated status, but also bore an important social responsibility as "interpreters of events, givers of meaning, transmitters of feeling" (viii). As Americans searched for meaning and guidance in a time of radical uncertainty, one with many possible futures unfolding, they looked to a guiding voice of established authority in the public sphere that the poet could provide. But Dickinson either cannot or will not guide her readers toward the possibility of resolve that comes from social mourning. Instead, she wrote Higginson, "My business is circumference," indicating she was thinking non-teleologically about her own self and authorship (448). Just as the disfigured landscape, literally strewn with American bodies in Dickinson's time, can be disrupted and effaced, so can the mourning process fail to achieve reconciliation, regardless of whether or not political reconciliation is achieved for America, and so can the poet fail to achieve an original record and artistic expression of the current moment.

At a time when she was actively pursuing entrance into American literary culture, "Alabaster Chambers" exemplifies Dickinson's anxiety about her responsibility as an American poet of the Civil War era, a unique—and, as with any era, yet unwritten—epoch in American history. It is one of only a handful of poems that she published, and certainly one of only a few that she revised upon the advice of outside readers, and while its evolution and publishing history demonstrate that she maintained a vexed and equivocal relationship with the Northern publishing industry, the fact remains that there *was* a relationship at all. To Higginson, Dickinson professed an attitude of self-displacement from the trappings of a public life as poet and the difficult grind of competing in the literary marketplace: "I smile when you suggest that I delay 'to publish,' that being foreign to my thought as firmament to fin…If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her; if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase, and the approbation of my dog would forsake me then. My barefoot rank is better" (447). It seems as if she felt the Civil War marketplace was a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation, but the fact remains that, in spite of her demurrals, Dickinson not only engaged in but courted the practice of collaborative revision and publication, the process of rewriting and the uncomfortable dance of constructing an authorship that was effaced by the very feedback she solicited from Higginson (among others).

Xenotopic effacement of land and the idea of violent erasure held metaphorical implications for authors who were being effaced by the processes of commodification and rewriting in the literary marketplace. Fahs declares that "popular war literature reveals…an expanded realm of imaginative freedom," and this is partially true: writers had more opportunity for publication in more genres than ever before (16).[136] However, the popular war literature to which Fahs refers was itself an exercise in restriction and rewriting: the formats were limited, formulaic, and redundant. To accommodate readers' expectations of military-themed subjects, authors were essentially recycling forms and themes from one another's works in a feedback loop of conventionality and reproduction. The Civil War literary marketplace was a culture of rewriting, grafting the specific details of death on the battlefield and/or the grief of those back home on top of existing generic modes that deviated only slightly from one another, subordinating the idea of an original American authorship to the requirements of war and the uncertainties it imposed on a stable sense of “America.” The expectations placed on female authors were even narrower, as Bell explains how women writers had to contend with the common public opinion that ambition and commercial success were “unfeminine,” and that women should not flaunt their success as a form of personal self-assertion (143). Such strictures carried an additional layer of gendered effacement for both Dickinson and Preston.

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[136] Fahs expands on the available forms of popular war literature: "Adventure war stories, juvenile war literature, war romances, race stories, sentimental soldier poems, war humor" (16).

In other works, Dickinson drew parallels between the Civil War dead and her space of authorship as meditations on commodified bodies. Such a maneuver can be seen in [444] “It feels a shame to be Alive —” (c. 1862), in which the speaker mourns for the dead “Men so brave” (2). Upon looking at “The Stone — that tells defending Whom / This Spartan put away” (5–6), the speaker observes, “What little of Him we — possessed / In Pawn for Liberty” (7–8). The metaphorical price that is “Sublimely paid” (9) becomes literally quantifiable in economic terms, as the speaker asks, “Do we deserve — a Thing — / That lives — like Dollars — must be piled / Before we may obtain?” (10–12). The Civil War renders the sacrifice of the dead, the “unsustained — Saviors —” (19), just another American commodity, much like the author, that proves ephemeral, “dissolved” in “Battle’s — horrid Bowl” (15–16). Nodding to literary celebrity, she contemplates that “It may be — a Renown to live —” (17), but, ultimately, Dickinson’s speaker/poet “envies the Distinguished Dust” in which the Civil War dead lie, suggesting that it is better to be commodified in death than in life.

Part of Dickinson’s discomfort with the literary marketplace was surely occasioned by the complexities of pursuing publication as a female author. As many scholars have shown, Dickinson exhibited a concern with her relationship to myriad social forces and institutions as affected by gender, such as marriage, work, religion, education, and so forth.[137] To separate the woman from the poet, Suzanne Juhasz concludes, represents an unnatural fragmentation, as Dickinson herself was the first to "observe and declare the necessary conjunction between woman and poet" (9). But less attention is paid to Dickinson's gendered relationship to the literary marketplace. In 1862, Dickinson wrote,

> They shut me up in Prose —
> As when a little Girl
> They put me in the Closet —
> Because they liked me "still" —
>
> Still! Could themselves have peeped —
> And seen my Brain — go round —
> They might as wise have lodged a Bird
> For Treason — in the Pound —
>
> Himself has but to will
> And easy as a Star
> Abolish his Captivity —
> And laugh — No more have I — (1–12)[138]

While scholars have offered various responses to this poem,[139] I agree with Richard B. Sewall in that Dickinson's concern here is "more with herself as poet than with herself as child," noting the young girl in the closet is "almost unmistakably the young poet struggling to assert herself against the 'prosaic' influences around her" and the failure of her literary advisers to encourage her to write poetry" (327–28). However, I argue that the metaphor Dickinson draws on—one in which figures of authority have overtly enclosed the poet in a space defined by/confined in

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[137] For touchstones of Dickinson gender studies throughout the years, see Fred D. White's Approaching Emily Dickinson: Critical Currents and Crosscurrents Since 1960 (2008); Margaret Dickie's "Feminist Conceptions of Dickinson" (2005); Mary Loeffelholz's Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory (1991); and Albert J. Gelpi's The Tenth Muse (1975).

[138] [613] "They shut me up in Prose —" (c. 1862).

[139] Anna Priddy notes the "wild freedom" that Dickinson attributes to the poet, whom she frames as exceptional (200), while Wendy Barker cautions against reading it as a "bitter, resentful diatribe" but rather the child's "statement of victorious assertion" (78).

“Prose”—reveals something even more complex about her relationship to the literary marketplace. In this image, gatekeepers of the literary marketplace have deliberately, perhaps even violently, silenced the female poet in a space of overt poetic effacement, confined to ordinary “Prose” and denied poetic expression in a “still” cocoon not unlike the Disc of Snow in “Alabaster Chambers.”

Dowling claims that antebellum interactions between male publishers and female authors were patterned after “the separate-spheres domestic ideology, the most accessible code of gender conduct available in their culture (66). Women were expected to downplay their agency and be deferential, reserved, and inspired by duty, not represent themselves as possessing genius. But the poet shut up in Prose has a Brain that the gatekeepers cannot contain or limit, as it will “go round” regardless of their attempts to silence or control it, which Dickinson brazenly compares to a crime against the state (“Treason,” a particularly weighty word in the nationalistic atmosphere of wartime culture). Her gender draws a significant line between male and female writers, as well, as evidenced by the metaphor of her own girlhood that gets juxtaposed against the ambiguous male alternative offered in the final stanza. While not explicitly identified, the “Himself” (9) she refers to, whether it be another male poet or a god-figure, only has to will his creation into existence in order to “Abolish his Captivity” (11), an option denied an effaced speaker who laments, “No more have I” (12). To be denied entry to the literary marketplace, Dickinson suggests, is an issue of gender bias.

In the 1860s, the literary industry was newly fraught with tensions between authors and publishers as more women entered the literary marketplace. Fellow Massachusetts writer Mary Abigail Dodge, writing pseudonymously as Gail Hamilton, gave a retrospective accounting of the Civil War publishing industry in her 1870 exposé *A Battle of the Books,* noting the “chronic feud between authors and publishers" that was partially inherited from the 1850s and partially a new outgrowth of the turbulent 1860s and the changing face of the publishing industry (9). A matter of "deep and serious import," Dodge situates the literary marketplace within the masculine arena of war, representing its divisiveness as a barbarous struggle. She draws on the readily available post-Civil War metaphor of violence; however, unlike the war, which saw people striving for a unity of purpose in the war effort and ultimately ended, the literary marketplace of the 1860s, Dodge insists, was a space of disunity, anarchy, and perpetual competition: "It is a sort of bush-whacking, in which every man whacks on his own account, and frequently does not know that there is any other bushwhacker than himself. So the warfare goes on, but to no end" (9). Dodge further charges that the competition and commodification endemic to a free market have created insularity and mistrust, a phenomenon wherein authors no longer collaborate or champion one another in the marketplace but rather withhold information and even sabotage one another in an effort to get published: "Nobody learns wisdom from another man's experience, because the other man keeps his experience to himself…Trade laws know no more of gallantry than trade winds…There is nothing but supply and demand; nothing but buy and sell" (9, 287–88). Once again, she likens it to a masculine paradigm (maritime trade), reiterating that the problem is one inherent in androcentric models. The 1860s literary marketplace, declares Dodge, is a Darwinian eat-or-be-eaten realm that leads to literary fame (which she detested as an unfortunate byproduct of a successful publishing career) or anguished anonymity: "To him who understands it, and guides himself by it, it is a chariot of state bearing him on to fame and fortune. To him who does not comprehend it and flings himself against it, it is a car of Juggernaut, crushing him beneath its wheels, without passion, but without pity" (288).

Elsewhere Dickinson explores the privilege afforded the male poet, contrasting his experience against her own. In one example, she reflects on the Poet who “Distills amazing sense / From ordinary Meanings —” (1–2), but she is frank about how his poetic ability comes at her expense: “The Poet — it is He — / Entitles Us — by Contrast — / To ceaseless Poverty —” (10–12).[140] It is unclear whether this is literal poverty due to her inability to publish as a woman—the impoverished “Us” then referring to female authors collectively—or perhaps a more figurative mental or spiritual poverty. But she insists on the “Contrast” (11) between herself and the literal and/or spiritual reward of the male poet as the great “Discloser” with “a Fortune — / Exterior — to Time —” (15–16). In another poem of 1862, she contemplates the “Poets” that she lists first among all that she values (before the sun, summer, and even heaven) but her final two lines take an introspective turn, in which she perhaps describes the poetic endeavor for her personally: “It is too difficult a Grace — / To justify the Dream —” (15–16).[141] Whether that difficulty is due to the problem encountered by publishing as a woman and/or within the Civil War, or reflective of Dickinson’s own unique psychological interpretation of the literary endeavor, she does not reveal, but there is an overarching coherency between some of her poems that indicates she was not only thinking about the literary marketplace and the poet’s role, but that those thoughts were sometimes gendered and specific to the *female* poet’s role.

Throughout her Civil War poetry, Dickinson periodically contemplated the personal cost to the authorial psyche of the act of engaging the public sphere. In [234] “You’re right — ‘the way *is* narrow’ —” (c. 1861), Dickinson speaks to an ambiguous gatekeeping system that is commonly read as one of her many meditations on religious fundamentalism, but it serves as an equally appropriate metaphor for the literary marketplace of the 1860s. The poem points out all of the strictures faced by anyone attempting to navigate that gatekeeping system: “And ‘difficult the Gate’ — / And ‘few there be’ — Correct again — / That ‘enter in — thereat’ —” (2–4). This process, Dickinson considers, “’*Tis* Costly” (5) and akin to the commodification of death itself: “With but the ‘Discount’ of the *Grave — /* Termed by the *Brokers* — ‘*Death*’!” (7–8). Ultimately, Dickinson ends the poem with an uncertain shrug, “I guess —” (12), as if in submission to the process of a perpetual and never-ending cycle of commodification. A few years later, in a more direct and cynical meditation on the cost of submitting oneself to a commodity system, she wrote [709] “Publication — is the Auction” (c. 1863), which reproduces some of the same imagery of snow and white blankness in “Alabaster Chambers” to effect an attitude of self-effacement. Likening the act of publication to the “Auction / Of the Mind of Man —” (1–2), in two short but pungent lines she acknowledges the way in which an author must submit herself wholesale as a commodity to the open market in order to bring her work from the private space of the mind to the public space of readership. She connects the notions of corporeality and textual product—the “Corporeal illustration” (11) of “Thought” (10)—and leaves the ambiguity of what exactly, at this point, is being commodified: the poem, American authorship generally, or the poet’s body as a physical being subjected to an increasingly panoptic literary marketplace and celebrity culture. As she acerbically asserts at this point in her writing career, “Poverty — be justifying / For so foul a thing” (3–4), it is as if two more years of attempting to navigate the vicissitudes and strictures of the Civil War literary marketplace closed the suspended animation of her asocial authorship in which she found the effacement to be both productive and destructive, opting to withdraw entirely from that which she felt would ultimately compromise. Ultimately, as we know, Dickinson chose self-effacement by way of physical seclusion—“I do not cross my father’s ground,” she wrote Higginson (452)—retreating from publishing into a cocoon of her own design. Infamously garbed only in white, the poet herself becomes her own alabaster chamber sequestered in her father’s Amherst home. Her self-effacement, then, was not so much a posture of modesty and retreat into the domestic sphere of wifely and motherly duty but rather an agentive, reflexive asocial response to the 1860s literary marketplace and the broad crisis of effacement in the Civil War.

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[140] From [448] “This was a Poet — It is That” (c. 1862).

[141] From [569] “I reckon — when I count at all —” (c. 1862).

“Alabaster Chambers” provides evidence of a rare but not isolated moment in which Dickinson transcends her authorial anxieties and attempts to enter the public sphere, actively pursuing the transmutation of author to commodity. The poem’s failure to resolve or achieve a static version inaccessible to further revision serves as an apt parallel to the poet’s inability to apprehend or make meaning of the Civil War. As other elegists and poets were actively publishing work with very direct political and social purposes, Dickinson was either incapable of or unwilling to attach a telos to the present moment of her poetry, instead using the xenotopia trope to turn inward to her authorial psyche and implicitly confess her reservations about the capacity of the poet (and, thus, the literary sphere) to adequately represent the Civil War moment, and, more importantly, to create a unique literature of the war that will outlive the current moment without being effaced and rewritten by the vast swath of popular literature and the commodity culture of the 1860s. In “Alabaster Chambers,” she paradoxically acknowledges the ability of poetry to transcend the futility of the war, yet cannot move past her own inability to articulate its larger import. Symbolic images of the task of writing abound in the poem, as the palimpsest created in the second stanza mimics the process of writing, erasing, and rewriting in a fruitless and never-ending cycle of recording and/or constructing something accurate or meaningful of the war. As the sleeping dead lie awaiting the resurrection that only the author—

both the poet/creator and the Poet/public figure—can achieve through her pen, time passes, and lines of poetry accumulate in "Arcs" and rows; however, the poet's ink "drop[s]" futilely and lies in "Dots" on a blank white space lacking articulation or import. The page of the poet is made circular—a "Disc of Snow"—a non-linear, non-teleological space of asocial authorship accumulating soundless, formless characters that fail to make meaning of the present moment. The poet, like the Civil War dead, hangs in suspended animation in a space of rewriting and effacement, and her poetry is ultimately rendered as silent as death itself.

Divided Selfhood in Preston's Confederate Authorship

Largely unknown and omitted from the vast majority of Civil War scholarship, Margaret Junkin Preston is in many ways Emily Dickinson's neglected Southern counterpart: classically educated, well-read, isolated, prolific, contemplative, and ambivalent about her relationship to the public sphere. Probably owing to the fact that Preston's poetry is more traditional—generally less ambiguous in nature and more conventional in form and meter—and that Civil War literature of the South has had a much slower emergence in American Studies, Preston's relative anonymity today is a striking fact when one considers how popular and celebrated she was in her own time.[142] Toward the end of her career in 1888, the *Washington Post* declared her "one of the really famous American authors of the day…greatly beloved and revered as a Southern poet" (qtd. in Holloway 110). This was, however, a distinction bestowed at the end of a long and steady professional climb fraught with anxieties and contradictions, and in spite of Preston having "assiduously avoided publicity" and living a "secluded life" displaced from the literary centers of America, both North and South (Holloway 110). Preston's career, much like Dickinson's, was marked by ebb and flow, drawing near to the literary marketplace and then retreating, a desire to be read and published but a marked distaste for the publicity and responsibility of the poetic role that was sharply inflected by class.

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[142] For an in-depth discussion of the myriad reasons for the slow emergence of Confederate literary studies, see Hutchison's introduction to Apples and Ashes (2012).

Preston's biography reveals a complex admixture of often competing influences relevant to understanding her authorship. At a time when the great sectional line was being drawn and a declaration of affiliation was central to one's identity, Preston had a foot in both North and South. Born in Philadelphia in 1820, she spent her formative years in the epicenter of Northern intellectuals, educated by the faculty of Lafayette College where her father, Reverend George Junkin, was president. In 1848 Dr. Junkin accepted the presidency of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), and the entire family uprooted and moved to Lexington, Virginia where Unionist sentiments still prevailed. After Harper's Ferry and Lincoln's call for troops, however, the wind quickly shifted and secessionism took hold, causing Preston's family, like so many others' during the outbreak of violence, to become both geographically and ideologically separated. Dr. Junkin's Unionist sympathies led to his forced resignation as president of Washington College, after which he rapidly retreated to Philadelphia in 1861. Preston's political affiliations were complicated by her past and loyalties to her father and Pennsylvania, but ultimately she maintained a faithful public allegiance to the South, a position she shared with her husband, Major (later Colonel) John T. L. Preston, who was himself a writer and professor of the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. Both she and Major Preston opposed secession, but their close ties to the VMI and the Southern military elite (Preston's sister Eleanor was Stonewall Jackson's first wife) undoubtedly influenced their views, and they cared deeply about the protection of their home and the preservation of their lives in Virginia. In spite of the constricted gender conventions in antebellum Southern society, particularly the prohibition of female authorship, Preston's poems in this era were decidedly pro-Southern, espousing Confederate nationalism. As Holloway noted at the time of her article written well into the Reconstruction era, it would have been a "revelation" to many of Preston's readers to learn of "the fact that she is not a daughter of the South" (110).

The state of the literary climate in the South makes Preston's authorship all the more impressive, and her commitment to publishing as a Confederate all the more meaningful. The literary marketplace of the Confederate South was perhaps even more precarious than that of the North. "[Its] littérateurs," Hutchison contends, "were perpetually beleaguered" by material hardships, such as "severe shortages of paper, ink, type, skilled labor, and printing presses," which were exacerbated by economic and logistical hardships, including "rampant inflation, a shoddy interstate mail system, and the omnipresence of Yankee troops in southern land" (2). In 1860, there were 986 printing offices in New England and only 151 in the South, 190 bookbinders in New England and only 17 in the South, and only a handful of established Southern periodicals that were nonetheless still reprinting Northern articles and poems (Fahs 21).

Further hindering the fulfillment of a Confederate literature, Southern writers, with their tendencies toward gentility and tradition, were inclined to reproduce Northern and/or classical forms (like the traditional elegy) and refigure them to suit nationalist sentiments and the shared cause of social mourning for private losses. That which emerged as "independently" Southern ended up resembling poorly constructed and ill-conceived parodies of Northern literature. Southern intellectuals and/or editors began decrying the attributes of their countrymen that impeded real progress toward a Confederate literature, namely indolence and conventionality, traits that extended to the practices of both writers and readers. In 1862, the *Southern Illustrated*

News declared in amazement the number of poetic submissions it was receiving, but bemoaned the lack of quality: "'We have lyrics enough, were they worthy of print…The "rebel" muse, we grieve to say, is so disobedient and wayward a child, so slipshod a Sibyl, that she rebels against all the laws of rhyme, and cares less than nothing about her *feet*'" (qtd. in Fahs 33). The *Southern Literary Messenger* agreed, decrying their abundance of "too much trash in rhyme…If it is thrown out of the window, the vexatious wind always blows it back" (qtd. in Coulter 509). Fahs remarks on the vast shadow cast by Northern literary influence, declaring that ultimately, Southern literature was "unable to break free of the North's literary influence" (5).

New scholarship by Hutchison, among others, is contesting such claims, as he insists, "the Confederacy gave rise to a robust literary culture" founded on "a literary nationalism that was not only internationally minded but also more durable than its state apparatus" (2, 4). Recent work from Michael T. Bernath observes, "it is a startling, almost unbelievable, fact that by the end of 1862, the Confederacy had just about entirely cast off its age-old dependence on northern publishers and was now able to satisfy domestic demand with its own products" (152). In some ways, there were, perhaps, more opportunities in the South for original innovations in form and theme, as the war's outbreak fueled literary nationalism and led to a resistance against Northern literary hegemony, creating the same fervor for a new "national literature" of the Confederacy that broke its dependency on Northern books, periodicals, and publishers. The urgency behind Confederate literary nationalism was stoked by the blockade of Southern ports and the end of the federal mail service that made access to Northern periodicals and books difficult, if not impossible. For Southern writers, there appeared to be an opportunity to forge a uniquely Southern literature that was stylistically self-determining and reflective of Confederate culture.

The work of Preston met such criteria, as it was not rote imitation or maudlin sentimentalism, and thus deserves further consideration from scholars based on its aesthetic quality. While not as intrepidly ironic or abstruse as Dickinson's, Preston's poetry is innovative and complex, anticipating qualities of both realism and modernism, with some of her poems exhibiting sometimes cold and indifferent and other times sharp and ironic confrontations with the monolithic forces propelling the cycle of life and death. Some of her most interesting work never made it to print, for example a poem she wrote in her journal titled "When a Few Years are Come, Then I Shall Go the Way Whence I Shall Not Return" (1841). Like Dickinson, death is a preoccupation for Preston, and she fatalistically explores the inevitability of her impending demise ("I too shall die," she frankly begins) and the hegemony and ubiquity of personified death, who is "every where…." (qtd. in Klein). Hutchison assures that, "unlike many Confederate poets, Preston need not apologize for her versification," which had a "clear formal command" (106). Curiously, Preston's work merits only a single paragraph in Hutchison's *Apples and Ashes* (2012), and there is no mention of her at all in Bernath's 400+ page study.

Beyond subjective claims about the quality of her poetry, Preston deserves a larger place in Civil War studies on the distinction of her popularity alone. As Stacey Jean Klein explains, in the first installment of her career prior to marriage and war, Preston was already wildly popular, publishing actively for *Graham's* and other major magazines and journals: her name appeared eighteen times between 1849 and 1853 in the *Southern Literary Messenger* alone ("Wielding" 222). Without analyzing her work, Joseph Kuhn places Preston alongside the "main exponents" of Southern literature, including Timrod, Father Abram J. Ryan, Paul Hamilton Hayne, and Sidney Lanier (172). The upper echelon of Confederate littérateurs like Timrod and Hayne, states Hutchison, "lobbied for a *polite* Confederate literature" that was refined, elegant, and scholarly, and, yet, much of what was produced was popular in orientation: “Thus, Confederate literature is characterized by an at-times *uneasy fit between polite and popular forms*” (13). Preston’s work was animated by this tension, as she was educated in classical literary traditions and experimented with different forms that would have marked her as “elite,” yet maintained a reputation for being accessible and widely read among popular audiences.

Moreover, her seeming defection from North to South greatly complicates and makes more interesting her adopted ideological commitment to Southern nationalism. Unlike Timrod, whose works, as Hutchison suggests, perpetuate an unbending racialist rhetoric that demarcates the ethnic emergence and solidarity of a fictive Southern ethnicity, Preston’s pro-Southern works often resonate with apprehension or artifice (10–11). Her prior (or perhaps sustaining) commitments to Northern values make her work, even at its most vehement nationalism, thrum with paradox that not only merits more attention, but that also enlivens the question of how to read literary nationalism in a wartime setting—here, the American Civil War, but more broadly any wartime situation—in which the enemy lines are not so easily drawn. Perhaps too often the triumphalism and confidence in such works lead us to take these authors at their word, but such cannot be the case with Preston, as well as other apparent defectors like Southern novelists Caroline Howard Gilman and Caroline Lee Hentz and Northern poet Sarah Piatt.[143] Fliegelman cautions against assuming Confederate literature to be self-evident or dismissing it as too offensive, as the reactionary voices of the Confederacy must be “encountered in all their complexity” (335). To encounter the complexity of Preston’s authorial career is to calibrate the dichotomies of her Northern past and her Southern present, her commitments to her father’s

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[143] See Karen Manners Smith’s, Cindy A. Stiles’s, and Miriam J. Shillingsburg’s chapters in The History of Southern Women’s Literature (2002).

Union views and her husband's growing Confederate sympathies. It is also to take into account her understanding of the war as a mother and Southern homeowner, her engagement of the Confederate literary marketplace as a woman writer, but, most importantly, her own personal stake in defining authorship for a new national literature.

Preston began her writing career around the time the Junkin family left Philadelphia in 1841, regularly contributing stories and poems to periodicals like the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Due to the traditional expectations placed upon women writers, however, she had a vexed relationship to the literary marketplace and either chose (or felt forced) to effect a posture of self-effacement. As with her satirical novel, *Silverwood: A Book of Memories* (1856), released one year before she married, she often published anonymously; other times, she signed her works with gender-neutral initials "M.J.," a literally self-effacing practice that was likely both liberating and frustrating. Privately proud of her literary achievements, Preston chronicled her career by scrapbooking clippings of her published works; for those she contributed incognito, she would add "M.J." in her own handwriting to assert agency and identity over the authorship (Klein, *Poet* 13). In 1845, she published her first poem under her own name—"A Ballad in Reply to Martin Farquhar Tupper's 'New Ballad to Columbia'"—in which she takes a vehemently abolitionist stance, laying blame for the slave trade at England's doorstep and arguing for recolonization:

> Yes! hastened be the hour
>   When slavery—hateful word!
> Thro' all our pleasant borders,
>   Shall never more be heard;—
> When christianised—enlightened—
>   Out slaves shall walk abroad,
> Beneath their native sunshine,
>   The freemen of their God! (qtd. in Klein, *Poet* 19)

In publishing under her true identity, Preston was publicly claiming both political and social stances, a bold and even controversial move for a woman in the 1840s, and stances she clearly felt in conflict with as her life progressed and she migrated both physically and ideologically from North to South.

Her move to Lexington in 1848 marks the time when Preston's expressions of her ideological commitments became more complicated, both in terms of politics and gender roles. In 1849, she rhapsodized over her new home—"But while with admiration deep, I humbly dedicate / A heart of zealous loyalty to my adopted state" (15–16)—but expressed her ultimate loyalty to the North: "Yet true to all my earliest love, I still will turn again / With fondlier feelings far to you, oh! sylvan shades of Penn" (17–18).[144] But at some point, and by the time she resumed publishing during the war, her verse resonated with Confederate nationalism: "Grandly thou fillest the world's eye to-day, / My proud Virginia!" she wrote during the war (1–2).[145] What is less clear is exactly what motivated her departure from Northern values, at least in print, but several events from her life could suggest the change. It appears that her father's household at some point owned slaves, in spite of Dr. Junkin's support of the Union and abolition, and in 1859, the house was allegedly poisoned by its slaves (Klein, *Poet* 41). That same year, Major Preston served as a military guard at John Brown's execution, which made the threat of slave rebellion all the more present (Klein, *Poet* 42). In the early 1850s, at least, her views on slavery seem to have changed. In a letter written in 1850, Preston includes a lengthy anecdote of a slave wedding, writing her presumably Northern friend:

> I wish, J., you could have heard the merry *haw-haws* that reached us in the parlor, as we sat with our coffee-cups in our hands round the well-filled waiter which had been despatched to us. If you had, I do not think your heart would have been disposed to waste much superfluous commiseration upon the so-called "poor unhappy slaves"…But surely, if it *did* spoil our servants a little some-times, is not this better than the utter and entire want of interest and sympathy that exists between Northern mistresses and their

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[144] From "The Old Dominion: A Ballad," published in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1849 (qtd. in Klein, "Wielding" [223]).

[145] From "Virginia. A Sonnet." (c. 1860s).

> domestics? But enough on this subject: so, dear J., au revoir! (qtd. in Allan 56–57)

Southern values seem to have influenced Preston's views on slavery and complicated her formerly feminist views on women entering the literary marketplace. As Klein documents, "Southern women had been slower than their Northern counterparts to press for changes in their civil standing…[and] more hesitant in challenging the boundaries of the literary world. In Virginia, her abilities and ambitions were destined to collide with woman's conscripted place" (*Poet* 22). In 1855, still unmarried at age thirty-five and feeling professionally and personally isolated, she began asserting her conflicted feelings on female authorship publically in print.

In "The Child of Song" (1855), a semi-autobiographical chronicle of a young woman's use of writing elegiac poetry to help mediate the pain of lost loved ones, Preston's protagonist, Adalaide, despairs over the irreconcilability of being both woman and author: "But what business has a *woman* with authorship? Is she not looked upon as an intruder in the field of literary labor? Is she not constantly reminded that *home* is her province, and that her utmost ambition should extend no farther than to dress the garden of *man's* heart and plant affections there? She must content herself with this sphere…" (qtd. in Klein 35). One year later in *Silverwood*, Preston further articulated (through another thinly-veiled author surrogate, Edith) her frustrations about women's effacement within the public sphere and her own conflicted relationship to an increasingly commodified publishing industry.

> Sometimes Edith had a vague idea of launching upon the literary current, a venture of her own—a little argosy freighted with love, and fancy, and hope, that might bring her in return, the *quid pro quo* so much needed. Why should she not coin her brain into dollars—be "a bread-and-butter philosopher," as the Germans have it? Others, whom she believed possessed no more talents than herself, had made successful hits—why might not she? (266)

Of course, by this point, Preston was an established poet with a substantial career, but *Silverwood* nonetheless recorded her ambivalence about how women generally, and she, personally, could and should navigate the literary marketplace. In spite of its moments of confidence and even bravado in her literary ventures, Edith, when asked if she were apt to join the “Amazonian tribe who are fighting for a ‘wider sphere,’” vehemently argues for traditional gender roles: “‘By no means! I’m perfectly content to have the barriers just where they are, since I believe Providence designed this circumscription. I firmly believe our sex was commanded to be ‘under obedience,’ as part of the primal curse’” (175). And, yet, a few moments later, Edith reflects on the psychological underpinnings of her position, as she decries her intellectual prowess for being discordant with Southern values of ideal feminine behavior. She infuses her dialogue with a subtle critique of and resistance to the standards that held her back: “[Intellect] makes [a woman] restless; it puts temptations before her to leave the beaten track—a thing always objectionable for a woman. If she is conscious of these noble strivings within her, she *does* feel hampered by the restraints society imposes” (176).

Such views were consistent with Preston’s own social interactions. Elizabeth Randolph Preston Allan, her step-daughter, remembers Major Preston declaring, “‘She is an encyclopædia in small print!’” but that she strategically effaced that intelligence within a posture of traditional femininity whenever with company: “[W]hen called upon to take her part in conversation, she was easily the most interesting woman in the company. She never introduced topics, nor led in conversation, as literary women were supposed to do, and she was at the farthest remove from a pedant; but no matter what her companions were talking of, they presently found that [she] knew more about it than themselves” (100–01). Preston seems to have strategically self-effaced to balance her sense of feminine duty with her inherent intelligence, “masculine” education, and literary knowledge and ambition. In *Silverwood*, Edith outlines the unique quandary of the female author, stating, “If she puts herself in print, she belongs no more to herself—she has taken the public into partnership—so *it* thinks; and a thousand things, thenceforth, wound her sensitive womanhood" (176–77). Clearly, Preston was working through the personal and financial losses and gains that a woman author necessarily encountered in the 1850s marketplace. Ultimately, she refused to attach her name to *Silverwood*, despite the publisher's offer to pay her an additional two hundred dollars because he believed Preston's name recognition would help the book sell (Allan 86). Within a year, she would be married and a stepmother to seven children, leaving (in Edith's words) the "noble strivings" of her literary career behind for the "beaten track" of a life of traditional domesticity.

Preston would not publish again until the outbreak of war both necessitated the income and sanctioned female authorship. Social convention adapted to Confederate nationalism and the fact that so many men were displaced to the battlefields, and these new mores made female-authored work acceptable when in public service to the Confederacy. Preston's writing during this era was undoubtedly motivated by the intrusive and violent events of the war, including the dangerous military service of her husband and stepson, which, as Klein maintains, "solidified for Preston the high personal cost of war and compounded her belief in the Confederate cause as just" (iii). She increasingly identified as a Southerner, with critical moments being the death of Stonewall Jackson in May of 1863, and the pillaging of her home the following year.

The "horrid and senseless war" gave Preston a reason to write; be it nationalism, economic gain, professional advancement, or personal fulfillment, the Civil War instigated a new mode of asocial authorship for Preston (qtd. in Allan 135). With the encouragement of her husband, who believed that her talent was valid now that it could be used to aid the Confederate cause, she resumed publishing in the summer of 1862 with the immediately and immensely popular "Dirge for Ashby," a poem that celebrates the war effort in the South as a righteous cause, but that conflicts with her private journal recordings of her desire for the war to end (Klein 46). Ever paradoxical in her public and private writings, in April of 1862, Preston wrote in her journal, “Darkness seems gathering over the Southern land; disaster follows disaster; where is it all to end? My very soul is sick of carnage. I loathe the word — *War*. It is destroying and paralyzing all before it” (qtd. in Allan 134). While writing poems celebrating her adopted homeland, she wrote privately, “I feel so lonely and isolated” (Klein, “Wielding” 224). In contributing to the cause of Confederate nationalism publicly, she penned in her journal, “When I am compelled to hear scorn and loathing predicated of everything *Northern* (as must continually be the case), my heart boils up, and sobs to itself. But I must remain silent” (qtd. in Klein, “Wielding” 224). Preston’s return to authorship was not motivated by her own staunch and unwavering Confederate nationalism.

It was during this time, when her writing occupied two separate and oft-competing modes of public and private, in which Preston receded into the interiority of asocial authorship, employing tropes of an effaced Southern landscape and the Confederate cause in elegiac poems of mourning for authorial effacement. Klein considers Preston’s revived wartime and postbellum career as motivated partially by her love of the South and partially by her desire to become a functional, publishing author in a space that did not invite nor welcome women authors without effacing or controlling them. Thus, Preston marshaled themes of Confederate nationalism and glorification of the Old South as vehicles through which to become a published author: “she hid her agenda behind a conservative facade” (*Poet* xiv). I propose to expand Klein’s assertion by arguing that Preston’s asocial authorship articulated the paradoxical axes of her unique authorial conditions: North/South, author/domestic, and professional/personal. Through xenotopia and irreconcilable elegies, Preston expresses the figurative violence of war, conflating the destruction of soldiers' bodies with the disruptions of women's lives and the figurative destruction of her own authorial career.

Preston's most popular piece of Civil War poetry was her 1865 epic poem *Beechenbrook: A Rhyme of the War*, which chronicled the many wartime sacrifices of women: homes destroyed (as Beechenbrook is ultimately ravaged by Union troops), domestic lives upended, duties expanded, and, of course, the many deaths of husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, and friends. By this point, Preston herself had suffered many losses either directly or indirectly attributed to war: her stepson, Willy, died in the Battle of First Manassas and was unable to be brought home for proper burial; her brother, Joseph, died far from his Northern home on the battlefield; her stepson, Randolph, died of typhoid fever; and her brother-in-law, Stonewall Jackson, among many friends and acquaintances, died in the war effort, as well. *Beechenbrook* certainly contains autobiographical elements, including the Union invasion of the family estate in the Shenandoah Valley, and many similarities exist between Preston and Alice Dunbar, the Confederate woman at the center of the poem, such as husbands with high-ranking positions in the Confederate army. But the sacrifices of war so compatible with the traditional elegy form—the individual losses of loved ones and the disruption of domestic safety—recall the same tone of the female author's sacrifices, and, more specifically record the interior space of Preston's own vexed authorship, as she crafts an irreconcilable elegy for the myriad losses to the author sustained in war.

"Only a private" is a portion of *Beechenbrook* that was frequently excerpted during and after the war, as E. Merton Coulter advises that poetry, a form that was always prolific among Southerners, "thrived with uncommon vigor under the influence of war" (509). In this particular section of *Beechenbrook*, Preston depicts a dying soldier who is contemplating his place in the war and narrating his firsthand experience of impending death to Alice Dunbar, who is tending to him at her home near the war-torn Shenandoah battlefield. Preston abruptly disrupts form and meter by departing from the rhythmically musical anapestic tetrameter of the rest of the epic poem to a more loose and scattered trochee pattern, matched by a departure in both narrative style and point of view. This portion of the poem is vaguely attributed to the soldier, Macpherson, but there is a mystical quality to the introduction of his words, whispered and elevated to the status of memory or vision as Dunbar is in a sort of reverie—"the mists of unconsciousness"—that encompasses both the past and deep contemplation of the present circumstances (6.730). Recalling Dickinson's non-teleological and circular "Disc of Snow," Dunbar's interpretive space of interiority, private grief, and reflection is described as an "eclipse" (6.731). Within this space Alice Dunbar must express her own poetic vision while being forced (seemingly by a sense of duty to the Confederacy or to her role as the recorder of the war) to bear witness to Macpherson's words and his deathscape, necessitating that she interrupt her meditation to "[pause] to hear" (6.760). The soldier's self-elegy begins to merge with Alice's own history, becoming as much a part of her psychological processing of the war as it is of his own.

Macpherson recalls the effacement of his individual self in the war effort, noting the myriad ways in which his identity and sacrifice are rendered futile by the anonymity and violence of death in the Civil War. He questions the ability of the very elegy he is creating to achieve any resolution for either himself or his loved ones left behind or to ascribe any meaning to the war effort generally or his individual sacrifice specifically:

> "Only a private;—and who will care
> When I may pass away,—
> Or how, or why I perish, or where
> I mix with the common clay;" (6.761–64)

Immediately, the multiple frames of narration collapse into one circle of perpetual futility shared by Macpherson (the fictional author of the poem), Alice Dunbar (the fictional receiver/recorder of the poem), the speaker (the fictional recorder of Alice's story), and Preston (the actual author of the poem *and* the capital-P "Poet" of the war). Macpherson repeatedly issues the refrain "Only a private," downplaying his role in the war and noting that it matters not that "I did my duty well" (6.770). As he laments, "I fought, / And there, like a soldier, fell," his role in the war is placed at a figurative distance by becoming only a facsimile of service ("*like* a soldier"); even in noble sacrifice to the Confederate cause, his service is not fully actualized, the simile indicating a degree of separation between the physical reality of war and the psychological perspective of he who has lived it experientially (6.771-72). Even firsthand experience is effaced in the violent retelling of war.

Macpherson's skewed sense of duty and honor, his plight of anonymity, and his effaced individuality all at once become a metaphor for Preston's authorship, expressing a simultaneous reverence for and fear of *terra nullius*—blank or empty space or land that belongs to no one—and the process of rewriting in which she and Macpherson find themselves:

> "They will fill my empty place again,
> With another as stout and brave;
> And they'll blot me out, ere the Autumn rain
> Has freshened my nameless grave." (6.765–68)

Here, Preston—through her speaker and Alice Dunbar's vision and Macpherson's spontaneous poetic effusion—contemplates the ways in which war can give an individual a voice, a platform, a profession, and/or a cause, but also the inherent effacement and circularity of that process. Already Macpherson, the (soon to be) dead, and his elegy have been subordinated beneath three layers of telling, which calls into question the nature of historical recording and the seeming futility of narrating the events of the war with any certainty or reliable perspective.

The elegy served an important role in the Civil War of writing and rewriting loss, allowing both writers and readers to transfer personal grief into a shared communal space of collective mourning wherein grief was articulated and then rewritten over and over again with the details of others' lost loved ones, providing a sort of psychic comfort of synonymy and connecting those losses to a larger cause. Laderman identifies one of the key rhetorical strategies for making sense of Civil War suffering in the North as the "[imaginative transformation] of the destruction of life into something heroic," a way to interpret the stability and perpetuation of the nation through the "promise of a 'good death' in the service of the Union" (124). Grief on both sides was transmuted from an individual's loss into a space of nationalism, an expression of both private pain and the shared loss of patriotic sacrifice. However, this came at a cost, as Nudelman illuminates the "tendency of nationalist culture to abstract the effects of violence" (2). The practice was thus itself an extension of effacement as the grieved were both celebrated in the moment and then obscured by the palimpsestic process of collective mourning. Macpherson is abstracted into ideology (the Confederate cause) and history (another number among the many dead) by the elegy, no longer an individual to be grieved but a nonrepresentational part of a continuous system of rewriting grief.

Macpherson's mourning expands outward from concerns that he will not be conventionally grieved (as he mixes with the "common clay" and is denied proper burial back home surrounded by intimate loved ones) to more philosophical concerns over his social erasure from the historical record and how his identity is effaced by such displaced mourning rituals:

> "The country I died for,—never will heed
> My unrequited claim;
> And history cannot record the deed,
> For she never has heard my name." (6.773–76)

The individual is enfolded in a circular process of prolific regeneration, as his place in the war—personally, historically, professionally—is continually refreshed with new blood. A sense of impermanence suffuses the narrative: soldiers die, and more soldiers are created; poems are published and forgotten; poets are replaced by new poets. An ambiguous "They"—the Confederate army, the Confederate people, editors and publishers in the literary marketplace, a vague readership, replacement soldiers and replacement writers—are indifferent to particularities and only invested in the broad strokes of Confederate nationalism. Macpherson displaces the telos from his own elegy, as he predicts that communal mourning will not be achieved due to the obscuring of memory and history that happens within the forward momentum of war. But, more unnervingly, he suggests that, rather than passive forgetting, there is an active erasure, a culture of disremembering that is depicted as a figurative (and violent) act of revision—blotting—that is part of the authorial purview. To "blot out" is an important metaphor that conceptually conflates writing and erasing with active forgetting and effacement: a) "to make a blot over (writing) so as to make it illegible; to obliterate, efface" and b) "to efface, wipe out of existence, sight or memory; to annihilate, destroy," particularly something painful in one's memory or existence (*OED*). The author is not only complicit in this process (by virtue of not venerating the individual soldier) but also victim of it, as she, too, is "blot[ted] out" by the circular machines of the literary marketplace and war, as much a commodity and cog as the dead soldier. Cavitch claims that elegiac poems and their writers are caught between genre as an embodiment of normative values and the individuated efforts to imbue poems with the value of more idiosyncratic perceptions (16). At the same time that the individual being mourned within the elegiac work is enfolded into a public act of social mourning, his or her identity effaced by the process and product of elegy, the author's agency is effaced, as well. Through the traumatic social “blotting out” process, the tortured and desolate pronoun “me,” which could apply to both soldier and author, hangs in anonymous and effaced suspension amidst a haunting scene of a nameless grave. The namelessness of the grave has particular import for Preston, who (either out of necessity or desire) felt the need to self-efface her authorial accomplishments by publishing anonymously and hiding from literary celebrity.

As the soldier’s words resound in Dunbar’s psyche—and reverberate throughout the multiple frames of the poem-within-the-poem—the Edenic setting of Shenandoah becomes a xenotopic deathscape that she calls “that Valley of slaughter” (6.672). In the beginning of the poem, Beechenbrook Cottage sits on a pastoral idyll, with mild blue skies, shimmering sunshine, blooming orchards, and the sounds of creeks and birds. Once war erupts, she represents serene nature disrupted by human imposition. Drawing on common tropes of a traumatized Southern landscape, Preston depicts the defacement of Shenandoah at the hands of Union violence:

> The wild tide of battle runs red,—dashes high,
> And blots out the splendor of earth and of sky;
> The blue air is heavy, and sulph’rous, and dun,
> And the breeze on its wings bears the boom of the gun. (6.637–40)

After Macpherson’s “Only a private” recitation, and upon the pronouncement of his death, the xenotopic scene evolves and its figurative import expands: the land becomes an agentive force that picks up the mantle of mourning for the individual death that, per Macpherson’s irreconcilable elegy, society cannot or will not grieve. A personified natural environment is gripped by a mournful sorrow in reaction to the death of Macpherson:

> The breath of the morning is heavy and chill,
> And gloomily lower the mists on the hill;
> The winds thro’ the pine-trees are shivering low
> With a plaintive and sad *miserere* of woe:
> A quiet is over the Cottage,—a dread
> Clouds the children’s sweet faces,—Macpherson is dead! (6.793–98)

Nature’s breath slows and grows cold, simulating a frigid, death-like state as if commiserating with the dead soldier. In so doing, nature submits itself agentively to the same process of effacement that has blotted out the individual soldier, in spite of his sacrifice to land and nation, as a fog-like haze obscures the land itself. An otherwise conventional moment of personification is thus complicated because the process of effacement erases the subjectivity of the soldier.

Underneath that haze of effacement, hidden from social view and yet illuminated by the poem in which it is contained, is an act of authorial displacement in which nature assumes control of the elegy from Macpherson and Alice Dunbar. Nature becomes the poet/writer recording the lost individual when it spontaneously pens a *miserere* (a psalm seeking mercy) that mourns the soldier’s death. However, the writing process displaces the telos (and the traditional elegy is upended) as the *miserere* fails to function as a vehicle for social mourning, instead hanging low in the pine trees and seemingly only affecting children. Grief—be it natural or human—ultimately proves unproductive, acommunal, and perpetual. Nature’s takeover of the mourning process affirms Macpherson’s fear that society will not mourn for him and he will ultimately be not only forgotten but rewritten as nature is already rewriting the elegy he effused only moments earlier. The rewriting process denies society the ability or right to enfold the soldier’s death into its narrative of Confederate nationalism while also displacing the author/poet from the role of elegist as the conventional trope of natural mourning is turned to other, non-consolatory purposes. Preston’s elegy is ultimately irreconcilable, as the individual soldier, the author/poet, and natural environment are all swallowed up by a non-teleological grief cycle that is circular, perpetual, and without function.

By the time she wrote the ambitious and surprisingly complex *Beechenbrook*, Preston already had a keen understanding of the literary marketplace and its instability. She recorded in her journal that her purpose in writing the 64-page epic Confederate poem was to "present a true picture of these war-times in which we live," but she was undoubtedly well aware that nationalism and feminine sacrifice were the themes that would secure publication (qtd. in Allan 203). Furthermore, her journals reveal that her attitude toward the war evolved from a seemingly nationalist stance to one that concerned itself with the war's toll on her family, invested less in fueling the Confederate propaganda machine and more so in the war's end. The conditions for writing *Beechenbrook* were difficult, as she had very poor eyesight and had to resort to dictation for much of it; it was written during the winter of 1864–65 on "rough paper made in the Confederacy, with a poor pencil…by firelight" (Allan 200). Preston and her husband invested $2600 for an initial printing of two thousand copies by J. W. Randolph in Richmond, but all but about fifty copies survived the violent burning and evacuation of Richmond before the fall of the Confederacy (Klein, *Poet* 57). *Beechenbrook* was republished in Baltimore in 1866 and sold over 7000 copies, ultimately seeing myriad editions through to print thereafter and securing Preston's place in the mythos of Confederate literature. It was a struggle for Preston to see *Beechenbrook* to print, and her unflagging efforts to do so reveal her authorial ambition (whatever its motive) and suggest her firsthand knowledge of the problems of the literary marketplace.

John Daniel Wells proposes that *Beechenbrook* "should be seen not as a kind of personal story so much as another attempt by Preston to assert herself as a public figure playing a political role in the Confederate cause" (155). I argue, however, that Preston's literary ambitions and expressions of Confederate nationalism, while certainly part of the story, are only one facet of the complicated asocial authorship that saw her both embrace and criticize the effacement at work in the 1860s literary marketplace. After the war's end, she capitalized on her literary success by continuing to write and publish her poetry, as well as editing literary columns in several Southern quarterlies, reinforcing the idea that her self-effacement could potentially be a strategic posture. As her reputation grew, she enjoyed praise from both critics and readers. Her first full volume of poetry, *Old Songs and New* (1870), was declared by the *London Saturday Review* to be "the best book of American poetry after Lowell yet published" (Holloway 110), and a later critic called her the "best woman poet of the South" (Rutherford 431). The contemporary Southern poet Paul Hamilton Hayne noted that her name appeared "constantly" in Northern periodicals, and she "was frequently commissioned to write pieces for public occasions" (Klein, *Poet* 87). Yet publication continued to be a vexed endeavor for Preston. She faced opposition at home from her husband, whose feelings about his wife's authorial career had grown from pride during the war to lukewarm sympathy and then embitterment as her notoriety eclipsed his own accomplishments. In the spring of 1872, she wrote to Hayne that Colonel Preston did not like a woman's "rushing into print" (qtd. in Klein, *Poet* 73), to which Hayne emphatically replied, "…*there is no sex in genius*" (qtd. in Wells 156).

But her later authorial struggles extended to the same space of interiority carved out in her asocial authorship, as she continued to distrust literary fame and the commodification of herself as author. Lundberg observes that the role of poet in the mid–nineteenth century was akin to a public servant performing a civic function and enjoying the eminence and esteem afforded such luminaries as ministers: "…the poet was thus burdened with the special responsibilities to reveal artfully the truths to the public at large. At the practical level, this meant being quite visible in public life…lending meaning to important events, exhorting the emotions, invoking the collective past…[the] poet as public interpreter and instructor" (xi). This sense of the social function of authorship intensified during the war, as that which was formerly reserved for a space of personal interiority and subject to authorial agency—i.e. control of one's own form, style, and subject matter; a solid sense of one's readership; the interiority of grief; a fairly knowable landscape of the literary marketplace—became prescribed by social demands and currents and thus commodified fodder for public consumption. Writing to Hayne in December 1881, Preston revealed the vast scope and breadth of her celebrity, but also confided that she found literary fame burdensome, particularly the social function of luminary/mentor to other writers and the role of "public poet":

> …does every literary fledgeling who writes a poem or a book, send you the MS. and ask you to put it in shape for the press? Does everybody who wants to get a story published in *Scribner* or *Harper* write and request you to arrange the terms for them? Does every poetling who writes a jingle insist that you shall prepare such book notices as will make it sell forthwith? Do the people who translate send you their MS. to revise? Does everybody ask you for special poems for this, that, and the other public (or private) affair? Well, they do me! I am tormented by this sort of thing… (qtd. in Allan 301–02)

Even as she continued to actively pursue publication, Preston lamented her role in an endless succession of developing others' writings, a cycle of rewriting and effacement that continued to make a commodity of her own authorship.

What is significant (and difficult to trace with any certainty) about Preston's new mode of asocial authorship was its level of self-reflexivity and true motivation. Twentieth-century critics were quick to dismiss her poetry as one voice in a brief and momentary chorus of amateur female writers uplifting the Confederate cause during wartime, and, after defeat, a concerted preservation effort of cultural values and mores known as the "Lost Cause." As Edwin Mims wrote in 1909, "[l]ike so many Southern poets, [Preston] did not take her work seriously enough…Her poetry is…imitative rather than original; beyond a slender note of pathos in contemplating the conditions in the South and a sort of common-place religious meditation, her poetry is of little enduring value" (27). To validate his point, he cites Preston's self-professed dilletantism:

> Pray remember that I have never given myself up as most women do who have made any name for themselves in literature. It has only been my pastime, not the occupation or mission of my life, which has been too busy a one with the duties of wifehood, motherhood, mistress, hostess, neighbor and friend. Only when the demands which these relations entailed were satisfied did I turn to my pen. I think I can truly say that I never neglected the concoction of a pudding for the sake of a poem, or a sauce for a sonnet. Art is a jealous mistress, and I have served her with my left hand only. (qtd. in Mims 27)

Even if we are to take this quote as authentic—supposedly penned later in her career in a letter to Hayne—it is impossible to know if these represent her genuine feelings upon reflecting on her career, or perhaps something else: part of a jocular epistolary exchange; the commonly issued obligatory apologia that many women writers provided reviewers, editors, and other contemporaries while actively attempting publication; or a fleeting moment of self-consciousness captured in a private confession. Mims does not provide the source, and this quote is not recorded in any of the available biographies on Preston, one of which was written contemporaneously to Mims's text in 1903 by Preston's stepdaughter, Elizabeth. Making things more difficult are the contradictory thoughts on authorship recorded in Preston's journals, her letters, and the poetry that she willingly made public and/or attached her name to. However, I contend that it merits consideration since this quote—and the inherited tradition of critical devaluation of Southern literature that it is so intimately bound with—has been used to sideline Preston from meaningful scholarship as a literary-historical footnote to Southern male writers and poets like Timrod and Lanier.

What is significant in Preston's above quote is twofold and establishes her self-effacement. First is the retrospective abstraction of her writing under the broad generalization of "art"; as she looks back at her career, she (self-)effaces the particularity of her individual contribution as author or even poet/Poet in favor of dissolving her work into an all-encompassing cultural movement containing nationalist overtones. Second is her metaphorization of her authorial self as a slave to “her mistress,” a personified female authorship, and the sort of beholden, obligatory, unbinding relationship that suggests. Rather than expressing her female modesty, there is a process of ideological effacement underway as Preston is both aligning her authorship with the slave body while ironically asserting her non-slave status. Newbury proposes that authorial anxieties about the public’s demands on the author came to be imagined through an “analogy between authorial celebrity and slave work” (84). Newbury elaborates, “Speaking most fundamentally, the celebrity and the slave were united through their shared cultural configuration as consumable workers, laborers whose bodies, rather than their labor or production, were available for consumption” (84). Preston’s comparison of herself as serving her mistress, Art, configures her as the ultimate nineteenth-century symbol of suppression, prescribed labor, and effacement: a slave. To write, she indicates, is to submit oneself to a space of non-agency that is, quite specifically, a gendered relationship, as she as a woman writer does not serve a master but rather a female mistress. But Preston’s analogy also distances herself from the mistress and asserts herself as *not slave*. In reality, Preston herself was a mistress of an estate, and in analogizing herself as a slave to Art that she only serves with one hand, Preston’s artistic self-effacement is, at some level, a mode of white and/or upper class self-assertion.

Though she later framed her career as one of a mere hobbyist, the fact is that Preston, while singlehandedly managing her estate, the affairs of her many children and stepchildren, and a complex network of employees and slaves, wrote prolifically and fervently during the Civil War and zealously pursued publication, arguably serving that very “mistress” she later distanced herself from. Whether she courted it or not, she developed a reputation among celebrated writers and common readers alike, establishing herself as one of the preeminent writers of the Confederacy, only to fall out of favor as subsequent literary movements devalued her style and contribution. In the first of what would be a lengthy and significant epistolary relationship, Hayne wrote to Preston, “Your genius and lofty patriotism have struck me so forcibly” (qtd. in Klein, *Poet* 67), to which she later replied, “I think you praise me too highly; you give me credit for *genius*, which, allow me to say, I do not possess…I claim to have a modicum of talent…of a far lower order than genius” (qtd. in Allan 260). Even while exhibiting her usual self-deprecatory humility, her correspondence with Hayne belied the dismissive dilettantism she later professed, instead capturing the engaged, insightful, and earnest self-consciousness of a writer with both professional and personal investment in seeing her work to print.

In pages of letters exchanging the minutiae and jargon of the publishing industry—the hirings and firings of editors at major journals, the details of how different publishers handled the typeface and editing process, and authorial commiseration about the complex strategies of publishing—she revealed herself to be a seasoned and successful veteran of the marketplace while maintaining the self-consciousness of a writer who knows that her place in the industry is constantly in jeopardy: “Don’t you think my book, as coming from a Southern source, merits a little notice in the *Southern Review*?” (qtd. in Allan 255); “I crave true, critical handling; not the indiscriminate praise which means nothing” (qtd. in Allan 256); and “What you say about *rejection* by publishers, editors, &c. is *very* true: it ought never to dishearten a writer who knows much about the history of literature as connected with publishers….[M]y poor *Beechenbrook*, I was assured by a Philadelphia publisher, would not sell beyond 500 copies….It has reached the eighth edition” (qtd. in Allan 250–51). Preston was aware of the complexities of the literary marketplace: the caprices of editors, the discrepant requirements of publishers, and the mercurial demands of readers. The fact that this knowledge was cultivated during the war reveals Preston to be more involved, attuned, and ambitious than the image she later crafted for herself. Instead of the indifferent or uninvested amateur merely penning elegies and nationalistic anthems as part of her duty, Preston, insists Klein, motivated by her desire to resurrect her career, used the war and the cult of Confederate nationalism to "find acceptance as a publishing female author in the South," strategically deploying—and then manipulating through xenotopia and defamiliarized death—the forms and themes that would see her work to print both during and after the war (*Poet* xiv). The "horrid and senseless war" she decried in her journal gave Preston a reason to write (qtd. in Allan 135). Be it nationalism, economic gain, professional advancement, or personal fulfillment, the Civil War initiated a new mode of asocial authorship for Preston, which she capitalized on.

It is easy to imagine the myriad reasons Preston might have felt uncomfortable with literary celebrity—her complicated past of Northern and Southern affiliations, the record in the public sphere of her contradictory feelings on the Union and abolitionism, and her need to protect the privacy and economic productivity of her Shenandoah Valley estate through wartime invasions. But on a more personal level, I believe Preston grew increasingly disquieted by the conflation of authorship and commodity in what she called the "broad field" of the literary marketplace (qtd. in Klein, *Poet* 36). Perhaps vacillating within a decade between avowed abolitionist to slave owner allowed Preston the psychological flexibility to either ignore or embrace the irony of contextualizing her authorship as slave work and aligning herself and her authorial role with the commodified body of the slave. In *Beechenbrook*, her Confederate heroine declares without any hint of the paradox, "Shall we tamely resign what our enemy craves? / No! martyrs we may be!—we cannot be slaves!" (2.197–98). The humility and self-denigration evidenced in her journals and letters make clear that on some level, she felt discordant with the increasingly commodified and complicated system of publishing. What emerges in the asocial authorship of Margaret Junkin Preston is a multi-registered and complex mode of approaching the burgeoning Confederate literary marketplace that is all at once strategic, conflicted, ambitious, private, and self-conscious, resulting in an interior space of authorial self-effacement that places her in the company of more “canonical” and critically celebrated writers like Dickinson, as well as contemporaneously successful writers such as Whittier. More importantly, this situates Preston, too, as a key figure in articulating a complex and innovative authorship distinctive of the 1860s.

I argue that this psychic crisis of effacement in the literary marketplace of the Civil War was equally productive as it was restrictive. Dickinson and Preston exhibit an ambivalent relationship to the idea of effacement, representing it as both a positive and productive action at the same time that it is equally reductive—and even destructive. On the one hand, it can be a positive evolutionary measure to write something, err, erase, and start afresh through a process of redefinition, potentially resulting in refinement or amelioration. But these authors identify that something significant gets obscured or destroyed in the rewriting process. The author—her agency, her function, and her poetic output—becomes reduced to an invisible space of effacement, not just passively unproductive but actively and acutely erased and replaced. Thus the circularity of the writing process and the impermanence of both author and text become anxieties that underscore the inward turn and self-isolation of asocial authorship; the author, identifying the process of effacement at work as the nation rewrote its borders and history during and after the Civil War, both critically and agentively embraces an ahistorical, asocial definition of authorship that is also non-teleological and inward facing.

Conclusion

One almost omnipresent theme proved nearly inescapable in Civil War literature: as Lundberg states, “the problem of giving meaning to the suffering born of death” (xv). In the pursuit of that goal—or perhaps in retreat from it—the asocial authorship of Dickinson and Preston represents an innovation in form. Garrett explains the ways in which forms emerge as fundamental reflections of the historical moment: “[T]he specifically *historical* interest of literary forms…lies in their emergence as imaginary solutions to historically new problems. Cultural forms are not tied aprioristically to sociohistorical epochs, simply emerging and dying out with successively dominant tendencies; they may be, on the contrary, reactivated…even after they would seem to have been superseded by more developed forms” (2). Through xenotopic deathscapes, these authors effect, in Garrett’s terms, a reactivation (and yet a reinvention) of the elegy, an overt movement away from the sociality of collective mourning for the literal dead toward an interior space of irreconcilable mourning for the figurative individual/psychological death (i.e. authorial effacement) that results from the process of erasure and rewriting.

I agree with Fahs that there was an “expanded realm of imaginative freedom” for authors during the 1860s (16). However, this freedom was not in acquiescence to prevailing popular trends but rather an expansion/evolution into a new pre-realist mode of asocial authorship that was equally restrictive. Wilson overstated—and underestimated the complexity of—the crisis of originality in Civil War poetry:

> During the Civil War, this more authentic kind of poetry scarcely leaks through at all. It is a striking phenomenon of the period that the declamatory versification of public events should completely have rendered inaudible, should have driven into virtual hiding, the more personal kind of self-expression which had nothing to do with politics or battles, which was not concocted for any market and which, reflecting the idiosyncrasies of the writer, was likely to take on unconventional form. (487–88)

The evolution of asocial authorship—the development of new forms, the original adaptation of an ironic, remote, and/or internalized expression of Civil War violence, and the deep interiority and self-awareness of authorial effacement and rewriting—was not manifested in hiding, in rejection of publication, or in some subversive defiance against the status quo. To the contrary, asocial authorship was an innovation of accessing the literary marketplace, born out of the psychic crisis and epistemological shift of defining authorship in the Civil War and the burden of articulating its traumatic and violent consequences in a commodified space. “Foundational epistemological borders,” writes James Dawes, “are revealed by war to be fragile social fictions. The human will, which through moral intentions and declaration stabilizes the borders of these meanings, seems irrelevant and thin when juxtaposed to war’s vivid and traumatic material realities…War thus initiates a semantic crisis, a crisis of meaning premised upon disbelief in language’s ability effectively to refer to and intervene in the material world” (131). During the Civil War, the thin lines between public and private, commodity and the sacred, and duty and profession were blurred for many, authors included. Asocial authorship was honed by the friction between artistic process and commodified product and the resulting displacement of the author. By turning inward and embracing effacement, Dickinson and Preston responded to the façade of unity and sociality occasioned by the nationalism of war, a rapidly commodifying nation, and a new ironically impersonal literary marketplace fueled by the notion of celebrity. These authors reconfigured the overt sociality of communal mourning practices and readers’ demands for war-themed works by developing an authorship of asociality that resulted in works that mark the pivot toward realism and modernism and signaled the end of the Romantic era.

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