

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MAN ENOUGH: FRATERNAL INTIMACY, WHITE
 HOMOEROTICISM, AND IMAGINED
 HOMOGENEITY IN MID-NINETEENTH-CENTURY
 AMERICAN LITERATURE

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“Man Enough” construes mid-nineteenth-century literary representations of sameness as corollaries of the struggle during this volatile era to realize unity among white men. I argue that three canonical authors envision homoerotic or same-sex erotic desire as a mechanism through which men can honor and defend sameness. These authors advert the connotative power of sameness by envisioning or assaying erotic desire between men as democratic. This fraternally conjugal (or conjugally fraternal) union serves as a consequence of the cultural directive to preserve the nation’s homogeneity.

In chapter one I reflect upon the circulation of sameness in mid-nineteenth-century America. I provide an overview of the logic of sameness in conceptions of race and then discuss how it textured sexual difference. As historians have recorded, new

homosocial spheres led to fraternal intimacy at a time when white men competed in the free market economy. These new forms of friendship were erotically—though not necessarily sexually—charged.

In the second chapter I argue that in The Blithedale Romance Hawthorne represents homoeroticism as effecting strong, yet tender erotic bonds between men that circumvent women and feminizing domesticity. He ultimately registers that same-sex erotic desire imperils male individualism and autonomy since it demands submission.

Chapter three begins with an observation that critics fail to consider how dominant attitudes about race and gender shaped Whitman's representations. Another aspect of his Leaves of Grass that has eluded attention is the prevalence of California in his work. As I argue, Whitman's references to California in his own "Blue Book" copy of the 1860 edition suggest his desire for a racially and sexually homogeneous gay nation.

Herman Melville's Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War is the focus of my final chapter. In this poetry he underscores that the homosocial martial life of war provided American men with an opportunity to forge fraternal intimacy with one another. Seeking to memorialize the sacrifices of Union soldiers, Melville sentimentalizes their losses so much that his poetry comes across as a homoerotic epic. Melville in Battle-Pieces offers a model of fraternity in which men eroticize racial and gender sameness.

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this labor of love to the memory of my great aunt Gale Saunders and my uncle Alan Schramm, whose agony and struggles made my queer life possible.

I also dedicate this work to my nephew Braeden Woodbury and my niece Chloe Gale, with hope for peace and a better world.

“There was a time when licentiousness laughed at reproof; now it writes essays and delivers lectures. Once it shunned the light; now it courts attention, writes books showing how grand and pure it is, and prophesies from its lecherous lips its own ultimate triumph.”

—Rufus W. Griswold in his November 10, 1855
Criterion review of Leaves of Grass.

“The love that dare not speak its name has become the love that won’t shut up.”

—Conservative pundit Pat Buchanan, ca. 1990s.

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difficult world. I just hope my friendship has been as rewarding. My dear friends Beth Armitage, Mary Romagnolo, Lisa King Adkins, George W. Stone, Jill “Muffy” Pollack, and Johnna Rizzo kept me from slipping into the abyss of insanity many times, plying me with martinis and other sybaritic pleasures while reminding me of “*le frisson du jouissance juteux*.” They show incontrovertibly that meaningful friendships are usually charged with eros.

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The lover learns at last that there is no person quite transparent and trustworthy, but every one has a devil in him that is capable of any crime in the long run. Yet, as an oriental philosopher has said, "Although Friendship between good men is interrupted, their principles remain unaltered. The stalk of the lotus may not be broken, and the fibres remain connected."

Ignorance and bungling with love are better than wisdom and skill without. There may be courtesy there, there may even be temper, and wit, and talent, and sparkling conversation, there may be good-will even,—and yet the humanest and divinest faculties pine for exercise. Our life without love is like coke and ashes. Men may be pure as alabaster and Parian Marble, elegant as a Tuscan villa, sublime as Niagara, and yet there is no milk mingled with the wine at their entertainments, better is the hospitality of Goths and Vandals. My Friend is not of some other race or family of men, but flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone. He is my real brother. I see his nature groping yonder so like mine. We do not live far apart. Have not the fates associated us in many ways? It says, in the Vishnu Purana: "Seven paces together is sufficient for the friendship of the virtuous, but thou and I have dwelt together." Is it of no significance that we have so long partaken of the same loaf, drank at the same fountain, breathed the same air, summer and winter, felt the same heat and cold; that the same fruits have been pleased to refresh us both, and we have never had a thought of different fibre the one from the other.

—Henry David Thoreau,
A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (284-5).

Introduction

homo
n¹: The Latin word for "man"
n² and a.: A colloq. abbrev. of "homosexual"

homo-
before a vowel hom-. a. combining form of
δμός Gr. "same;" a formative of many
scientific and other terms, often in
opposition to "hetero-"
— OED online.

Published in 1849, a year before Tennyson's "In Memoriam," A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers is queer. In straggling journal entries interspersed with dolorous verse, Henry David Thoreau recounts the weeklong excursion he took on the two rivers in 1839 with his older brother John, who died suddenly from lockjaw in 1842. The events of the trip, though, serve as a backdrop for Thoreau's epistemological excursus on the generative power of male intimacy.¹ His musings on friends and "the lover" in the passage that opens my study feature a provocative slippage between the two subject positions, destabilizing the already rickety distinction between Platonic friendship and same-sex sexual desire. After reminding his presumably male readers that friendship often begets lifelong bonds, he bemoans the absence of an affective passion that would cement men's intimacy. But in identifying this critical absence as "love," Thoreau is being impishly euphemistic. Men may appear to be as "pure as alabaster and Parian

marble,” but in reality, he ingeniously declares, they can’t help but “pine for exercise.” “[T]here is no milk mingled with the wine at their entertainments,” he laments, evoking the boozy—and ineffective—Platonic camaraderie of tavern culture. Prefiguring Ishmael’s raptness in squeezing “the very milk and sperm of kindness” (456) with his *Pequod* crewmates, Thoreau’s appeal for men to realize an intimate, erotic brotherhood holds clues for this volatile cultural moment.² As he avows, an intimate brotherhood always involves erotic entanglement.

Underlying Thoreau’s plangent appeal is the presumption that varying shapes of sameness can serve as the linchpin of male intimacy. The stanch brotherhood he puts forth is an especially cohesive example. The racial sameness of the two friends, which he establishes in no uncertain terms, is redoubled by his claim that the two share an even more primary connection. “Flesh of my flesh,” of course, is an allusion to Genesis 2 in which Adam accepts the recently created Eve as his wife: “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (23-4). His homoerotic revision of the genesis of man combines fraternity and matrimony to yield a marriage of two equals—Adam and Steve, so to speak. This equality is central to his intimacy with his friend, even leading to a shared state of arousal. Seeing someone with a similar groping nature records his impression of an overriding mutuality, one that he hopes ensures they never have “a thought of different fibre the one from the other.”

“Man Enough” construes this imagery and rhetoric of sameness in mid-nineteenth-century American literature as corollaries of the larger struggle to sustain or

re-effect unity among white men during a volatile moment in American history and politics.³ I argue that in three of their works Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville envision homoerotic desire—or, to be more historically accurate, same-sex erotic desire, as the term “homosexual” did not enter currency until the latter part of the century—as a mechanism through which men can honor and defend sameness (viz., racial and sexual).⁴ That these three authors are stars in the constellation of the American literary canon only spells out in starker terms the cross-fertilization of literary, national, and cultural politics that occurred during this time. This explosive node of representational and political practices bolsters the recent contention that some nineteenth-century American authors convey and even in some cases reinforce an imagined homogeneity among white men. Many nineteenth-century American men were vexed by the growing racial and cultural heterogeneity of the nation, the ideological skirmishes over the freight of sexual difference, and the competition of the free-market economy.⁵ As I show, these authors felt impelled to advert the connotative power of sameness by envisioning or assaying erotic desire between men as democratic. This fraternally conjugal (or conjugally fraternal) union, as some of these authors imply, suggests a degree of compatibility with the cultural directive to preserve the homogeneous character of the nation and beef up what was deemed at the time a barebones American identity.⁶

That the man Thoreau elegizes in A Week is his biological brother might seem peculiar because it suggests their relationship approximates incest. However, is this necessarily incestuous? That is, is it only incestuous according to contemporary understandings of eroticism? While representations of incest crop frequently up in

literary works in the homosocial canon, it is important to remember that brotherhood circulated very differently in mid-nineteenth-century American culture.⁷ As recent historical investigations have shown, men were allowed more latitude in expressing intimacy with one another.⁸ The absence of taxonomic systems of sexuality allowed for desire to be less policed and more intractable. "Brothers in Arms," a short story anonymously published in the January 10, 1863, edition of Harper's Weekly, serves as a provocative example of fraternal intimacy. The story opens with the Landsdowne family taking in Laura Chenery, their twenty-year-old cousin, after the sudden death of her father. Motherless since the age of five and raised in Paris by her father, Laura embodies the risqué femininity of Europe and the regrettable consequences of an absent mother. As such, she is the antithesis to Mrs. Landsdowne, who, through her consummate devotion to family and home, embodies the virtues of American republican motherhood. Upon the orphan's arrival, brothers Robert and Charlie, who initially accept her as a sister, fall for her. She quickly senses their attractions and adopts the role of the coquette, "delight[ing]" in the "ordinary conquest ten times enhanced by the zestful triumph of setting two who ought to love each other by the ears." When the brothers' pious mother apprises them of Laura's design, they choose to enlist in the Union army rather than compete for her since, as they proclaim to one another, the relationship between brothers supersedes any romantic attachment to a woman. Crucially the author makes more explicit this dynamic of their passionate bond when they are wounded in battle:

[Robert] thought how dear they had been to each other—the dearest, till *she* came, of any thing the earth held. . . . He writhed along on the sward closer to his brother's side, and threw his arm over his neck. . . . Charlie understood the

language of that mute caress, and turned his face toward the true eyes that sought it so wistfully.

The brothers' "mute caress" and wistful stare, along with the way the author positions fraternal eroticism as the counterpoint to the love of a woman, erotically charges their already intimate relationship. Robert's final words to Charlie—"I die loving you"—only spells out more clearly the polyvalence of an intimate fraternity.

The story of the Landsdowne brothers again evokes the trope of fraternal incest. Many cultural historians have explained that throughout the nineteenth century authors and even politicians cast the nation in familial terms. Primarily the family structure served as a means to unite Americans during this unpredictable time. The narrative of the nation, then, became intertwined with the narrative of the family romance in which patriarchal hierarchy becomes suffused with erotic power. Presidents such as Jefferson and Jackson were sometimes represented as benevolent patriarchs caring for their nation of children.⁹ The recurring imagery of fraternal incest, then, could be read less literally as an attempt to bind American men as equals (or as equal in relation to the father) through the figurative language of brotherhood. An even more intriguing case of fraternal intimacy is Chang and Eng, the famous conjoined twin brothers from Siam who were exhibited in America starting in the 1830s. The twins piqued Americans' curiosity to such an extent that they became assigned to a kind of redoubled difference (e.g., racial and biological otherness) and, more tellingly, freakery. However, as Allison Pingree shows, the publicity for the brothers suggests that Americans approached them as somehow emblematic of the nation. Featuring a bald eagle and the nation's motto (*E Pluribus Unum*), these bulletins signal that the twins served as "an emblem of unity

among separate states” and that “not only is patriotism employed to sell the twins, the twins themselves are used to sell democratic nationalism” (94). Oddly enough, many Americans, threatened by division over the issue of slavery, looked to the brothers’ freakish coexistence in an excruciatingly intimate proximity as a model for the nation’s unity.¹⁰

Desperate for answers, Americans tried to unravel the twins’ personal lives to ascertain any clues to their ability to remain tranquilly conjoined. Pingree’s overview of responses to the twins includes a painting of the brothers entitled “A Copulative Conjunction” (107). This framing, as she argues, “supplants or warps ‘normal’ heterosexual copulation” (107). As the portrait suggests, some paralleled the twins being conjoined with a form of copulation. This albeit-metaphorical same-sex copulation is what drew so many people to see them. There was an interest in seeing two men inhabit the same body, a curiosity that involved questions about individuality (did they share an identity?) and the meaning of their physical and metaphysical connections (how intimate were they?). Some imposed the complementary and romantic logic of heterosexuality onto the brothers, seeing them as “each other’s literal ‘other half’” (111). By inhabiting the same body and cleaving to one another through their sharing of flesh, Chang and Eng came to embody a new iteration of Adam and Eve, though certainly a more monstrous or freakish version. Intriguingly, the polymorphous possibilities involved in sleeping with their wives—Was it an orgy, since both twins were there? Were both wives in attendance? Did the brothers share genitals? Did they experience the same pleasure at the same time with the same intensity?—caused the most rancor among townspeople. While the brothers were still treated as monstrous others, their own physical copulation was

“presented as [an] idealized literalization of brotherhood and sameness, and of romantic and matrimonial stability” (112). That the twins came to embody this ideal during a time of nationalist fervor signals yet another instance in which nineteenth-century Americans understood male same-sex intimacy—albeit a freakish example of it—as somehow complementary to American democracy.¹¹ This is yet one more instance of an intimate fraternal relationship that serves as a paradigm for a democratic relationship between equals. Homoeroticism is apparently love American style.

Until about thirty years ago, discussions about representations of homosexuality were subject to “the tyranny of biography,” an interpretive bent that presumes a coherent or intelligible connection between these depictions and an author's own sexual identity.¹² In short, critics imposed a biographical grid onto these representations when interpreting their meaning. While some of these examinations have yielded useful speculation as to how an author's sexuality—in this case, an author's sexual alterity—informs his or her representational practices, by reading these depictions literally critics have discounted the symbolic resonances of homoeroticism.¹³ This is especially important considering that many nineteenth-century representations of same-sex erotic desire were relegated to subtexts because of cultural phobias and anxieties. With the exception of sexual temperance tracts such as Sylvester Graham's A Lecture to Young Men (1834) and the Reverend John Todd's A Student's Manual (1835) and The Young Man (1845), discussions or references to homosexuality were far from widespread in mid-nineteenth-century America. Curiously, however, homoerotic depictions crop up with some regularity in the literature of the period, suggesting either the amenability of American culture to the undertone of same-sex erotic desire or the prevailing belief among some

authors that it was so. For whatever reason, writers felt comfortable enough to include imagery that was palpably erotic, even by mid-nineteenth-century standards. But just what did this imagery signify to the nineteenth-century reader? Would men be able to detect the rumbling of the subtext and read between the lines? Did men construe same-sex eroticism as a galvanizing symbol, not a literal call to arms? Or did they see it as a knee-jerk response to what were certainly grave problems?

The absence of diagnostic categories such as “homosexual” has led some cultural historians to assert that the critical machinery used to distinguish erotic and sexual desires—much less what constitutes sexuality—in the twenty-first century was not operative during this era.¹⁴ While it is true that the modern concepts of erotic and sexual desire were embryonic in the nineteenth century, allowing for all manner of undetected slippages to occur, a vestigial distinction between the two did exist. A case in point stems from the mid-century resurgence in Platonic thought. Neo-Platonism provided men with the tools to differentiate the two interrelated, yet separate forms of desire. The panegyric to the ancient in Representative Men (1850) features Emerson enshrining him as the holiest of his inspirations because he “represents the privilege of the intellect, the power, namely, of carrying up every fact to successive platforms and so disclosing in every fact a germ of expansion. These expansions are in the essence of thought” (47).¹⁵ The fruits of men’s intellects far outweighed the vulgar materialism of the free market.¹⁶ Whitman was of the same mind, listing Plato in “The Base of all Metaphysics” as a motivation for his vision of a homoerotic nation:¹⁷

State the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato,

And greater than Socrates sought and state, Christ divine having

studied long,
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,
See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see,
Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath Christ the
divine I see,
The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to
friend. (8-13)

Later Whitman imposes a Platonic hierarchy onto male lovers, casting them as teacher and student. "To the young man, many things to absorb, to engraft, to develop, I teach, to help him become élève of mine," he announces in the opening line of "Calamus" 42 in the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass.¹⁸ But Whitman and Emerson were not the only ones who found inspiration in Plato, a fact that indicates the wide extent of the ancient's influence on nineteenth-century *belles lettres*. In his study on Melville, Merton M. Sealts, Jr. insists that "Plato is clearly the preeminent influence on [Melville's] thinking and writing" (Pursuing Melville 279). Along with John Addington Symonds, Walter Pater, and other neo-Hellenists across the Atlantic, American writers and philosophers looked for guidance in Plato's musings in helping to express male same-sex intimacy.¹⁹

The frank attitude toward male same-sex erotic and sexual desire in dialogues such as Symposium and Phaedrus likely served as the impetus for some of the surprisingly homoerotic moments in nineteenth-century American literature. As many of his dialogues demonstrate, the ancient understood the connotative power sameness had for a culture that externalized sexual difference.²⁰ In Lysis he adopts the persona of his mentor Socrates for a dialogue with three boys about desire and friendship. Although

they never arrive at an irrefutable thesis regarding the basis for friendship, one of the hypotheses they assay rests on the axiom that men befriend those whom they are like. “God is ever drawing like towards like, and making them acquainted” (28), Socrates propounds, attributing the idea to poets. This theory, however, is dismissed because while a man might desire a similar being, he is just as wont not to desire him. Sameness, as Plato seems to suggest, might or might not serve as a binding force of intimacy for men. A likeminded sentiment pops up in Symposium when Phaedrus discerns between common love and heavenly love. Whereas the former signals physical love and materialism, the latter involves a sexual transaction between an older man and a youth. In this kind of *quid pro quo*, submission to an older teacher serves as the mechanism of manhood. This relationship signals the seeming paradox that for manhood to be conferred, a youth must submit as a sexual object without internalizing or making permanent this feminized status.²¹ But it is precisely this exchange that lays bare a mutuality for which the outcome is the boy becoming like the man who has imparted or, in this case, disseminated knowledge. The student learns from the teacher in order to become him; he likes what he wants to be like.²² In this way, homosexual sex functions as a mode of cultural transmission in which the seeds of male power are passed on and preserved. The mythological story that Plato tells of Zeus’s splitting of men in two to curb Promethean challenges to the gods—a myth that Pingree points to in her discussion of the Siamese twins Chang and Eng—treats desire as part of the drive to reunite these divided parts:

[T]he men who are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being a piece of the man, they hang about him and embrace him and they

are themselves the best of boys and youths, because they have the most manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and they embrace that which is like them. (123-4)

Platonic homosexuality, then, unfolds along the axis of mutuality and equality through the implanting into the boy of the discursive practices of “that which is akin to him” (124).

The reality was that in nineteenth-century America, likeness or similarity was fraught with very specific meanings, especially regarding race. Early in the century, abolitionists and anti-slavers—for very different reasons, as I explain in chapter one—took important steps to end the Atlantic slave trade and abolish the institution itself. In the process, they fomented a reconsideration of the very nature of the institution, particularly the ethicality of enslaving a group of people based solely on their perceived physical and cultural differences. But another upshot of the struggle to limit and eventually end the practice of slavery was the flurry of state and federal court decisions that made whiteness a prerequisite for citizenship and, even more trenchantly, personhood. An effect of these decisions was what Dana Nelson has called “the referential power of white manhood” that marks “the affective foreclosures of heterogeneous democracy entailed by a fraternally homogenizing logic of national manhood” (xii). These deliberations, as well as the ensuing legislation in Congress, as I discuss in chapter one, rest upon the originalist polemic that the framers of the Constitution had only white men in mind when endowing citizens with God-given rights of freedom and liberty. While slavery was in the process of dissolving, the firmly held

belief in the homogeneous nature of the nation, fortified by this forceful “referential power of white manhood,” was not. In such a way, this era in American history largely set the conditions for identity politics, a late-twentieth-century system of political critique that exposes and seeks to rectify the marginalization of a group of people based solely on their shared identity.

The logic of sameness that these jurists and politicians employed effectively measured the circumference of American citizenship. But another degree of sameness that emerged as a result of this debate served as a useful means for those who desired to reunite the internecine nation. Of course, some sought to unite white men so as to form a collective front opposed to black enfranchisement and the pursuant fear of miscegenation. But other leaders who men looked to for moral guidance believed that this appeal to sameness functioned as a means to parry what was becoming the likelihood of the South’s secession. In his Address of the Charitable Society for the Education of Indigent Pious Young Men for the Ministry of the Gospel (1820), the abolitionist Lyman Beecher, concerned that the issue of slavery would compromise the comity of the nation, calls for the institutionalization of sameness in order

to produce . . . a more homogeneous character and bind us together with firmer bonds. . . . Schools, and academies, and colleges, and habits, and institutions of homogeneous influence . . . would produce a sameness of views, and feelings, and interests, which would lay the foundation of our empire upon a rock. (20)

A number of philosophers and authors shared Beecher’s concern, lobbying for the erection of institutions organized around sameness to allay anxieties over difference. The rapid expansion of the nation under the political juggernaut of Manifest Destiny only

exacerbated this angst. No longer a nation of states concentrated primarily in the East, America by mid century stretched from coast to coast. Moreover, the acquisition of territory created a problem as to what to do with the American Indians and other non-white people who lived on the land (viz., Mexicans and Chinese laborers). Should these racial others become absorbed into the national composite? Or should they be excluded in order to preserve the nation's homogeneous character? Many politicians, philosophers, and authors, including John O'Sullivan and the nationalist literary group the Young Americans, used the seventy-fifth anniversaries of the signing of the Declaration of Independence (1851) and Constitution (1863) to call for a nationwide reflection on what constituted American identity. Defining "Americanness" through literature and legislation, as they claimed, would finally eradicate the lingering cultural influences of Europe while uniting the conflicted nation through a shared—and racially homogeneous—national identity.

"America is the one country where the most consistent care has been taken to trace clearly distant spheres of action for the two sexes and where both are required to walk at an equal pace but along paths that are never the same" (Tocqueville 697). Along with his observations about the institution of slavery, those that Alexis de Tocqueville makes in Democracy in America (1835, 1840) about the role sexual difference plays in ordering the nation provocatively record the cultural climate of nineteenth-century America. According to the logic of separate spheres, as it has widely been understood, women, in their capacity as wives and mothers, functioned as custodians of the family—and more largely the nation—in the private sphere. Men, conversely, managed the matters of the public sphere, including and especially business and governance. But these

single-sex or homosocial networks quickly shifted from providing order to creating discord. American men began to interpret women's domestic power as feminizing and, thus, threatening to their authority, autonomy, and manhood. The proliferation of fraternal orders, including the Freemasons and the Odd Fellows, only aggravated this schism, providing men with deeper homosocial recesses in which they could ensconce themselves.

Those bent on making sameness primary to American juridical and political philosophy parlayed the Transcendentalist axiom of the universal connection of the self into a way for white men to see their spiritual interconnectivity. While subjective difference persisted between white men, ensuring the conditions for a competitive economy, it was attenuated or made secondary by this theory of connectivity that reminded men of their same origin.²³ Critics' insistence that this sameness is indicative of the nineteenth century's preoccupation with managing sexual difference has impelled some to interpret literary representations of male homoerotic desire as somehow barometric of men's attitudes toward women. Given that American culture tended to treat gender and sexual desire as mutually constitutive categories, this methodology makes sense. In Love and Death in the American Novel (1960), Leslie Fiedler approaches "love" as "a way of coming to terms with the relationship between man and woman" (xxvi). In reading novels such as Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn (1884) and James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales (1823-41), Fiedler asserts that the recurring image of men retreating into the woods represents the possibility of "a pure marriage of males—sexless and holy, a kind of counter-matrimony, in which the white refugee from society, and the dark-skinned primitive are joined till death do them part" (209).²⁴ By

striking out together in the wilderness, the frontier, the open sea, or other open, unsettled spaces, men could evade the marriage trap and the feminizing influences of the domestic sphere. In the process, they could shore up their autonomy and mobility as American men.

These rugged, homosocial settings, external to social convention and “the web of femaleness” (500), according to Fiedler, facilitate interracial bonds between men. He notes that the male couples central to works such as Herman Melville’s Moby Dick often are a white/non-white or “dark” pairing. This generic convention emerged out of the prevailing attitude that the rituals of native civilizations, as well as the superstitions of African and black American culture, would help to counteract the overcivilized feminization men claimed they were subjected to in the woman-run domestic sphere.²⁵ By forging an erotic bond, white and “dark” men could transcend racial antagonism and devote themselves to safeguarding virile American manhood. Fiedler’s proposition that these novelists figure white men’s desire for dark men on the social interdiction of homosexuality, however, seems at odds with the attitudes toward race that circulated in mid-nineteenth-century America.²⁶ On one hand, his reading broaches the idea that because of the absence of a discrete taxonomic category such as “homosexuality,” novelists used the more familiar concept of racial alterity to convey the difference of their characters without having to reference explicitly the unspeakable nature of their relationship. On the other hand, he neglects to consider if these homoerotic representations are complicit in a larger program to bolster sexual and racial sameness. The storm clouds on the nation’s horizon confirmed for some the imperative of a system of racial difference to maintain the status quo while preserving racial purity and white

men's custodianship of the country. As several critics have demonstrated, many of these literary representations of male same-sex erotic bear hallmarks of these systems of sexual and racial differences. In this dissertation I hope to widen the angles by reading these representations through the cultural lens of sameness.

Chapter one, "The Same as It Ever Was: Mapping the Logic of Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," is organized around the premise that recent analyses of race during this era in American history are dominated by difference. In an attempt to deepen our understanding of the period, I reflect upon these conceptions of difference and factor in the constitutive role that sameness played in ordering mid-nineteenth-century America. I begin by providing an overview of the racial science that coalesced in the late-eighteenth century. Spurred on by the Enlightenment's synthesis of theology, logic, and humanism, ethnologists, philosophers, and politicians began to devise an entire host of hypotheses that would provide scientific evidence of race. Although these theories often contradicted or were at odds with one another, such as the debate over monogenesis and polygenesis, they all served to erect a system of racial difference that upheld the cultural dictate of racial purity. I also trace the logic and rhetoric of sameness in key Supreme Court decisions concerning race and citizenship (e.g., Dred Scott and Cherokee Nation v. The State of Georgia). As I show, for justices such as Roger Taney a codified system of racial difference in itself presumed the preeminence of a homogeneous nation. The nationalist desire for a uniform citizenry played a central role at this historical juncture when the very terms of what constituted an American started to come into focus.

Next, culling work by historians such as Mary Ryan, Mark Carnes, Nancy Cott, Anthony Rotundo, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, I show that the overlapping concepts of

sameness and difference played out similarly in determining the cultural freight of sexual difference. Galvanized by their new duties as caretakers for the American hearth and home, women, as literary critics Ann Douglas and Jane Tompkins have shown, began to don the mantle of authorship, writing fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and magazine articles, heralding the influence of the domestic sphere—or, in some cases, the perilous effects of its absence—on the public sphere.²⁷ This domestic renaissance, however, caused anxiety among some men who interpreted it as a threat to normative masculinity. Seeking a way to be insulated from feminizing domesticity, a number of men started to conceive of ways to remain external to the domestic sphere, including joining fraternal orders and even migrating to the male-dominated frontier of the West.²⁸ As historians have recorded, these new homosocial spheres provided men with a means to reassert their fraternity as they vied against each other in the public sphere. At the same time, though, they created new social arrangements that could involve erotic entanglement. I close this opening chapter by scrutinizing how philosophers such as Emerson conceived of male friendship. As I show, the draw of sameness constituted a critical part of these mid-nineteenth-century meditations on the nature of friendship.

Elaborating upon the assurances and pitfalls of this erotic brotherhood organized around sameness is my goal in the second chapter, “‘The entangled life of many men together’: Fellow Feeling and the Penetrative Threat of Sameness in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Blithedale Romance.” As critics such as Lora Romero have averred, in this 1852 novel Nathaniel Hawthorne is critical of the culture of domesticity and sentimentality that coalesced in mid-nineteenth-century America and its estimation of the familial intimacy of the domestic sphere over more public expressions of fraternity. The

novel opens with the protagonist Miles Coverdale, a poet, writing in his "cozey part of bachelor rooms" (10) where he is surrounded by convenient, but distracting domestic pleasures. Tired of writing in solitude and yearning to accomplish something "heroic," he joins the experimental community of Blithedale with the express goal of tapping into the "blithe tones of brotherhood" (12). Through the pairing of Coverdale and Hollingsworth, the Ahabian leader of the utopian project who seduces the poet, Hawthorne seems to epitomize Fiedler's understanding of homoeroticism as effecting strong, yet tender erotic bonds between men that circumvent women and the feminizing world of domesticity.

The destructive presence of the feminist character Zenobia, based upon Sarah Margaret Fuller, noted women's right activist and author of Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), is also central to understanding Hawthorne's placement of women's rights in opposition to American manhood and fraternity. He ultimately registers his concern, however, that an erotic brotherhood necessitates submission to another man. Consequently, same-sex erotic desire in Hawthorne's view imperils male individualism and autonomy because it demands that a man submit to another as an erotic object. As an alternative, Hawthorne sides with the model of homosociality in which women, such as Priscilla, who, as the mysterious Veiled Lady of the novel, is susceptible to the mesmeric command of dominant men, are traded between men as a means to secure triangulated fraternal intimacy²⁹ In this way, women, and subsequently heterosexuality, preserve men's autonomies while allowing them to organize safely around their sexual sameness.

Chapter three, "'A Promise to California': California, Male Same-Sex Eroticism, and the Logic of Sameness in Walt Whitman's Blue Book," begins with a nod to literary critics who *in passim* recognize that Whitman often reinscribes prevailing beliefs toward

race and gender in his otherwise heterodoxic book of poetry. As I point out, these critics, with a few noteworthy exceptions, do not examine how his assent to these dominant attitudes shapes his representational practices, especially regarding the homoeroticism that saturates most of his poems. Another aspect of Whitman's book that has eluded attention is the prevalence of California in his work. As I argue, Whitman's interest in California in the 1860 edition of Leaves demonstrates this very flight from the overcivilized East to the uncivilized West. California's location on the margins of the nation in the 1850s saliently parallels the inside/outside tension at the crux of Leaves: the inside or central world of the heterosexual and the outside or marginal world of the homosexual. Populated entirely by men, the rugged California in Whitman's work is an unsettled frontier on which an organic and intimate camaraderie between brothers takes shape. At the time, the liminal position of California also allowed the poet, an ardent supporter of territorial expansionism, to conceive of a territory that could reap the fruits of democratic governance while remaining outside the divisive politics of slavery. But, as I argue, Whitman's alignment with the Free Soil Party's platform, which supported the continuation of slavery in the East while opposing its extension to the new West, especially when coupled with the California legislature's attempt to bar freed blacks from entering the state so as to ensure labor for poor white men, communicates a racist dimension or subtext to his vision of brotherhood.

The 1860 edition of Leaves is crucial to my study for two reasons: first, it is the edition in which Whitman started to conceive of the book as an American bible; second, it is the first edition in which the poet included "Enfans d'Adam" and "Calamus," two clusters of poems that deal expressly with sexuality as a political matter.³⁰ But I focus on

an even more specific version of this third edition, one that has eluded critical scrutiny.

Walt Whitman's Blue Book is the poet's own copy of the 1860 edition that, as the subtitle mentions, contains "his manuscript additions and revisions" for the fourth edition published in 1867. Although some of these revisions are included in the fourth edition of Leaves published in 1867, there are a number that are not, some of which register the scope of Whitman's investment in the West as a new American Eden.

A literary work lauding the heroism displayed by men in the Civil War is the focus of my fourth and final chapter, "'With men whose manhood never took denial': The Erotics of Sameness in Herman Melville's Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War." Similar to his exploration of the homosocial world of sea-faring life in Moby-Dick, Melville in his 1866 collection of poetry underscores that the martial life of war provided American men with an opportunity to forge fraternal intimacy with one another in the absence of women. But in the same breath he shows that this chance regrettably occurs during the Civil War, a baleful theme throughout Battle-Pieces. Melville relies on this erotic fraternity as a means to reunite the men of the Union and the Confederacy by characterizing the two sides as warring brothers. Seeking to memorialize the sacrifices of Union soldiers, Melville, similar to Whitman in Drum Taps (1865), sentimentalizes their losses to such an extent that his poetry comes across less as a journalistic account of war, as some critics have characterized it, and more as an extended homoerotic epic. The way he represents the allure of the active male body, as well as his rhapsodic meditations on men's devotion to one another, hinges upon an eroticism that stresses the desirability of sameness. Consequently, what emerges from the pages of Battle-Pieces is a model of fraternity in which men eroticize racial and gender sameness. Appealing to white men

from the North and South through this erotically charged language of brotherhood, Melville expresses his hope that white brothers will turn inward and rely on one another in order to combat the differences that threaten to divide them during Reconstruction. While he is sympathetic to enslaved black men, communicating his secondary opposition to slavery, his treatment of them as indescribable monsters haunting the margins of American society only amplifies the sentiment that pervades this collection of poetry: that America's future lay solely in a white, manly brotherhood.³¹

One of the many methodologies of lesbian and gay studies has been the recovering of histories heretofore unrecorded. Through painstaking archival research and acrobatic rethinking of texts, historians and literary critics including Jonathan Katz, Estelle Freedman, Martin Duberman, Martha Nell Smith, Karla Jay, Robert K. Martin, and Bonnie Zimmerman, have taken on the Herculean task of plotting the history of homosexuality in America, exposing in the process the social mechanisms that policed forms or expressions of erotic and sexual desire. But positioning same-sex erotic and sexual desire strictly in opposition to dominant culture obviates even the possibility that the two could be collusive. "Man Enough" intervenes in this binary framing by suggesting that at a specific historical moment canonical male authors began to envision same-sex erotic desire as a means to shore up unity among white men. I demonstrate that, despite its not having coalesced into an "official" identity or subject position (i.e., "homosexual"), male same-sex eroticism textured existing identity categories and was shaped by them in kind. Scholars of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer studies must factor in these mutual determinations when theorizing or speculating about the cultural meaning of same-sex eroticism. Although the history of homophobia and

heterosexism are undeniable and very real, presuming that same-sex eroticism is always wholly counterdiscursive or in opposition to dominant systems of power glosses over the moments—in history or even contemporarily—in which it is not. By suggesting that some expressions of male same-sex erotic desire are somehow complicit with dominant culture, I do not seek to discount or even necessarily demonize them. Instead, I intend to record as accurately as possible the political nature of identity as authors represented it in mid-nineteenth-century American literature. And, as history has shown, politics can often make for the strangest of bedfellows.

¹ Thoreau would later expand his ruminations on friendship into a freestanding essay on the topic.

² “[L]et us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness. . . . In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti.” See Rotundo’s American Manhood and Barker-Benfield’s Horrors of the Half-Known Life, just to name two.

³ Of course, I am indebted to Eve Sedgwick’s deft approach to the continuum between the homosexual and the homoerotic as “a strategy for making generalizations about, and marking historical differences in, the structure of men’s relations with other men” (Between Men 2). Her notion of “the potentially erotic” (x) plays a critical role in my understanding of these homoerotic representations in mid-nineteenth-century American literature for even the potential for such an erotic energy conveys the existence of what might be called the semiotics of homosexuality.

⁴ The term “homosexual” has long been attributed to Karl Maria Kertbeny, an Austrian-born Hungarian who used the term in his 1869 counterargument to Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code that outlawed homosexuality.

⁵ In National Manhood, Dana Nelson insists that the “transition from Confederation to Constitution [was when] U.S. democratic possibility became conditioned by presidentialism’s powerfully homogenizing masculine ideal, one loaded with unnecessarily rigid longings for self-sameness and self-subordination in the name of unity” (xi).

⁶ Crain approaches romantic friendship between men as “egalitarian. It could bind men without curtailing their liberty” (5). A parenthetical comment he makes bears repeating: “(It could bind women, too, but because women were not full citizens, the political implications of their friendships were different.)”

⁷ See Leslie Fiedler’s Love and Death in the American Novel and Walter Benn Michael’s Our America.

⁸ See Carnes, Rotundo, Coviello, Crain, Chapman and Hendler, Katz, and Warner, just to name a few.

⁹ For more on the family romance in nation building, see chapter four (“Friendly Inequalities: Emerson and Straight Homoeroticism”) in Newfield’s The Emerson Effect and Michael Paul Rogin’s Fathers and Children.

¹⁰ I am reminded of a line from “By Blue Ontario’s Shores” in which Whitman calls for “these States [to] be fused into the compact organism of a Nation” (9.3).

¹¹ Pingree explains that “the sexuality of either man, because witnessed—and thus to some extent participated in—by the other, presented prospects transgressive to Victorian American culture in which they lived: homosexuality . . . , incest . . . , and adultery” (105-6). While I concur with Pingree’s cogent reading, I wonder, as my argument suggests, if the brothers’ theoretical or imagined homosexuality was understood less as a transgression and more as a corollary of their democratic equality.

¹² Marilee Lindemann introduced me to the concept of the tyranny of biography. For more on how biography stifles inquiry in single-author studies, see her Willa Cather, Queering America.

¹³ Robyn Wiegman briefly discusses “metaphoric homosexuality” (“Melville’s Geography of Gender” 737) in Melville’s “Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” (1855). Her discussion of the male bond as “a mechanism for negotiating the discrepancy between the actual oppressions of men . . . and their collective domination of women” (736) includes a nuanced psychoanalytic reading of sexual difference (by way of Irigaray). Although I am interested in what psychoanalysis has to offer our understandings of sameness and difference, I have made a concerted attempt to avoid using it when reading these texts because of its historical specificity. Using psychoanalysis to speculate about the complex workings of these literary works seems anachronistic and suspect.

¹⁴ See Sedgwick’s illuminating introduction to Between Men in which she identifies as one of the main aims of her study the exploration of “the ways in which the shapes of sexuality, and what counts as sexuality, both depend on and affect historical power relationships” (2).

¹⁵ The Emerson/Plato lineage has been well documented by scholars. See Jill Fritz-Piggott’s “The Law of Adrastia: Emerson’s ‘Experience’ and Plato’s Phaedrus,” Ray Benoit’s “Emerson on Plato: The Fire’s Center,” and Walter Blair and Clarence Faust’s “Emerson’s Literary Method.”

¹⁶ Emerson was also inspired by the works of Immanuel Kant, the eighteenth-century philosopher of the enlightenment whose Critique of Pure Reason (1781) includes a section entitled “Transcendental Doctrine of Elements” that focuses on the empiricism and the human production of meaning. See Crain’s discussion of Emerson, Phaedrus, and Lysis, 161-180.

¹⁷ For more on Melville and Plato, see Sealts, Creech, and Matthiessen (especially 384-5, 473), who reads the nineteenth-century author as critical of the philosopher. Also refer to John Wenke’s “‘Ontological Heroics’: Melville’s Philosophical Art” for a thorough treatment of Melville and the Platonic divide between body and spirit.

¹⁸ As Robert Martin has discussed, “Whitman’s concept of the ideal lover was influenced to some extent by his reading of Plato” (74). Jonathan Ned Katz notes that “Whitman’s notebooks refer to his reading the first volume of Bohn’s six-volume edition of Plato” (381n.6). Katz also explains that Whitman was also moved by Socrates’s meditation on love. Byrne S. Fone also observes that “[t]he literature of homosexual instruction that resonates against [Whitman’s “Calamus”] has as its most obvious classical location in Plato” (138). See Fone 206-7 for a more in-depth analysis linking Whitman’s intimate friendship with the kind Plato celebrates in Phaedrus and Symposium.

¹⁹ For a thorough overview of Hellenism in Victorian Britain, see Linda Dowling’s Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford.

²⁰ That is, nineteenth-century American culture, as I discuss in chapter one, broadly conceived of sexual difference in negative terms; in being based on a “me/not me” distinction that summarily disallowed the possibility of shared elements.

²¹ See Foucault’s discussion of the “antinomy of the boy” (The Use of Pleasure 221).

²² In the section 47 of “Song of Myself,” Whitman includes a Platonic reference that alludes to the Greek practice of pedophilia: “I am the teacher of athletes, / He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own, / He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher” (1-3).

²³ For an engaging counterpoint, see “Thoreau’s Bottom” in which Michael Warner illustrates that Henry David Thoreau questioned the irreducibility of sexual difference on which the concept of love between men and women rest. As passages from Thoreau’s journals suggest, the American philosopher contests the very logic of heterosexuality by insisting that individuality serves as the irreducible difference. By taking note of how Thoreau conceived of “the sameness of the other” (66), Warner posits that even within the nineteenth century philosophers felt dubious about the constitutive role gender binaries played in shaping normative sexual desire. More fundamentally, Thoreau’s musings on sameness and difference record the formative role these concepts played in nineteenth-century understandings of erotic and sexual desire.

²⁴ The Leatherstocking Tales consist of five novels: The Pioneers (1823), The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Prairie (1827), The Pathfinder (1840), and The Deerslayer (1841). See Ann Douglas’s The Feminization of American Culture, Nancy F. Cott’s The Bonds of Womanhood, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s Disorderly Conduct, Jane Tompkins’s Sensational Designs, and Lora Romero’s Home Fronts, just to name a few. More recently, Caleb Crain in American Sympathy has shown how even before the nineteenth century some American authors were keen to explore “bonds between men that kept men free” (2).

²⁵ Mark C. Carnes in Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America notes that, in response to the Free Masons’ enactment of temperance clauses at the behest of the temperance movement—whose membership consisted primarily ministers and women—during the 1830s, a number of American men in the 1840s fled to the Improved Order of Red Men, a fraternal society that incorporated Native American ritual in the hopes of showing that “[m]en must remain emotionally free to pursue a path of friendship and to avoid any obstacles that would hinder such a course” (102). Unsurprisingly, actual “red men” were ineligible to join the order.

²⁶ When explaining why white men were drawn to racial others, Fiedler asserts, “[i]n dreams of white men . . . the forbidden object tends to be represented by a colored man . . . [T]he spouse of the [homosexual] pariah is properly of another race, a race suppressed and denied, even as the promptings of the libido are suppressed and denied” (362).

²⁷ Historians such as Linda Kerber have suggested the porousness of the line separating the public and private spheres, showing how “women’s allegedly ‘separate sphere’ was affected by what men did, and how activities defined by women in their own sphere influenced and even set constraints and limitations on what men might choose to do” (18).

²⁸ Carnes explains that young American men “were drawn to male secret orders, where they repeatedly practiced rituals that effaced the religious values and emotional ties associated with women” (“Middle-Class Men and the Solace of Fraternal Ritual” 48). He goes on to note how the “rituals affirmed that while woman gave birth to man’s body, initiation gave birth to his soul, surrounding him with ‘brothers’ who would lavish the ‘utmost affection and kindness’ on him.”

²⁹ This particular model of homosociality is discussed at length by René Girard in Deceit, Desire, and the Novel and Gayle Rubin in “The Traffic of Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex.” See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s Between Men.

³⁰ Michael Moon suggests that in the 1860 edition Whitman advances his “primary claim of the Leaves of Grass project: that sexuality is fundamentally a political matter because it is never simply ‘sexual,’ that is, unrelated to other economies in the culture besides the erotic” (Disseminating Whitman 159).

³¹ Wald explains that decisions such as Dred Scott illustrate "the kind of unrepresentability to which the Supreme Court had . . . consigned black Americans" (53).

Chapter One

The Same as It Ever Was: Mapping the Logic of Sameness

equal·i·ty: The quality or state of being equal: as **a: sameness** or equivalence in number, quantity, or measure **b: likeness** or **sameness** in quality, power, status, or degree.

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Law, 1996 ed.

"[L]iberty and equality in America have been regularly contingent on whose freedom and whose equal treatment is at issue."

—G. Edward White, History of the Supreme Court of the United States: The Marshall Court and Cultural Change, 1815-35, vols. III-IV (740).

In this chapter I map the underlying logic of mid-nineteenth-century American culture that privileged sameness in the face of alterity. I begin by demonstrating that the mutually constitutive concepts of sameness and difference were manifest in prevailing ideologies about race, particularly the effort to make racial homogeneity the "national need to cultivate 'sameness'" (Nelson 6) in response to abolition and black equality. The preeminence of racial homogeneity cut across party lines, conveying the significance sameness had for most white Americans. At the same time, as I argue, since equality could only be conceived of between similar subjects, the presence of people of different races and the inequality they came to embody created a republic fraught with anxieties over race and equality.¹ Next I discuss how the reassessment of Indians by nineteenth-century ethnologists led to a recasting of the Indian question. Ethnographies such as Francis Parkman's The Oregon Trail (1847) and The Conspiracy of the Pontiac (1851)

and Lewis Henry Morgan's League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois (1851) valorized aspects of Indian culture, leading some whites to rehash the debate over whether these "savages" could become civilized and acculturate to Anglo-American culture. As I argue, though, this debate was belied by a nativist project that aimed to expel Indians from the nation so that white men could become American indigenes. In section three, I assess the homosocial spaces of fraternal organizations and industry that took shape as mid-nineteenth-century American culture and society became ordered by sameness. Spurred on by the growing antagonisms between the sexes and the incipient calls for women's rights, white American men erected an identity-based political bloc, ionized by male intimacy and a shared devotion to racial homogeneity, to counteract challenges to their power and privilege. Focusing on Emerson's essay "Friendship," I close this chapter by assaying that an eroticized form of sameness was central to male friendship in mid-nineteenth-century America.

Nineteenth-century America's preoccupation with alterity or otherness has proven to be a fecund vein for scholars of many disciplines, above all historiographers invested in critical race studies, postcolonial studies, feminist studies, gender and queer studies, ethnic studies, and labor or class studies. Historically, this focus, while demonstrating that some facets of American culture and society unfolded along the axes of difference, has placed the conception of sameness in a sort of critical penumbra. There yet ethereally so, sameness has been treated by historians and literary critics as a kind of given or default category, one whose circulation has been oversimplified in historiography by a binary understanding—the me/not me construction—of difference. My intent in this chapter is to provide an overview of the animus of sameness that circulated in mid-

nineteenth-century America, an era marked by the emergence of the middle class, the regularization of voting, the proliferation of gender-based social movements, and the bugbear of race. Understanding the nineteenth-century logic of sameness conveys the degree to which identity politics became embedded in American political culture and society and, as I demonstrate in the subsequent chapters through close readings of literary works, illumines the often oblique representations of erotic desire between white men in works in the homosocial American literary canon.

I. “The great mass of white men”²: Black Difference, White Equality

“What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is as good as the other. A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations.”

—Karl Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital (28).³

“The root meaning of equality is negative; egalitarianism in its origins is an abolitionist politics. It aims at eliminating not all differences, but a particular set of differences, and a different set in different times and places.”

—Michael Walzer, Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality (202-3).

The history of racial difference in America is protracted and complex, well deserved of the critical attention it has received. For the purposes of this section, though, I want to focus on attitudes about racial difference that circulated predominantly among whites in mid-nineteenth-century America. Investigating these theories yields crucial insight into how equality and citizenship were broadly conceived during this time in society and politics. The shift in emphasis from forging relations of equivalence between different races to permuting the categories of difference in the name of what David Theo Goldberg has termed “racial knowledge” allowed for equality and citizenship to become

conflated with sameness.⁴ Relations of equivalence could be conceived of and established only between subjects who were deemed similar in nature. As a result, the logic of racial sameness remained an implicit element of American society and culture, embedded in this larger project of racial knowledge to elucidate and abide by the color line.⁵

"Of all the novel things which attracted my attention during my stay in the United States, none struck me more forcibly than the equality of social conditions," Alexis de Tocqueville expounds in the opening of Democracy in America (11). For him, equality constitutes "a providential fact" (15) connoting "the leveling of all" (13). In the nineteenth century, equality served as a point of departure from the aristocratic form of governance against which his native France had revolted some fifty years earlier. He explains that his interest in America stems from the way Americans banded together because of their similarities. This fact, he avows, is "the key to almost [his] whole work":

The immigrants who came at different times to dwell in the land which today covers the American Union differed from each other in many respects; their intentions were not similar and they governed themselves according to different principles.

However, these men shared common features and found themselves in a situation common to them all. . . . All the immigrants spoke the same language, all were children of the same people. (39)

Throughout his meditation Tocqueville is drawn to the inherently paradoxical nature of the nation epitomized in its motto *E Pluribus Unum*. The wonder of America, as he avers, is that different groups of immigrants rallied around their "common features" and

declared into existence a coherent national identity. In this way, difference gave way to sameness, especially how most Americans "have sprung from the same stock, speak the same language, pray to God in the same way, experience the same physical conditions, and obey the same laws" (360). Observing the sameness that unites Americans leads the Frenchman to pose a fundamental question: "So where must the observable differences come from?" (360). Here Tocqueville suggests that race served as one of the foremost categories of difference ordering nineteenth-century American society.⁶ Unlike in antiquity, when masters and slaves were often the same race, blacks were enslaved because of their race, consequently ensuring "the memories of slavery" in America and the "the permanent difference of race" (400). His probing registers that the determination of sameness is mutually constitutive of the determination of difference, making it tricky to scrutinize the two separately when trying to unravel the Gordian knot of race.

The nineteenth century marked the third consecutive century in America of the institution of slavery. However, it was not until the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries that Southern white men, sensing the contradiction slavery posed to the nation's declaration of liberty, felt impelled to broadly rationalize and justify this institution (Fehrenbacher, The Dred Scott Case 12).⁷ Under the aegis of scientific rationalism that flourished under the American Enlightenment, public intellectuals such as Thomas Jefferson began to ruminate if slavery was justifiable because of an immutable Caucasian superiority.⁸ Although some hinted that the justification of black enslavement might be found in science, this was not generally the case. In fact, as Bruce Dain explains, science at the turn of the eighteenth century "increasingly focused on classification and the problem of reproduction, heredity, and variation, while American culture and politics

focused on race, sexuality, and race mixing" (viii). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, though, the tide had turned and scientific inquiry in the United States had become driven by racial science and gynecology (Nelson 109), both of which helped to shore up white fraternity by pathologizing nonwhites and women. Around the 1830s, advocates of slavery attempted to quell criticisms from anti-slavery and abolition groups in New England. The premises that apologists of slavery put forth, as George Fredrickson explains, were based upon axioms that deemed Western civilization superior to the evident barbarism of Africa:

As portrayed in proslavery writings, Africa was and always had been the scene of unmitigated savagery, cannibalism, devil worship, and licentiousness. Also advanced was an early form of the biological argument, based on real or imagined physiological and anatomical differences—especially in cranial characteristics and facial angles—which allegedly explained mental and physical inferiority. (The Black Image in the White Mind 49)

Of course, the pretended savagery of Africans, particularly as it was hyperbolized in nineteenth-century American media (see **Figure 1**), made the idea of human servitude a



**Figure 1. “The Naturalist.”
Harper’s Weekly, 25 April 1857.**

little more palatable for some whites, particularly in the North.⁹ But for others, as Fredrickson subtly suggests, the justification for slavery came down to a more primary reason that stemmed from the “real or imagined . . . differences” of blacks—their discernible blackness.¹⁰

Prejudicially assigning negative meanings and values to blackness was partly a holdover from Calvinism, viz., the tenet of original sin in which blackness circulated as a signifier for postlapsarian depravity. But while Americans in the mid-nineteenth century continued to call upon religion to impose order and meaning onto society and culture, science came to play an even more central role. Turn-of-the-century scientific philosophers such as Samuel Stanhope Smith proffered theories about racial difference that, while treating species diversity as a natural phenomenon, “still denigrated blackness as the mark of savagery and degradation, a corrupted version of the white archetype” (Dain 44). Other theories scientists claimed proved innate Negro inferiority, criminality, and, more pressingly, the biological nature of race.¹¹ Samuel G. Morton hypothesized that the variation in crania among different races proved that each race descended from a different ancestor, a view shared by others including Harvard naturalist Louis Agassiz. Racial difference did not signify variation within a species group but, rather, a different species altogether.¹² Polygenesis, as this theory became known, contradicted the long-held monogenic theory of Adam and Eve that served as evidence of a universal, interracial, and Christian brotherhood.¹³ Although some supporters of slavery tentatively supported polygenesis because it contradicted scripture, a number ascribed to it once Josiah Clark Nott, an Alabama physician, offered a boiled-down version of it in Types of Mankind (1854).¹⁴ But even more so, polygenesis proved to some that “[n]either climate

nor state of society could ever change the African into a European” (Stanton 20).¹⁵

Other scientific studies undertaken during this period aimed to incapacitate abolition and other movements that threatened to undermine the extant racial hierarchy in America. A study headed by Dr. Edward Jarvis, a Massachusetts physician, for example, found that the rate of insanity among blacks increased once they moved to New England. By leaving their warmer southern habitat for the colder North—not by coincidence, a move usually required to escape slavery—blacks ran the chance of becoming demented (Stanton 58-60). Jarvis’s study shows the lengths that some scientists were willing to go to avoid a black exodus to the North and maintain the status quo of slavery. As the abolitionist call for black equality grew louder in mid-nineteenth-century America, some Northern and Southern supporters of slavery, as well as those who opposed it for reasons other than humanitarian ones, argued even more adamantly against miscegenation.¹⁶ Missouri congressman Francis P. Blair, a well-known colonizationist, avowed that racial purity was at the core of nation building, asserting that it was “the wish of every patriot that all within the limits of our Union should be homogeneous in race and of our own blood” (qtd. in Foner 269). Likewise, the nationalist novelist James Kirke Paulding, an avid Jacksonian, argued that miscegenation would “destroy the homogeneous character of the people of the United States, on which is founded our union, and from which results nearly all those ties which constitute the cement of social life” (qtd. in Fredrickson The Black Image in the White Mind 107).

That Paulding was a New Yorker might surprise those who still insist on framing the slavery issue as a clear-cut division between the North and the South. But as historians admonish, such a dichotomy simplifies the complex field of American society

and politics. Most Northerners, including more conservative Republicans, opposed the notion of black equality central to abolition for fear that it would lead to an internecine war, the dissolution of the Union, and racial amalgamation. To be sure, this was despite the fact that many eminent abolitionists were vocal in their opposition to miscegenation.¹⁷ Anxieties that abolition would open the doors to amalgamation were probably even more acute in the North since Northern blacks had already attained a certain degree of freedom, forcing Northerners to reckon with the inevitability of a new social order. Literature of all kinds, including pamphlets, editorials, and novels, cropped up in the North warning of the twin perils of abolition and miscegenation. A novel entitled A Sojourn in the City of Amalgamation in the Year of our Lord 19--, published anonymously in New York in 1835, provides a glimpse of America a hundred years after equality had been bestowed upon blacks. As Ratner explains, the author intends to inveigle his Northern readers with a world gone topsy-turvy:

The blacks became the most respectable part of the community. Though still vulgar in dress and manners, they had attained a position of complete equality and now were in the process of subjugating the whites. . . . This was the future the abolitionists were promising America: the inferior Negro destroying the superior white race. (18-9)

But the slippery slopes of anti-miscegenation arguments were not limited to fiction. Later in 1858, for example, rumors teemed when Stephen Douglas, during his second debate with Lincoln, told the crowd that Frederick Douglass had been spotted riding with a white woman in a carriage as her husband drove them. Some wondered, then, if the end game of black abolitionists surpassed attaining black liberty and equality and included

amalgamation.¹⁸ As Dain explains, this concern, while extreme, was fueled by comments by Douglass, along with other black abolitionists such as the physician James McCune Smith, who saw amalgamation as "a proclamation of the reality and equality of race in the present and of the need for white America to embrace blackness at once" (255). Assurances from Republican politicians such as Lincoln that "the separation of races [was] the only perfect preventative of amalgamation" (Speeches and Writings, 1832-58 401), however, were not enough for some. The belief that racial sameness was a nationalist imperative persisted in the minds of many Northerners.¹⁹

"Nations, from convenience and comity, and from mutual interest"²⁰: The Comity of a White America

"The chief and, in a sense, the only condition one needs in order to reach a centralized public power in a democratic society is to love equality or to make men believe you do."

—Tocqueville, Democracy in America (789).

"I am opposed to negro equality. I repeat that this nation is a white people—a people composed of European descendents—a people that have established this government for themselves and their posterity, and I am in favor of preserving not only the purity of the blood, but the purity of the government from any mixture or amalgamation with inferior races."

—Stephen A. Douglas in a speech delivered in Chicago, July 9, 1859,

Created Equal? The Complete Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858
(20-1).

Northerners who opposed abolition were not by default sympathetic to slavery. A number of Americans believed the institution was contrary to the nation's promise of freedom, particularly the right to free labor and competition. Slavery, as the Free Soil Party insisted, was unfair to poor whites because it undermined free labor.²¹ Moreover, fearing slave insurrections such as the widely reported one in Santo Domingo, Haiti, in

1791, as well as Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia in 1831, some Americans saw slavery as setting the conditions for a violent race war that might jeopardize the nation's security and economic prosperity.²² These concerns found a voice in the American Colonization Society (A.C.S.), organized in 1814 by a group of abolitionist clergymen and politicians who saw in enslaved blacks a chance to Christianize Africa "with their own consent" (Jay 22).²³ As Lawrence Friedman explains, the A.C.S. became an organization in which anti-slavery parties such as the Whigs and Free Soilers allied with Southern Democrats bent on extirpating freedmen from American soil:

Because colonization promised to eliminate the free Negro population that gave their bondsmen hope for emancipation, these slaveholders believed that A.C.S. efforts would shore up the "peculiar institution." Still others, North and South, supported the A.C.S. simply because they did not want Negroes around, whether free or slaves. Finally, certain ambitious cultural and political leaders backed the society because of its large and diverse following; they hoped advocacy might garner support from whites of diverse ideologies. (14)

Generally colonizationists saw no future for blacks in America since they had come to embody an immutable racial difference.²⁴ "[T]he free people of color are by far, as a class, the most corrupt, depraved, and abandoned," the eminent Whig senator Henry Clay espoused in a speech to the Colonization Society of Kentucky (The Papers of Henry Clay, volume 8, 147). Like Clay, many colonizationists sympathized—on a limited basis, of course—with the predicament in which blacks found themselves once they attained freedom. Around the 1840s and 1850s, when Free Soilism emerged as a viable political platform, the colonization movement attracted an even larger following "giving greater

impetus to the hope for homogenization through the removal or elimination of the Negro . . . [and engendering] a new sense of American nationalism that had clear racial overtones" (Fredrickson 135).²⁵ A number of important nineteenth-century politicians and activists, including "halfway abolitionists" (Friedman 36) Lyman and Catharine Beecher, Horace Mann, Lewis Tappan, and Sarah Hale, held that colonization would remedy America's race troubles. Clay aligned himself with the A.C.S. when he argued that "unconquerable prejudice resulting from their color, [blacks] never could amalgamate with the free whites of this country" (The Papers of Henry Clay, volume 8, 153).

Whiteness, and to some extent manliness, circulated in nineteenth-century America as a situational category constituted by what Edward Said has termed "contrapuntal ensembles" which predicate identity solely on "opposites, negatives, [and] oppositions" (52).²⁶ Specifically whiteness was not defined positively (i.e., what it was within itself) but negatively (i.e., what it was not in relation to something or somebody else—blackness, "Indianness," "Asianness," etc.).²⁷ By emphasizing difference over sameness, whiteness could remain abstract and unwritten—the blank page of natural law—while still circulating as a stable and natural identity category.²⁸ Conversely, blacks came to signify a foreign, "parasitic" presence.²⁹ The scientific and cultural preoccupations with racial difference, in tandem with the logic of white supremacy that skewed scientific inquiry, meant that equality under the law could only exist between white men. Some even contended that the very concept of equality in America was contingent upon racial hierarchies.³⁰ Just as a master needed a slave, equality needed inequality. This was the open secret of mid-nineteenth-century American politics.

Such disputes reflected a larger cultural anxiety about the unity of America, particularly when it came to expressing a coherent national identity.³¹ Literary historians have documented a trend in many nineteenth-century works of literature in which authors struggled to conceive of a way to unite people of various European descents under the appellation "American." Rallied by the mid-century cry of Manifest Destiny, a group of literary nationalists called Young America emerged seeking out a national literature advocating the democratic struggles of the nation. However, as Priscilla Wald has explained, when attempting to unite Americans through "a culture rooted in a shared vision rather than a shared past" (113), the Young Americans used "[a] white male body . . . as the emblem—the governing body—of the nation, . . . [making] expansion an expression of its very essence, its white masculinity" (116). Although the group's zeal to unite Americans must be understood as an attempt to ameliorate the class tensions that coalesced in the free market economy, the ambition to curb the proliferating narratives authored by women and enslaved and freed blacks who represented radically divergent visions of America served as an even greater catalyst. The national identity heralded by the Young Americans rendered narratives contesting the exclusionary terms of citizenship illegitimate since only white men were authorized to speak for the nation.³²

These exclusionary terms of citizenship were at the very heart of the Dred Scott decision, or Scott v. Sandford, handed down by the Supreme Court on March 6, 1857. Scott, a slave whose master had taken him to various free states and territories including Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri, sued for his freedom arguing that he became free once he entered free territory. After a series of decisions and appeals in the lower courts, Scott, represented by the Free Soil lawyer Montgomery Blair, pled his case to the high court

then led by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, a Marylander sympathetic to the South.³³ The majority opinion authored by Taney, siding with the plaintiff Irene Sanford, infamously nullified the Missouri Compromise of 1820 enacted by Congress.³⁴ Taney's *obiter dictum*, as opponents of the decision called it, clearly signaled that the Supreme Court was sympathetic to the interests of slave owners and the South by declaring that freedmen could not sue in a court of law and that slaves were property to which (white) citizens had a legal claim.³⁵ The Dred Scott ruling also had a significant impact on mid-nineteenth-century American politics, notably how citizenship and equality were circumscribed to white men. The crux of Taney's opinion was that whites and blacks would forever remain divided by "indelible marks" (Finkelman 63). Moreover, the chief justice stood firm to the doctrine that the Founding Fathers did not have blacks in mind they endowed Americans with certain inalienable rights and liberty. Even more illuminating of his current of thought is a passage in which he rails against "liberal constructions" or pragmatist interpretations of the Constitution that could conceivably be deployed to endow blacks with citizenship:

It is not only the same in words, but the same in meaning, and delegates the same powers to the Government, and reserves and secures the same rights and privileges to the citizen; and as long as it continues to exist in its present form, it speaks not only in the same words, but with the same meaning and intent with which it spoke when it came from the hands of its framers, and was voted on and adopted by the people of the United States. (68-9)

Taney's repetition of sameness communicates his allegiance to an originalist understanding of the Constitution that conserves the intention of the document's framers.

But the conservatism of his opinion stood on shaky legal ground. In fact, this pretense reflected the prevailing assumption about inherent black inferiority, suggesting that the Justice abdicated his responsibility as a jurist and, instead, succumbed to the culturally sanctioned lure of sameness. When mulling over the question of black citizenship in his opinion, he characterizes blacks as “an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations” (61). Most of the legal precedents he cites affirm the illegality of interracial marriages and miscegenation. The Maryland law passed in 1717, as well as one passed in Massachusetts in 1705, for instance, demonstrate the “fixed opinions concerning that race” (63) held by the framers and “show that a perpetual and impassable barrier was intended to be erected between the white race and the one which they had reduced to slavery” (62). Ultimately, as Fehrenbacher stresses, anti-miscegenation laws “can scarcely be regarded as having marked the limits of citizenship” (350). Their salience to Taney’s opinion, however, did mark the permeability of another “impassable barrier”—viz., the one separating the court of public opinion and the impartial halls of the highest court in the land.

Judicial scholars have cited the Dred Scott decision as one of the most egregious miscarriages of justice in the Court’s history. More than a century of analysis has yielded cogent commentary about the conditions that allowed for such an injustice. But these critiques circulated in mid-nineteenth-century America, too, among lawyers, legal scholars, and the press. “[T]he rights of Human Nature’ know no distinction founded on this difference of origin and color,” the editors of the New York Tribune cried, adding that “[i]f a black man commits a crime, he is punished for it just as though he were a white man; he ought therefore to have a voice prescribing and modifying the penalties of

the crime” (qtd. in Finkelman 164). Frederick Douglass solemnly announced in his speech marking the anniversary of the American Abolition Society that the decision was so contrary to the rule of law that “[t]he white man’s liberty has been marked out for the same grave with the black man’s” (qtd. in Finkelman 175). Saliently, Justice Benjamin Curtis’s dissenting opinion on the case exposes Taney’s cloaking of his pro-slavery sympathies in the intentionalist rhetoric of constitutional law:

Political reasons have not the requisite certainty to afford rules of judicial interpretation. They are different in different men. They are different in the same men at different times. And when strict interpretation of the Constitution, according to the fixed rules which govern the interpretation of laws, is abandoned, and the theoretical opinions of individuals are allowed to control its meaning, we have no longer a Constitution; we are under the government of individual men, who for the time being have power to declare what the Constitution is, according to their own views of what it ought to mean. (124)

Curtis’s refrain of difference is a salient counterpoint to the hollowness of Taney’s mantra of sameness. The chief justice, according to Curtis, did not put forth a strict interpretation of the Constitution by reproducing the intent of its framers; rather, he engaged in tyranny and partisanship thereby undermining the ethos of the judiciary and flouting the rule of law. But even more tellingly, in this context difference is a purely organic phenomenon in juridical discourse owing to judicial subjectivity and the flux of politics. However, as Curtis controverts in his dissent, these differences of opinion cannot influence or determine constitutional law or else the foundation of the Constitution establishing the unity and consistency of federal law would be undermined.

Lincoln understood the Dred Scott decision in a similar fashion, framing it as a key first step in nationalizing slavery under the guise of a conservative politic.³⁶ In a speech delivered at Springfield, Illinois, on June 26, 1857, Lincoln, about to start his second unsuccessful bid for the Senate, took the Taney court to task for basing its majority opinion “on assumed historical facts which were not really true” (Speeches and Writings 393)—viz., that the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the framers of the Constitution did not have blacks in mind when conceiving equality among citizens. In a speech he delivered later in Columbus, Ohio, on September 16, 1857, Lincoln emphasized that the Republican Party was in fact “eminently conservative” (Speeches and Writings 35), aiming to shore up the beset republic. As Lincoln understood them, these foundational documents promised Americans a circumscribed equality, not one that was totalizing or radically democratic:

I think the authors of that notable instrument intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal in “certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” This they said, and this they meant. (Speeches and Writings 398)

One can't help but pause after reading the ways in which Lincoln sees men as unequal since they have little to do with the inalienable equality conferred upon citizens by the nation's founding documents. More specifically, he struggles to understand that a manmade system of laws could overwrite a biological similarity or homology. But the

fashion in which Lincoln conflates these variant forms of equality was prevalent in nineteenth-century America, a point I want to end this section with because it marks one of the most concrete examples in American political theory in which sameness and equality became interchangeable. "Men are not born equals, physically," James Fenimore Cooper asserts in his essay "On American Equality," "since one has a good constitution, another a bad; one is handsome, another ugly; one white, another black" (41). As part of his collection of essays entitled The American Democrat (1838), Cooper in "On American Equality" seeks to justify organic hierarchies by insisting that all men are not created equal. He rounds out his brief essay by admitting that while equality for all men is admirable in theory, "[d]esirable in practice, it can hardly be, since the result would be to force all down to the level of the lowest" (43). Cooper's and Lincoln's keenness to highlight the synthetic nature of equality conveys a shared struggle to fathom how a legally mandated equality could ever come to fruition in a world preoccupied with difference. Unlike Cooper, who saw government-imposed equality as undesirable, Lincoln took a more pragmatic stand. The framers, as he explains, "meant to set up a standard maxim for free society . . . constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere" (398). In other words, equality for Lincoln was a process, not a condition.

Lincoln's speech in which he denounced the Dred Scott decision is representative of the mid-nineteenth-century crisis over racial sameness and difference. Lincoln, of course, was susceptible to the many prejudices of his time. His long-standing support of anti-miscegenation laws had an incalculable impact upon his theorization of American

equality. Contesting the democrats' characterization of him as a black republican, Lincoln expressed a "natural disgust" (Speeches and Writings 397) prevalent in mid-nineteenth-century America toward amalgamation and rails against

that counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either, I can just leave her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of any one else, she is my equal, and the equal of all others. (Speeches and Writings 398)

Some readers might be quick to champion the sentiment that blacks are equal to whites when it comes to the right to reap the fruits of their labors. But did Lincoln believe that black equality exceeded capitalist production and accumulation? In this speech he is obviously circumspect, prefacing his stance on market equality with the unspecified qualification about how blacks are unequal to him. The simple way he refutes "that counterfeit logic" that white men want black women as either slaves or wives is telling: simply leave them alone. This could intimate that Lincoln thought black self-improvement was a necessary component to overcoming the institution of slavery. However, in the process of excoriating Taney for his fallacious reasoning that blacks were not the intended beneficiaries of the founding documents, he resurrects a topos of the Dred Scott decision when he asserts that "the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation. . . . Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by colonization"³⁷ (402). By broaching his opposition to amalgamation in this speech, Lincoln placates those who held that all abolitionists were soft on miscegenation.

But another reason he denounces amalgamation so vehemently is to illustrate that slavery was the leading cause of it in the first place. Thus, he lays bare the contradictory ground on which Taney's and Douglas's anti-miscegenation and pro-slavery convictions stood. Heeding the various metaphors of kinship in Taney's opinion, Wald detects an anxiety over a perceived "threat posed by blacks to the genealogy of a white 'family of independent nations'" which the chief justice uses to "justify the anti-amalgamation laws" (42). Even though Lincoln's passing remark about leaving blacks alone could be dismissed as off-the-cuff and, thus, unessential to understanding his vision for the country, it does convey a similar disposition, especially when adjoined with his opposition to amalgamation. Furthermore, his belief that colonization held the answers to America's race troubles registers the intent to shore up the eroding "white family of independent nations" that Taney, himself, believed was under fire.³⁸

II. "[T]he dense mass of savages": Red Menaces and the Rhetoric of Assimilation

"Next to the case of the black race within our bosom, that of the red on our borders is the problem most baffling to the policy of the country."

—James Madison to James Monroe, qtd. in G. Edward White, History of the Supreme Court of the United States: The Marshall Court and Cultural Change, 1815-35, vols. III-IV (703).

"It makes little difference . . . where one opens the record of the history of the Indians; every page and every year has its dark stain."

—Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor (338).

Whereas blackness in the white imaginary served as the antipode of whiteness, redness seemed to occupy a more intermediary station on the racial spectrum. Although whites ultimately saw Indians as racial others, recognizing and imbuing with meaning

"the observable differences," to rehash Tocqueville's words, between the races, their engagement with the varied tribes evinces that they viewed them less threateningly.³⁹ In fact, nineteenth-century white America esteemed certain Indian traits and customs, engendering a form of cross-cultural identification—an articulation of sameness—at odds with the emphasis placed on difference in the logic white supremacy. Some white men, perhaps out of colonial guilt, even intimated that these desirable qualities meant that Indians could eventually become civilized and assimilate into Anglo-American society. However, as I will discuss, the nativist project to ground white men's identities in the American soil—to naturalize themselves as the original Americans—belied this attempt to make inroads between white and Indian cultures. The convoluted relationship between whites and Indians ultimately shored up the goal of a national sameness, paving the way for whites to speak as American indigenes.

Until the late-eighteenth century, Indians appeared in the Anglo-American imaginary as archetypal savages skulking about the borders of civilization waiting to pillage and plunder. Captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's (1682) record that early Americans saw the Indians as "a scourge to the whole land" (Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mary Rowlandson 76) and a threat to Christian civilization. As the idea of America came into focus by the mid-eighteenth century, the white colonists realized that the Indians were not going to relinquish title to their fertile land. The flurry of Northwest Ordinances passed after the American Revolution—particularly the ordinance of 1787—suggested that the fledgling American government would recognize the tribes' claims to land and property by declaring that it "shall never be taken from them without their consent." Instead of arguing for conqueror's rights, the

government treated the various tribes as foreign nations who held highly coveted territory that the "United States, and any individual state, had only a preemption right—an exclusive option—to purchase" (Wallace, The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians 32). The Treaty of Greenville in 1795, forged between the United States and the confederacy of Indian tribes who banded together to battle the expanding nation, summarily ushered in a new spirit in which the government treated the tribes as nations with a circumscribed degree of self-governance (Wallace, The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians 33). Furthermore, court cases such as Virginia's Hudgins v. Wright (1806), which, in part, decreed that pure-blooded Indians—or, more exactly, those who did not exhibit typically Negroid traits—could not be enslaved, demonstrated that the Indians were not going to capitulate to white rule and quietly disappear. Together with the treaties that the American government entered into with the Indians, these important cases registered that Indians did have definite legal rights.⁴⁰

But while these treaties gave various tribes, especially the Cherokees, legal recourse, the prevailing belief, supported by the Marshall Court's decision in Johnson v. McIntosh (1823), was that the United States still had claim to the territory under the principle of discovery.⁴¹ As the two groups forged legal relationships in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, ethnologists set out to compare the two cultures so as to justify the supremacy of civilized white culture and theorize ways to answer the Indian question. However, the way in which whites established cultural differences between the two groups, as with blacks, entailed contrapuntal ensembles that defined "savagism in terms of civilization, or noncivilization, so as to mark with it all that civilized men could not be" (Pearce 232). The territorial expansion that the United States

underwent immediately following the War of 1812 forced many white Americans to face the heterogeneous reality of their nation (Wald 22), one that was directly at odds with the prevailing desire for a homogeneous nation.

Nineteenth-century Americans were of two minds about Indians: either they should relocate to the western territories of the nation, or they should be forced to acculturate to Anglo-American culture. Those living in close proximity to Indian tribes in southern states and on the frontier continued to highlight the alterity of Indians, deeming them clear and present dangers to their safety and, more broadly, Western civilization. Many white Americans, swayed by the polygenic hierarchy of races, believed that Indians were biologically incapable of becoming civilized (Gossett 244).⁴² Moreover, the emphasis placed on tribalism by Indians, as Lucy Maddox explains, “was generally represented as antithetical to the entire project of nation-building” (10). The prevailing thought was that Indians should be dispossessed of their land and relocated elsewhere so as not to interfere with territorial expansion. In his multi-volume study of the Pontiac tribe's grisly resistance to British colonization, Francis Parkman designated the biology of American Indians as inflexible:

The Indian is hewn out of rock. You can rarely change the form without the destruction of the substance. Races of inferior energy have possessed a power of expansion and assimilation to which he is a stranger; and it is this fixed and rigid quality which has proved his ruin. He will not learn the arts of civilization, and he and his forest must perish together. (The Conspiracy of Pontiac 48)

The rocky solidity of the Indians which Parkman criticizes is what white men were seeking to erect in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly in terms of—a collective

identity. But in the context of the acculturation/removal debate, this trait is detrimental for it conveys that men such as Parkman believed Indians could not adapt to civilization. Repudiating the concept of private ownership and siding with communalism, the Indians, according to Parkman, were a “dense mass of savages” (The Oregon Trail 179) who disdained individuality and autonomy.⁴³ Such a willing disregard of a superior culture infuriated “learned” men such as Parkman, who described Indians as “the human wolves in our neighborhood” (285) who in neither “manners . . . [nor] ideas were in the slightest degree modified by contact with civilization” (167). The idea that racial tensions between whites and Indians could be resolved through intermarriage, according to this viewpoint, conflicted with both the burgeoning racial science built upon the cornerstone of white supremacy and the national directive of racial homogeneity. Intermarriage led not to the civilization of the Indian but, as Parkman illustrates when describing such a relationship, to “indiscreet white men . . . feeding and supporting a rapacious horde of the bride’s relatives” (124).⁴⁴ Until the 1820s, a critical mass of white Americans thought that the government should force Indians to remain within reservations in the East so that they could cease hunting in the wilderness and take up tillage—a change contingent upon the repudiation of public or communal property (Gossett 231). However, this policy soon gave way to the call for colonization of the Indians to the West so that whites could reap the benefits of the fallow soil.

Pace Parkman’s contention about the Indians’ contumacy to civilization was Lewis Henry Morgan’s belief that tribes such as the Iroquois were prime candidates for acculturation.⁴⁵ Written to “encourage a kinder feeling towards the Indian” (ix), Morgan’s The League of the Ho-De’-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois (1851) records the rich history and

cultural traditions of the Iroquois in the face of white dominance in America. Contrary to the opinion of a number of his contemporaries, Morgan, along with other ethnologists, adopted an approach that, while biased towards Western civilization, was guided by a degree of cultural relativism. As the nineteenth-century historian George Bancroft impressed in his multivolume study History of the United States of America, From the Discovery of the Continent (1876), Indian societies exhibited a number of traits and customs present in white society. Morgan, in concord with Bancroft, points out, "There is not a quality belonging to the white man which did not belong to the American savage; there is not among the aborigines a rule of language, a custom, or an institution, which, when considered in its principle, has not a counterpart among their conquerors" (The League of the Iroquois 2, 126). Keen to draw the two cultures into a shared orbit, Morgan insists that the Indian tribal societies evinced the existence of an evolution from monarchy to oligarchy to ultimately democracy. "It is obvious that the hunter life is incompatible with monarchy, except in its miniature form of chief and follower" (1, 129), Morgan observes, paralleling the anti-monarchy of Indian life with the republican spirit that fueled the American Revolution. Moreover, tribes such as the Iroquois, although inferior to whites, were endowed with "the most generous traits of character" (1, 334) esteemed by civilized nations. "[I]t would be . . . irrational," he scolds his readers, "to regard the Indian character as devoid of all those higher characteristics which ennoble the human race" (1, 133). By using the "same means and the same influences which are employed to educate and elevate the mass of our own people" (2, 117), the American government would effectively defuse the threat that Indians posed to their society while concomitantly "rescuing the Indian from his impending destiny" (2, 111): annihilation.

But Morgan, an avowed monogenesist, based his program for Indian acculturation on the premise that Indians, despite their perceived racial difference and inferiority, were always part of the composite of America. Not coincidentally, Morgan evokes sameness when yoking the two groups together:

Both in our civil and social relations with the red men, we regard them as a distinct and separate class; when in each of these relations they should not only be regarded as our fellow-men, but as part of our own people. . . . So far as they are able to appreciate and enjoy the same privileges which pertain to the mass of the people, the claim for participation which their situation silently puts forth should not be disregarded. (2, 118)

Treating the Indians as "part of our own people" demanded the retailoring of the categories of difference between whites and Indians, not to mention the dismantling of the civilization/savagery dyad that ordered nineteenth-century culture. Morgan, in other words, recasts the relationship between Anglo-Americans and Indians under the rubric of sameness—as part of the "us" that comprises the United States. "Who shall relate our sylvan history [?]" he queries his readers, summarily binding the prehistory of the Indians with that of Americans. Of course, the belief that the Indians could become Americans was not specific to the nineteenth century. Jefferson, for example, advocated that Indians should learn agriculture and cultivate a value for private ownership. As he believed, once the children of nature mastered the mores and customs of civilization, they could become "naturalized" Americans. Jefferson held even more radical beliefs than this when it came to the biological separation of the two races. In a speech he delivered to the Chiefs of the Upper Cherokees, the president appealed to the Indians by promising them complete and

utter acceptance into American civilization: "You will mix with us by marriage, your blood will run in our veins and will spread with us over this great island" (qtd. in Wald 26). In a letter to Benjamin Hawkins, Jefferson elaborated on his vision for intermarriage:

In truth, the ultimate point of rest and happiness for them is to let our settlements and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix, and become one people.

Incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the United States, this is what the natural course of things will, of course, bring on, and it will be better to promote than to retard it. (The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 363)

Although Morgan never directly refers to miscegenation or amalgamation in League of the Iroquois, his descriptions of acculturation connote it.⁴⁶ "It is, indeed, a great undertaking to work off the Indian temper of mind," he avers about the transformative power of education, "[A]nd infuse that of another race" (2, 113). Additionally, he predicts that Indians will gladly become functioning members of society once "they are able to appreciate and enjoy the same privileges which pertain to the mass of the people" (2, 118). By arguing that Indians need to be treated as "part of our own people" once they acculturate, he invokes the familiar logic of sameness that ordered the nineteenth century, assuaging any fears that such a social change would upend social order.⁴⁷

Morgan's outlook on miscegenation, particularly in relation to Indian acculturation, is at times opaque, perhaps owing to the strident opposition to it in mid-nineteenth-century America. Early on in his career as an ethnologist, Morgan disapproved of miscegenation and amalgamation.⁴⁸ However, later visits to tribes in Kansas and Nebraska between 1859 and 1860 allowed him to witness the rapid acculturation of some tribes to Anglo-American culture and inspired him to revisit his

opinion. In fact, in The Indian Journals, 1859-62, Morgan clearly makes the case for miscegenation as a crucial component of the acculturation process for Indians:

[T]heir children will intermarry respectably with our white people and thus the children will become respectable and, if educated, in the second and third generations will become beautiful and attractive. This is to be the end of the Indian absorption of a small portion, which will improve and toughen our race, and the residue [will be] run out or forced into the regions of the mountains. (55)

Morgan's explanation of how intermarriage would facilitate the inclusion of Indians into the American populace must not be understood as his condoning the indiscriminate mixing of the races. In fact, as the conditional clause in the initial sentence of this passage implies, there are contingencies that must occur to make intermarriage a viable option.

The recurring theme of respectability in this passage conveys that the Darwinian concept of selective breeding was manifest in Morgan's vision. Culling passages from Morgan's Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity (1871), Bieder explains that the celebrated father of American ethnology believed that "Indians could be absorbed into the white population with little or no negative effects to the general white population" (231). It was only after "the second cross" of Indian and white blood—when half-breeds mated with full-blooded whites—that Indians could be fully absorbed by the American nation. "With the white carried still further," Morgan hypothesizes, "Full equality is reached, tending to show that Indian blood can be taken up without physical or intellectual detriment" (Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity, 207; qtd. in Bieder 231). Insisting that all men contained the potential—the "germs," as he put it—to become civilized beings, Morgan envisioned miscegenation as a means to hasten the process.

But even more importantly, Morgan's supposition about miscegenation must be understood in relation to the threat Indians posed to national homogeneity. As his explication of miscegenation conveys, the intermixing of the races would not result in cultural hybridity. Instead, the dominant white blood would absorb the desirable traits of Indian blood while discharging the inferior ones, making the ultimate result of the mixture incontrovertibly white. Careful not to state this idea in such stark, antagonistic terms, Morgan in The League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois again falls back on the naturalized rhetoric of civilization to secure his point. Civilization, as he insists, is an uncontrollable force whose dissemination is natural; it "is aggressive, as well as progressive—a positive state of society, attacking every obstacle, overwhelming every lesser agency, and searching out and filling up every crevice, both in the moral and physical world" (2, 108). This characterization of civilization as a voracious prevailed in mid-nineteenth-century America amidst the fervor of manifest destiny. As an 1844 essay in The Democratic Review analogized,

[c]ivilization may be likened to an absorbent body, placed in contact with an anti-absorbent, for some of the properties of which it has strong affinities. It will draw these latter so completely out that, to use a strong phrase, it may be said to eat them up. (qtd. in Rogin Fathers and Children 11)

Similar to Morgan's claim that whites will "absorb" the affinities of the Indian race, while expelling those who carry the "residue" of the undesirable traits of the race, the editors of The Democratic Review recast American civilization using the terms of racial science to preserve the supremacy and homogeneity of the white race. In this context, civilization serves to encode white supremacy as natural law, implicitly judging the sloughing of

racial others an inevitable part of the evolutionary process, not a tactic of imperialist aggression. The editors of Harper's Weekly expressed a similar sentiment in an editorial entitled "The Consequences to Weak Races" printed in their May 2, 1857, edition:

But in our conquest of nature with our stalwart arms, and with our dauntless hearts to back them, it happens that men, nations, races, may, must, will perish before us. That is inevitable. There can be no change for the better save at the expense of that which is—one generation gives place to another. Out of decay springs fresh life. The tribes of Indians who hunted over the land, without occupying it, retire before us like the hunted deer and the buffalo themselves—deeper and deeper into the innermost recesses of the continent. (278)

America is envisioned as an organic force consuming everything in its wake, "filling each crevice" of the continent with its superior citizenry bound by its consanguinity. The "residue" which is too inferior or resistant to be absorbed is forced to retreat into the "innermost recesses" of the nation—the unsettled frontier, the delimited reservation, the buried unconscious of the nation.

The Nativists are Restless: Indianation, Native Americans, and native Americans

“History is hysterical: it is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it—and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it. As a living soul, I am the very contrary of history, I am what belies it, destroys it for the sake of my own history[.]”

—Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida (65).

"Indian destruction generated a powerful nationalism."

—Michael P. Rogin, Fathers and Sons (13).

Despite their differences, advocates of both colonization and acculturation shared this goal to preserve the homogeneous character of Anglo-American society.⁴⁹ Consequently, there was a significant response from the government when the Cherokee Nation started to assert its tribal sovereignty—its national difference—from the state of Georgia in the 1820s. Up until this time, whites envisioned the Cherokees as a paradigm for Indian acculturation. Goaded by interracial members of the elite who had the most to lose from compulsory relocation, the tribe rapidly shifted from hunting to agriculture, adopted a Cherokee alphabet thought up by the half-white tribesman Sequoyah in 1821, and in 1828 printed its first newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix.⁵⁰ These cultural shifts culminated with the 1827 passage of the Cherokee Constitution, a document, published in the Cherokee Phoenix, in which the tribe brazenly declared its autonomy in the menacing shadows of the state and federal governments. By devising an identity politic that preserved and stressed their tribal and national difference while conforming to the Western model of civilization, the Cherokees contravened the national directive of a racially homogeneous nation. That the Cherokee Nation took these important steps in achieving the larger goals of acculturation conveys that they, as Wald aptly puts it, "in effect called the bluff of the United States government" (31). In response, the state of Georgia, which legally owned the land the Cherokees were claiming through an agreement with the federal government in 1802, passed a series of Indian laws in 1828 and 1829 that effectively superseded tribal with state law (White 711).⁵¹ Indians were directed to pay taxes, fight in state militia, and perform other duties required by all citizens of the state. Georgia's (re)actions communicated the government's intent to reimpose the model of sameness that the Cherokees eschewed. In section six of the Land

Policies and the Georgia Law of December 19, 1829, for instance, the legislators emphasized the importance of treating Indians and citizens of Georgia similarly in the name of law and order:

And be it further enacted, that all of the laws, both civil and criminal of this state, be, and the same are hereby extended over and portions of territory respectively, and all persons whatever, residing within the same, shall, after the first day of June next, be subject and liable to the operation of said laws, in the same manner as other citizens of this state, or the citizens of said counties respectively[.] (Filler and Guttman, 19)

Georgia's design was to repudiate the very differences the tribe used to cordon themselves off from the state and, more largely, America. Moreover, by governing the Cherokees under the same laws as it did its citizens, Georgia took yet another step in its goal to absorb the tribe and tribal lands in the name of state sovereignty.

Although many northerners, including missionaries such as Reverend Samuel Worcester and Dr. Elizur Butler, who lived among the Cherokees, as well as eminent philosophers, including Emerson, desecrated Georgia's actions as holocaustic, the state found an ally in President Andrew Jackson, whose policies "forged American national identity in westward expansion and Indian removal" (Rogin, Fathers and Sons 167). In 1829, Jackson supported the call for voluntary immigration of tribes, among them the Cherokees, Seminoles, Chicataws, and Chocktaws, to the unsettled West. By 1830, however, impatient with Indian resistance to relocation, the president adopted a less conciliatory plan. Compulsory Indian removal, he insisted, would "separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the

States, [and] enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions" (Filler and Guttman, 49). Jackson's Indian removal bill, which passed through Congress and was signed in May 1830, made relocation law. Once Georgia attempted to enforce removal, though, the Cherokees, under advisement of missionaries such as Worcester, sought out legal counsel to mount a case asserting that they were a foreign nation and, thus, exempt from state and federal mandates. After losing in the lower courts, the Cherokees took their case to the Supreme Court whose chief justice, John Marshall, in a rare instance of judicial partisanship, had actively campaigned against Jackson's election in 1828. At the crux of The Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia (1831) was whether or not a foreign nation could exist in the delimited territory of an American state. In his majority opinion, Marshall sided with the Cherokees, but in a way that undermined their claim of absolute sovereignty. Although the Cherokees conclusively showed they did not owe allegiance to the republic, he declared them a "domestic dependent nation" whose "relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian" (Filler and Guttman, 63).⁵²

Marshall's pronouncement of the Cherokees as such also meant, as Justice Henry Baldwin put it in his concurring opinion, that "there [was] no plaintiff in this suit" (qtd. in Wald 35). Fearing that the judiciary's refusal to specifically condemn Georgia's actions would pave the way for further legislation forcing the tribe from its land, the Cherokees and their sympathizers took a new tack. Worcester, a white missionary sentenced to four years of hard labor by the state of Georgia for refusing to sign an oath swearing allegiance to Georgia before taking residence on Cherokee land, sued the state insisting the requirement was unconstitutional. Again, Marshall authored the majority opinion and

sided with the two missionaries and the Cherokees. Arguing that past treaties between Cherokees and the state and federal governments established the relationship as between two discrete nations, Marshall declared in Worcester v. The State of Georgia (1832) that the Cherokee Nation was "a distinct community, occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter" (Filler and Guttman, 77).

Furthermore, Marshall dismissed Georgia's assertion that since the Cherokees resided in the state they must cede to it. "The whole intercourse between the United States and this nation," the chief justice spelled out, "[I]s, by our constitution and laws, vested in the government of the United States." Although the Cherokees had won against Georgia, the current president unabashedly sided with Indian removal. Laws such as the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, which effectively made American law supersede tribal law in cases involving Indians and whites, quickly eroded the Cherokees' sovereignty and forced them into signing treaties with the government relinquishing their land in the East for territory in the West. Even more so, proclaiming the Cherokees and other Indian tribes as wards of the federal government fostered a relationship of dependence in which Indians grew to rely "on annuities and government personnel and services, and worked to retard the development of community leadership and organization" (Satz 293). By the fall of 1838, the Cherokees, mandated by Zachary Taylor, were forced to immigrate to Oklahoma in one of the most poorly planned events in United States history. The Trail of Tears, as it came to be known, resulted in the death of several thousands of members of the tribe. While those who sympathized with the Indians roundly criticized Jackson for orchestrating such a travesty, most white

Americans supported his endeavors to open up the valuable tribal land to American industry and, in the process, banish the menacing threat of difference that the red men posed to a homogeneous American identity.

III. "[B]ecause females are *not men*": Separate Spheres, Fraternal Orders

“If scholars in women’s history have been addressing two lacks—the need to know about women, and the need to know about gender—scholars in ‘men’s history’ do not seem to face the same double task. There is little motive to unmask and uncover, since the history of men as human individuals has been constantly investigated. There is, however, a great need to situate men’s history in an explication of the sex/gender system.”

—Nancy Cott, “On Men’s History and Women’s History” (205).

“The division of labor by sex can . . . be seen as a ‘taboo’: a taboo against the sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between sexes and thereby creates gender.”

—Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex”(178).

The prevailing attitude in the nineteenth-century white America was that its society was divided by sex. The sexed public/private dichotomy served at least three interrelated purposes: to facilitate male agency in the public sphere; to transform white women into custodians of the American family and, indirectly, the nation; and to bolster the fledgling middle class central to the nascent capitalist market economy. The way that the division between sexes shaped identity and other discursive constructions illustrates, as Nina Baym has insisted, that the "public and private spheres were metaphorical rather than actual places, that public and private were different ways of behaving in the same place" (Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860 11). The sexed divide

separating men from women caused formidable schisms, laying the foundation for homosocial spaces that insulated men from women and vice versa. Phenomena such as these expose a double impulse in nineteenth-century America which continues to crop up in American culture and society: the harmonization of white men and women through the macrostructure of the heteronormative family and their simultaneous polarization because of their sexual difference.

Historians have identified a number of phenomena critical to the development of the nineteenth-century separation of spheres. Feminist historians such as Nancy Cott and Carroll Smith Rosenberg have shown that the sexual division of labor that bolstered patriarchal social order stemmed from the shift from communalism to individualism which, in turn, spun from the economic transformation of colonial America from agrarianism to industrialism. This economic shift heralded the beginning of a free market economy in which citizens became increasingly responsible for themselves, their families, and their livelihoods (Carnes, Secret Rituals 110).⁵³ The intensification of competition in the economy meant that only men were deemed fit to inhabit the secular business world. White women, conversely, were closely bound to moral welfare and religious piety, which empowered them as custodians of American home life, sentimentality, and morality.⁵⁴ Although the logic of separate spheres suggested that business and industry existed solely within the public realm and that women's influences were confined to the home, this was not exactly the case.⁵⁵ The business models coalescing in the public sphere were imported into the private sphere, consequently recasting the household in the ethos of industry. Additionally, the ideologies of domesticity and sentimentality that women disseminated in the private sphere made a

palpable impact upon nineteenth-century American public sentiment and politics. Yet despite these key slippages, the responsibility for managing the public economy generally fell in the bailiwick of men; white women became the overseers of the domestic economy in their absence.⁵⁶

The Second Great Awakening, which swept through New England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, radically transformed the blueprint for separate spheres, particularly in the way that middle-class women's roles as social reformers endowed them with a new degree of mobility.⁵⁷ Soon women became the vanguards of moral reform movements including abolition, Indian conversion and acculturation, moral and sexual purity, and literacy, rendering problematic the cleavage between the public and private spheres in the process. But while some women eagerly embraced their new roles as social reformers, others realized that the concept of "womanhood" was becoming retailored by this division in spheres. To be sure, as in contemporary America, gender was an overdetermined category in nineteenth-century American culture fraught with many contradictory meanings.⁵⁸ The fluxional society became saturated with cultural mechanisms establishing normative sex roles and habits. Those who transgressed these codified categories risked ignominy and punishment. But rather than assail this re-visioning of womanhood *tout à fait*, a number of women accepted it with the designs of making women's domestic work equal to, but different from, men's work in the public sphere. In so doing, some women did not contest this conception of womanhood until they realized that they had become "classed by sex" (Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood 206).⁵⁹ While some women accepted their responsibilities and created organizations seeking to redefine family structures and centralize women as the custodians of

domesticity, other early-nineteenth-century activists such as Sarah Margaret Fuller, Louisa May Alcott, Emma Willard, and Sarah and Angelina Grimke mounted more radical movements for women's suffrage and equality. Through social activism in the name of God and country, women rendered porous the boundaries dividing the private from the public (Douglas 98).⁶⁰ But even more importantly, middle-class white women had grown to see themselves as a legitimate sociopolitical bloc.

Back to the Garden: White Fraternity, Brotherhood, and the Homologic Matrix

“The logic of equivalence is a logic of the simplification of political space, while the logic of difference is a logic of its expansion and increasing complexity.”

—Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (130).

"For the American before 1850—a new man, as he felt, making a new world—was obsessed to know who and what he was and where he was going, to evaluate the special society in which he lived and to know its past and its future."

—Roy Harvey Pearce, Savages of America (135).

Though some men, including the ministers leading the reform movements, as well as those who supported women's equality, welcomed the currents of feminine sympathies in the secularized public sphere, most viewed them as detrimental to the masculine world of business. The surge in fraternal orders' memberships coincided with reforms that flourished under the aegis of the Second Great Awakening (Carnes, Secret Ritual 29, 77).⁶¹ Fraternities offered middle-class, white men a world replete with the rituals that the Second Great Awakening had effectively removed from the church. Most importantly, fraternal orders including the Freemasons, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the Improved Order of Red Men, provided a means to constitute brotherhood—as men

yoked together by a metaphorical fraternal bond. By the mid-nineteenth century, some white men deemed the creation of these homosocial relations a cultural imperative to counteract the perceived growing feminization of American society and threat to racial homogeneity. Through networks or organizations devoted to the fostering of fraternal bonds, white men could work collectively to secure their dominance and authority in the public sphere.⁶² The proliferation of fraternal societies in nineteenth-century America further registered the culture's approval of factions or subcultures organized around sexual and racial sameness.

One of the earliest, largest, and most influential of the orders in America was Freemasonry, an English fraternity that was first organized on American soil in Philadelphia in 1730. Largely artisan in nature, the order appeared to repudiate class identifications and herald a vocational brotherhood that, when paired with self-industry, led to the mastery of a trade and ownership of a business. Akin to Freemasonry, working-class immigrants from England brought Odd Fellowship to America in 1819.⁶³ Unlike the Mason's repudiation of class, Odd Fellowship was a decidedly working-class order that evolved from a homosocial tavern culture. While official business was on the docket, Odd Fellows spent most of their time in convivial fellowship. When an altercation broke out during a meeting, the lodge "proceeded to harmony" or recessed and headed for the tavern.⁶⁴ However, by the 1830s the Odd Fellowship severed its ties to tavern culture, caving into the demands of temperance, a reform movement that emerged out of the Second Great Awakening. Distancing themselves from their working class roots, the Odd Fellows refashioned themselves after the Masons as a middle-class society devoted to its members' vocational and moral improvement.

Although efforts to dry out fraternal orders met with little resistance, temperance had profound repercussions on nineteenth-century gender politics. Alcohol, in fact, was so common in American society that it had seeped into the workplace. Drink, as some insisted, put workers at ease, increasing output and fostering collegial bonds between male workers.⁶⁵ The prohibition of liquor from the workplace and meetings of fraternal societies, consequently, had a dramatic impact on the way men related to one another. Clawson explains that some men detected in temperance a concerted attempt by evangelical Protestantism to undercut men's liberty in three specific ways:

First, in practical terms, the prohibition on drinking deprived men of the tavern, which was not just a source of liquor but a masculine social space from which women were barred. . . . Second, it deprived men of the solidarity-promoting aspects of liquor consumption itself. . . . Third, drinking as a social rite can indicate not just masculine separateness but masculine superiority. . . . The fact that the right to drink is so often defined in terms of age and sex suggests that drinking is typically used to connote maturity and social adulthood. (162)

Temperance "deprived" men not just of alcohol, but of the discursive means by which they articulated or expressed their identity as men.⁶⁶ Importantly, although male ministers primarily led the temperance movement, the majority of its members were women (Ryan 135). Men suddenly found themselves beholden to what they interpreted as the feminizing spirit of evangelical Protestantism.

Women's influences did not merely creep out of the private sphere to reform the public sphere; rather, some men perceived these reforms as enabling women to usurp male power in secular society and politics. Successful in domestic reform, women started

to test the waters of political activism. Since calls for women's suffrage and equality emanated from reform movements such as family reform and temperance, a number of American men expressed staunch resistance to women's increasing authority in both spiritual and secular matters.⁶⁷ Leaders of fraternal orders assailed evangelical Protestantism for mandating an unmanly "dependence on women" and championing cultural "emasculatation" (Carnes Secret Ritual 77).⁶⁸ Reform movements calling for sexual purity, the education of girls, the improvement of working conditions in mills, and abolition, came at the express cost of white male autonomy because they required white men to submit to a form of Protestantism dominated by women and distasteful concerns. These reform movements more often than not precipitated in the naming of white male privilege. As a defense, some men asserted that the overly cloying confines of the domestic sphere adversely affected boys. A foremost concern was that since boys were reared in this world of feminine sympathy they were being taught to identify with their mothers. Although young men were able to establish relationships with one another in the public sphere, they were ultimately "being pulled back into familial relationships that were deemed particularly supportive of moral reform" (Ryan 141).⁶⁹ The implied threat was that evangelical Protestantism would transform America into a nation of sissies.

To reinforce their autonomy, a number of American men distanced themselves from the evangelical church in order to reconstitute their identities. In place of evangelism, fraternal orders held onto more traditional, conservative religious beliefs and devised new rituals around which men could organize into a sociopolitical bloc, particularly vis-à-vis the feminizing politics of domesticity and sentimentality. Funded solely by their memberships, orders such as the Freemasons erected fraternal lodges and

temples from which women were barred. By cultivating a religious hierarchy in which men submitted to a paternalistic God, fraternal orders shored up the patriarchal models of affiliation eroded by evangelical Protestantism and women.⁷⁰ Initiates in most orders were interpellated as sons seeking approbation from the high-ranking officers or “patriarchs.” The Odd Fellows, for instance, established an initiatory degree for which candidates had to pass a battery of tests that demonstrated their knowledge about and dedication to the order. Once a member attained this rank, he could then apply for a Patriarchal degree, loosely patterned after Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac, which mandated that candidates submit completely to the officers of the order.⁷¹ As Carnes hypothesizes, the ritual could have conceivably served as “a replacement for emotional ties [between fathers] and their own children: the gender bifurcation of middle-class life had produced fathers without attentive children as well as children without effective fathers” (Secret Ritual 123). But the ritual also clearly spelled out that an Odd Fellow must be willing to sacrifice his own autonomy for his “fathers” and “brothers.” Crucially, this impetus to immolate one’s sexed autonomy did not engender the same fear of emasculation that submitting to Protestantism did perhaps for two reasons: the male initiate submitted actively and willingly; and he submitted to his fellow men (Secret Ritual 101). Submission to the fraternal hierarchy paradoxically provided the degree applicant with access to the self-empowerment bestowed by the Odd Fellows.⁷² Moreover, only through submission could the initiate could become a man.⁷³

Unsurprisingly, the zeal for fraternity in mid-nineteenth-century America was fueled further by exclusionary policies and racial antagonisms towards blacks and Indians. Just as women were excluded from the Masonic order because they were “not

men,” freedmen and Indians were because they were “not white.”⁷⁴ Oddly enough, the expression of a homogeneous national identity was concurrent with the trend of white fraternal orders appropriating Indian rituals. The first of these movements was the Sons of Liberty, the fabled group of men responsible for dumping English tea into Boston Harbor while donning Mohawk garb. In 1771, the Sons changed their name to the Saint Tamina Society to deride the trend of orders naming themselves after European saints (e.g., the Saint George's Society and Saint Andrew's Society). The members named their order after Tamanend, the eminent chief and sachem of the Delaware Lenni-Lenape tribe who in 1682 signed the amicable Treaty of Shakamaxon with William Penn upon his arrival to America, to identify with a native or indigenous American and defiantly celebrate their patriotism in the face of English colonialism. In addition to instilling patriotic fervor among its members, the Tammany Society, which had tribes in each of the thirteen colonies, devoted itself to philanthropy.

The way this disobedient declaration of Americanness was predicated upon a strategic identification with Indian culture registers a discursively complex strategy by the emerging American nation to mirror Indian culture for the express purpose of establishing Anglo-American indigeneity.⁷⁵ In addition to creating a hierarchy based upon Indian titles, the Tammanies co-opted Indian ceremonies and incorporated them into their fraternal protocol. Of course, despite their respect for Indian culture, the Tammanies did not allow Indians to join their order. By the early nineteenth century, the Tammany Society had transformed itself into a political powerhouse, particularly in New York, disappointing some of its members who believed the philanthropic aims of the society had gone woefully neglected. The War of 1812 and the threat that England posed to the

newborn American identity caused some Tammany members to found the Society of Red Men in 1816. Rededicating themselves to American patriotism and benevolence, the Red Men provided charitable support to widows and orphans of Tammany members who died during the war. Moreover, the use of "Red Men" in their order's name spelled out more clearly their use of Indianness as a symbol for both America's independence and Americans' contumacy toward British colonialism. Again, like the Tammanies, the Red Men incorporated Indian rituals and hierarchies, but not Indians, into their orders.⁷⁶ Seeing white men in tribal garb led some Americans to view the order as a vehicle for cultural drag—as a way for white men to bond with one another and carve out cultural significance and personal meaning by "playing" Indian. But this process of "indianation," as Leon Jackson has called it, suggests that there was cultural and political value for whites in identifying with Indians.⁷⁷

The phenomenon of indianation was somewhat common in mid-nineteenth-century America, an age, as I have been discussing, dominated by racial differences between whites and Indians, among other groups (Jackson 98). To some extent, such a cross-cultural identification registered a nativist logic that reasoned that since "Indians were the first Americans . . . there was greater identification with [them]" (Rogin, Fathers and Children 125).⁷⁸ As American authors and philosophers reflected on what constituted a coherent national identity, they envisaged Indians as foes to whom they were bound; as antagonistic presences who paradoxically embodied America's prehistory; as those who embodied both racial differences and national similarities.⁷⁹ The Red Men's co-option of Indian ceremonies, rites, and titles, was part and parcel of this paradox, linking this

identification to a nativism that sought to sever ancestral and historical ties with England while providing an organically American substitution (see **Figure 2**). By 1834, the order,



Figure 2: A membership certificate for a Philadelphia nativist organization. In the banner above the picture of Washington appears "Beware of Foreign Influence." Encircling Washington's portrait is a quotation from his eulogy adopted by Congress: "First in War, First in Peace, and First in the Hearts of his Countrymen."

akin to the Freemasons and Odd Fellows, underwent a restructuring fueled by the zeal of evangelism, above all temperance, and transformed itself into a middle-class society.

Although membership in what was now called the Independent Order of Red Men was severely anemic in the mid-nineteenth century, totaling just over three thousand, the order experienced a boom in the latter half of the century, reaching upwards of 350,000 members by 1900 (Carnes, Secret Ritual 98, 99). The slow, but steady rise in membership that followed Indian relocation records that the absence of an indigenous presence eventually created an exigency to preserve or replace it.

That the preservation of Indian culture became the *raison d'être* for an all-white fraternal order only amplified a bitter historical irony. Some might interpret white men

serving as custodians of the traditions and cultures their nation was responsible for annihilating as a rightful act of contrition. But this discounts the intertwined goals of nineteenth-century America, particularly the Young Americans, to establish white men as the native voice of American while achieving a racially homogeneous nation. This changing of the guard for the preservation of Indian culture relates the final step in this larger nativist project: by deeming themselves the superintendents of Indian culture, the Red Men realized the goal of white men serving as the narrators of the history of America's indigenes. In the broader context of the logic of sameness, white men's claim on the native American—and the Native American—voice does not evince a *tout à fait* absorption of the other for that would resurrect anxieties over the vagaries of miscegenation. Rather, it registers the programmatic absorption of a foreign culture in which those who came to embody a resistant, unmixable difference were removed from the equation and cast out onto the margins of the nation. Once this displacement occurred, the nation could safely situate Indians in American memory, whitening the yellow pages of history.

"[A]s if a community of feeling lay between": Desiring Brothers

"If the relation of homosocial to homosexual bonds is so shifty, then what theoretical framework do we have for drawing any links between sexual and power relationships?"

—Eve Sedgwick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (5).

"Equality of social conditions makes men feel their independence and at the same time reveals their weakness; they are free but exposed to a thousand accidents. Experience soon teaches them that, although they do not usually need another person's help, the moment will always arrive when they cannot do without it."

—Tocqueville, Democracy in America (661).

The rituals devised by nineteenth-century fraternal orders did more than simply reaffirm their members' racial superiority and masculinity; they deemed homosocial bonds primary for white men by downplaying and, in some cases, abjuring bonds between the sexes. The Adoption degree required for membership in the Improved Order of Red Men, for instance, closed with this maxim: "Is your mind with friendship flowing, / Freedom in your pathway showing? / Brother's love shall never cease." The Improved Order of Red Men promised initiates access to an affective fraternal network that conserved a decidedly gendered form of "freedom." Furthermore, this pledge underscored that men were expected to "remain emotionally free to pursue a path of friendship and to avoid any obstacles that would hinder such a course" (Carnes, Secret Ritual 102). The directive for men to remain emotionally unencumbered conveys a degree of disillusionment and a re-evaluation of marriage by those in the fraternal ranks. Barker-Benfield and Ryan document a waning marriage rate by mid-century caused by the growing interest in bachelorhood and the western frontier (14-8, 179-85).⁸⁰ The prevailing sentiment was that marriage hindered male friendship since men were expected to invest their affective and emotional energies in their wives and families. "You do not now look men in the face," the narrator of Donald Mitchell's Reveries of a Bachelor (1850) laments about married life, "[A]s if a heart-bond was linking you—as if a community of feeling lay between." Instead, the wife becomes the "heart-bond that absorbs all others; . . . [the] community that monopolizes your feeling" (44).⁸¹ For men such as Mitchell's narrator, the happy plot of heteronormative romance always ended with the marriage knot, leaving men tethered to hearth and home and unable to realize fully the freedom found in "brother's love." By urging young men to defer marriage at the

very least, fraternal orders such as the Red Men hoped to ensure the constitution of this homosocial foundation and a sociopolitical network of brotherly love.

This caginess toward marriage concomitantly manifested in American culture at-large, suggesting that the attitude was not specific to fraternal orders. In colonial America marriage had primarily been a component of patriarchy in which a man was charged "with the duty of maintaining a well-governed home and sustained his authority by granting him control of its inhabitants as well as of family property and other resources" (Grossberg, Governing the Hearth 5). In the court of law, women were, in most respects, nonentities, categorized as "inhabitants" and "family property." Male relatives such as their fathers and husbands could sue on their behalf not as citizens or legal subjects but, rather, as chattel or "resources" with intrinsic value (e.g., domestic labor, production of male heirs). By the mid-nineteenth century, though, the import of individualism, coupled with the *au courant* motif of romantic love, impelled a cultural shift in which marriage was approached as a contract.⁸² This "contractual emphasis in marriage law," as Grossberg explains, "rested on the one support common to all compacts, the consent of the parties" (19). Around the same time, clergymen strove to bracket the moral influence of women by "no longer present[ing] marriage as a hierarchical relationship but stress[ing] that women were complementary, and piously influential, marriage partners" (Cott, "Passionlessness" 230).⁸³ By making consent and mutuality the circumference of matrimony, the nineteenth-century American legal system and, more largely, society, appeared to be on the verge of an egalitarian understanding of married life.

This transition in the legal treatment of matrimony was hardly seamless, for by deeming marriage a contract, the judiciary subsequently had to put forth an outline of

legal recourse for wronged parties in what became known as breach-of-promise suits. Contractualism forced judges to treat women and men as social agents with delimited rights and responsibilities. The sexual inequalities built into the American legal system, of course, were nearly impossible to ferret out since they were in the bedrock of law. But as Grossberg points out, the social and legal practice of treating women as passive, helpless subjects ironically skewed these breach-of-promise suits in their favor. The Victorian ideology of women's inherent chastity and passionlessness—two qualities that deprived women of sexual desire and kept them within the confines of the American home—actually worked in their defense:

[Judges] used legal penalties to enforce a code of chaste sexual conduct on both men and women within the larger double standard. The bench appears to have been particularly determined to protect women from seducers. Jurists . . . redefined seduction as victimization that sprang from the passion and deceit of males; the passivity of women was newly emphasized, as was her instinct for a selfless life as wife and mother. According to the Illinois Supreme Court: "It is possible but hardly probable that a case may arise where the parties are equally guilty." (Governing the Hearth 47)

Women suddenly found themselves with a legal leg on which to stand, despite its basis on an ideology that also oppressed them.⁸⁴ Legal victories for women, including the passage in New York of the Married Women's Property Act in 1860, which guaranteed women property rights in marriage, reflected this cultural shift.

Conversely, men were on the defensive since in breach-of-promise suits they were often presumed to be sexually predatory. The currency of this presumption coincided

with the increase in promiscuity among unmarried men, particularly those living in large cities where anonymity allowed for sex out of wedlock to go relatively unpunished (Chudacoff 38).⁸⁵ These trends suggest that American men began to reevaluate the institution of marriage. As the number of American bachelors skyrocketed, a new trend emerged in which single men fashioned alternative domestic arrangements.⁸⁶ Of those who remained unmarried in their late teens, a majority stayed at their parents' home in order to build the foundation of their careers as they saved money in an unstable economy.⁸⁷ Those who could afford to strike out on their own often lived in shared arrangements that fostered autonomy and independence. By mid-century, a number of men headed west to pursue their dreams of new-found wealth in California.⁸⁸ In cities such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, boardinghouses quickly cropped up, providing working- and middle-class bachelors with stable homes and surrogate families as they apprenticed in their different trades.⁸⁹

What was once a rather seamless transition from residing with one's parents to living with one's marital partner had become disassociated by this liminal stage of bachelorhood. Boardinghouses, fraternal orders, and various social organizations provided unmarried men with a space in which they could transition into adulthood. As Chudacoff notes, these new living situations allowed bachelors to “socialize with those who, *like themselves*, were seeking self-reliance and self-identity in the socially and morally changing urban environment” (Chudacoff 34, my emphasis). Fraternal orders, among them the Oddfellows and organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association, sought out young working-class bachelors in cities and offered all-male substitute families and domestic spheres to which these men would otherwise not have

access.⁹⁰ Crucially, as Rotundo theorizes, young men who were in need of an extra-familial domestic and affective network turned to one another because “[t]hey were, after all, the people who shared the *same* hopes and fears, the *same* daily experience, the *same* uncertain passage from boyhood to manhood” (61, my emphasis).⁹¹ Both Chudacoff’s and Rotundo’s ruminations highlight the aegis that brought these young men together: their similarity. Alone in a strange, new world, bachelors found sanctuary in domestic spaces ordered by a logic that made synonymous similarity and familiarity.

The homosocial dimensions of these new domestic spheres meant that men had to counterweigh the absence of women when devising a household schema. A number of gender historians have cast in strikingly similar terms the dynamics of these newly formed domestic arrangements. Ryan, for instance, avers that “young men in the 1830s were forming a new kind of social bond, one based on common interest, age, and status and nourishing warm, democratic, mutually supportive emotional ties” (129).⁹² Rotundo, paying close attention to first-person accounts written by men in these societies, concludes that they “helped to bind larger male youth groups in familial feelings” (64). Particularly in boardinghouses, the independence that each resident desired was ironically predicated upon the interdependence of the boarders. Residents in some cases literally became their brothers’ keepers. Boarders did not interpret this dependence upon one another as a threat to autonomy since these brothers were engaged in a collective struggle to constitute men as autonomous subjects. “Collective individualism,” as Christopher Newfield has termed it, united men in the hope of developing a form of independence that abjured isolation or alienation from one another. Transcendentalism’s preoccupation with what constituted the self and the state, as Newfield explains, fueled “an antebellum

middle-class obsession with concrete varieties of group life that sought a synthesis of free self and unifying law that was . . . simultaneously self and America" (67).⁹³ This paradoxical logic of brotherhood took as axiomatic that men's collective struggle for masculinity did not undermine autonomy and independence since these concepts constituted the circumference of masculinity itself. Masculinity subsequently became constituted by yet another degree of sameness. White men realized that they shared a desire to realize autonomy and independence in a society that was gradually heading toward reforms benefiting women, blacks, and Indians.

The shared living rooms and dormitories helped to foster emotional and close friendships between men. Chudacoff speculates that the newfound freedom in boardinghouses facilitated the exploration of same-sex erotic desire—including physical expressions—between men:

Independence from family supervision in the anonymous urban environment offered young men opportunities to explore their sexuality in a variety of liaisons and romantic partnerships, and boardinghouse life provided unique opportunities for men to develop intimacies with each other in their rooms away from public surveillance. The abundance of transients, which included seamen, soldiers, day laborers, and others, provided possibilities for the development, temporary or more long-lasting, of same-sex unions. (33)

Sleeping with other men, often in the same bed, as was the custom of the time, aided in the formation of intimate bonds and romantic friendships.⁹⁴ Rotundo traces how male friendship became more intimate in the early-to-mid nineteenth century and could have possibly included physical expressions of erotic desire.⁹⁵ Boys in their mid-teens, shaped

by the sentimentality of the domestic sphere despite their rebellion from it, based friendship "on intimacy, on a sharing of thought and emotion [; a] friend was now a partner in sentiment as well as action" (75).⁹⁶

"[H]eroic hands in heroic hands": Male Friendship and Sameness

"What place then is there for friendship, if, when absent, good men have no desire of one another (for when alone they are sufficient for themselves), and when present have no use of one another? How can such persons ever be induced to value one another?"

—Plato, *Lysis* (30).

"Men can better philosophize on the human heart but women can read it better."

—*Santa Clara Argus*, 21 July 1866 (qtd. in Griswold 43-4).

Despite the depth of male attachment, most young men in the nineteenth century treated intimate and romantic friendship as "a passing fancy" that "was largely limited to the years between boyhood and manhood" (Rotundo 87, 85). If these relationships were so critical in the development of a man's identity, why did they not persist throughout his life? What was it about this time in a young man's life that allowed for these close relationships to form? Finally, more to the point of my project, if so many American men found sameness desirable, why is there such a paucity of historical evidence of men candidly loving other men? Until recently, homophobia played a chief role in proscribing inquiry into the history of sexuality, making historiography bound and gagged by heterosexism. But notwithstanding these causes, the reasons are even knottier. After all, if sameness functioned as an organizing logic of nineteenth-century America, as I have been insisting, would not life-long erotic relationships or partnerships between men have been more prevalent and culturally sanctioned? Rotundo's conclusion, while problematic,

is useful. Homing in on Daniel Webster's use of the word "childish" to describe the tenor of his romantic letters to his friend Hervey Bingham, Rotundo surmises that

[b]y using the word *childish*, a young man contrasted the qualities of his own intense attachments to the qualities of manhood. He knew that the tenderness, the dependence, and the expressiveness that these relationships evoked in him were qualities at odds with the independence and emotional austerity expected of a grown man. . . . Furthermore, there was a quality of play in these relationships, something both passionate and whimsical which set them apart from manhood with its serious, determined tone. A man's life was a life of work, and there was little room in it for heart-to-heart talks late at night. (87)

What is problematic about this overview of nineteenth-century male friendship is that men who continued to cultivate close relationships with one another become exiled in the world of the *puer aeternus*.⁹⁷ Although Rotundo, himself, does not take this position, offering it as historical evidence of why most men "outgrew" these relationships, his explanation seems totalizing and offers little room for resistance. Men who questioned and opposed these prescriptive models of masculinity, much less those who remained in long-term romantic friendships with other men throughout their lives, for instance, only appear in Rotundo's model parenthetically or elliptically.⁹⁸ The data proffered by other historians, while not entirely disproving his characterization, evinces the need for further theorization about counterdiscursive models of manhood in nineteenth-century America. Ryan, for instance, uncovers data suggesting "a bare majority [of men in Utica], 50.4%, were married in the age group twenty-five to twenty-nine" (179). Chudacoff observes that "it was common for 40 to 50 percent of men in the age range of twenty-five to thirty-five

to be single and for close to one-third of adult men of all ages to be unmarried" (29). To be sure, one must consider other factors that could have had an impact upon the marriage rate: panics and economic slumps that made marriage financially undesirable; the uneven sex ratio in some geographic areas; and the numbers of widowers, just to name a few.⁹⁹ Even with these reasons factored in, however, the point remains that not every man in nineteenth-century America experienced or articulated manhood as Rotundo suggests. Statistics indicate that a considerable portion did not, suggesting that some men constituted their identity in a fashion heretofore unprobed by cultural historians.

Rotundo's proposition that romantic friendships between men occurred primarily during the liminal period of late adolescence and early adulthood conveys that he understands them as incompatible with mainstream or normative American masculinity. As he suggests, the intense interdependency constitutive of these intimate relationships conflicted with the cultural notions of independence and individuality critical to American manhood. Individuality is essential to Rotundo's composite of mid-nineteenth-century American manhood, particularly in relation to the capitalist juggernaut taking shape. "Men aimed to make themselves individual actors," he espouses, "[D]ifferentiated and separate from all others in a middle-class workplace that was open and fluid" (90).¹⁰⁰ A drawback to these articulations was that individuality—men's understandings of themselves as discrete subjects and agents—became compromised or, worse, erased. By turning inward and cultivating relationships of sameness in order to avoid difference, men risked undermining their individual differences *a priori*. If all men were the same, how could individual agency, competition, property ownership, or personal liberty and rights exist? What would happen to citizenship? What would social order and the

distribution of power resemble? In some regard, the boardinghouse, particularly for those in the transitional phase between adolescence and manhood, fostered a milieu in which physical and constitutive borders between men could be crossed because they were inchoate, porous, and just starting to be policed.

Once outside of the boardinghouse and in the world of competitive business, however, young men were confronted with the indispensability of difference, for success was measured by individual recognition, merit, and power. The cultural imperative to preserve the bond of sameness between men while ensuring their individuation played a role in making intimacy between men anathema.¹⁰¹ In mid-nineteenth-century American cultural politics there were concerns that some forms of male same-sex intimacy were culpable for the growth of crime. Social critics including the novelist George Lippard and the Baptist minister Rufus Griswold feared that these scoundrels would undermine social order and morality. Nineteenth-century America's understanding of "sodomy," as Christopher Newfield has argued, stemmed from colonial denotations that did not single out or specify any sexual act deemed "unnatural." Rather, closely reading Griswold's censure of Whitman's Leaves of Grass published in an 1855 issue of the Criterion, Newfield ascertains that "sodomy" connoted

"unnatural" relations between men and those unnatural (male) relations that lead to the 'vagrance' of the masses, full as they are of ambitious, coming men who upset social hierarchy. . . . The sodomite is he or she who favors mass life at the expense of pairing. . . . When some respectable authors before the Civil War link the challenge of the mob to the sin of sodomy, it suggests that male homoeroticism per se—and not just its minority status or taboo—poses a

distinctive and historically developed threat to crowd control. (The Emerson Effect 95, 96, 97)¹⁰²

In order to stave off the threats mobs posed to social order, conceptions of sameness were mapped onto macrostructures such as fraternal orders. Male intimacy was redefined accordingly so that men forged bonds through these macrostructures yet nevertheless individuated by physical and constitutive buffers.¹⁰³ Recasting male intimacy more widely across an organization or system ensured that collective action and individual agency could be coextensive elements of a homosocial circuit or continuum. At the same time, the projection of intimacy onto larger social structures and hierarchies including fraternal orders registers a concerted attempt to transform male eroticism into a more public—and thus more surveillable and manageable—phenomenon.

The correlation social critics forged between sodomy and "mass life" summarily meant that male same-sex erotic desire, at least in theory, threatened economic competition in the budding free-market economy.¹⁰⁴ Sustaining intimate relations in which the borders of identity were penetrable could potentially destabilize the tender balance between friendship and competition. Why would men compete with one another when they identified with and through one another—or potentially did, at least—on such intimate bases? How could a middle-class man hope to ascend the social ladder when doing so meant climbing over a potential affiant or intimate? As Newfield ruminates when reflecting upon the historical conditions that helped to shape Griswold's sodomy bugbear, men such as Lippard differed from those such as Whitman by the latter's belief that "'friendship' provides better governance because it creates equals. . . . 'Democratic' subjectivity rests for Whitman on interdependence rather than private property" (The

Emerson Effect 106, 107). Whitman's equation of male same-sex erotic desire with a specific articulation of democracy, a point I will return to in chapter three, fused the private and public spheres, causing more anxiety for men who championed the causes of fair competition and private property. Moreover, Whitman saw male friendship more fluidly, particularly how it would effect a homosocial republic in which brothers identified with, cared for, and desired one another.

Despite the appeal of communalism for men such as Whitman, the logic of the free market that conflated individual industry and ability with prevailing notions of liberty and freedom proved to be more resolute and seductive. By mid century, industrialization had gained a foothold on the American economy causing modifications in labor and the means of production.¹⁰⁵ As machines transformed the workplace, the means of production were retailored. Power quickly accreted among owners and made proprietorship an unrealistic goal for most middle-class skilled workers, signaling a failure of one of the foundational tenets of fraternalism.¹⁰⁶ Artisanal work, then, had to be re-inflected by the logic of industrial capitalism. With this new organization, artisans no longer controlled the means of production but instead became subsumed by the production process, itself, deepening anxieties over male autonomy and agency that would persist into the age of Taylorization.¹⁰⁷

Adjusting the goal from proprietorship to the possession of a skill communicates how industrial capitalism shaped the American mindset toward work through "proletarianization," as Ava Baron has termed it (152). First, that skill was understood as a possession communicates that artisanship became inflected by the logic of the free market. Skill, in other words, became something one claimed ownership to because it had

use value. Artisans became laborers in the larger industrial corporation since it was comprised of an extensive series of networks that relied upon their labor. Second, this adjustment presupposed the meritocratic workplace. Competition between skilled artisans in the workforce, hence, became a more frequent phenomenon than in centuries past because "high status was non-heritable and insecure; it was based on achievement and acquisition, continuously maintained" (Brown 151).¹⁰⁸ Since mutuality had been a cardinal principle of fraternal orders, men revisited the very meaning of fraternity so that it could conform to the demands of the free-market economy.¹⁰⁹ The result was a form of male individuality that paradoxically rested upon the interdependence of other men. A man's mastery of his skill was based upon a comparison with his peers in that same field so that his success was contingent upon being better than his fellow artisans. In order to ensure the best chances of success men forged varying degrees of alliance with one another "produc[ing] one of the most striking resemblances between the social culture of the marketplace and the all-male worlds of earlier life: a man had to maintain a judicious balance between cooperation and competition" (Rotundo 204).¹¹⁰ By this time, fraternal orders, as I have discussed, strived to extirpate the threats to competition by calling for "sobriety, self-restraint, and personal reform accorded with the needs of capitalism" (Carnes, Secret Ritual 32). Importantly fraternal orders did not deem this shift in the mode of production a threat to brotherhood. When tempered by self-restraint, most men saw competition as a component of fraternity from its inception.¹¹¹

This new degree of competition coincided with a cultural shift in the significance of adult male friendship. The intertwining of fraternal orders and corporations blurred the lines between business and friendship in mid-nineteenth-century America. In fact, it

became commonplace for businessmen to socialize outside of the workplace, blurring distinctions between work and home, as well as relationships between clients, acquaintances, colleagues, friends, and confidantes.¹¹² However, these new relationships stressed the importance of private property and the sanctity of the family. If these boundaries eroded and the public and private spheres collapsed, the notion of accumulation central to industrial capitalism could not exist. The marriage of work and pleasure gave rise to male friendships ionized by a professional valence. Business and industry became the means through which men forged friendships; shared values and feelings came secondary, if at all. As a result, the class boundaries of friendship became even more apparent to nineteenth-century American men. But what happened to more intimate friendships between men that surpassed the realm of friendly competition? Were they deemed superannuated in this industrial age because they were not predicated upon professional elements? Was their intimacy still deemed threatening to competition?

Historians such as Rotundo insinuate that close male friendships in adulthood were rare since men were expected to invest the lion's share of their intimacy in their family. Such a binary, however, is misleading since it understands intimacy as being singular and unidirectional. In fact, mid-nineteenth-century philosophy registers that men reacted to the professionalization of friendship by forging intimate bonds with other men that were more abstruse—that existed, as Emerson puts it in his essay "Friendship," in "the vast shadow of the Phenomenal" (114). Published in early 1841 in Emerson's first series of Essays, "Friendship" epitomizes transcendentalism's philosophy about the organic interconnectedness of nature, the self, and the other.¹¹³ Through a prismatic assessment of friendship, he exhorts readers to appreciate and cherish the intimacy

between friends because doing so will lead to deeper understandings of one's friend and one's self. I want to close this chapter by focusing on how Emerson in "Friendship" re-centralizes sameness so that it serves as the very basis of intimacy between friends. Critical of the passivity foisted on men by consumerism, Emerson envisions male friendship as a means for two different men to erect an intimate bond organized around mutuality and reciprocity. Consequently, as I demonstrate, what unites men in friendship is a safely erotic admiration for one another as separate, yet fellow men.

In "Friendship" Emerson picks up where he leaves off in the preceding chapter "Love," declaring that "the whole human family is bathed with an element of love like a fine ether" (111). Sustaining this topos, which "knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere" (107), he starts his meditation on friendship by highlighting that it does not just emerge from love, but is a form of love, itself. A friend, as Emerson suggests in his poem that opens the chapter, is the "lover rooted [who] stays" (109). That the word "love" appears nineteen times, and its synonym "affection" six times, throughout this brief essay serves to remind readers of the way these two abstracts frequently overlap.¹¹⁴ But in the same breath that Emerson sings of the metaphysical and intellectual benefits of friendship, he laments that men have not realized them. In fact, as he observes, people are wont to treat strangers better than friends since a stranger

is what we wish. . . . We walk better than we are wont. We have the nimblest fancy, a richer memory, and our dumb devil has taken leave for the time. . . . But as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his personalities, his definitions, his defects, into the conversation, it is all over. He has heard the first, the last and best

he will ever hear from us now. He is no stranger now. . . . Now, when he comes, he may get the order, the dress, and the dinner, —but the throbbing of the heart, and the communications of the soul, no more. (111-2)

The stranger is less threatening than a friend because his blankness allows for the projection of self onto him in order to attain an understanding of who he is, what he stands for, what he thinks. Once the stranger becomes familiar, however, he is no longer an extension of "mean egotism" ("Nature" 24). He becomes the friend to put up with, but from whom to censor the "communications of the soul" for fear of exposure.

Similar complaints that friendship had become less intimate in the nineteenth century and reduced to purely strategic alliances between men pervade "Friendship," registering Emerson's backlash against the commercialization of friendship. He is unusually candid about this, again evoking love to make his case for Platonic friendship that is ethereal and romantic and, thus, external to materialism:¹¹⁵

We chide the citizen because he makes love a commodity. It is an exchange of gifts, of useful loans; it . . . quite loses sight of the delicacies and nobility of the relation. . . . I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances. I much prefer the company of ploughboys and tin-peddlers, to the silken and perfumed amity which celebrates its days of encounter by a frivolous display, by rides in a curricule, and dinners at the best taverns. (118)

Emerson's bellowing about the prostitution or commercialization of friendship presages Whitman's barbaric yawp in Leaves of Grass, particularly the way that the former rails against bourgeois men as contrived and effeminate while treasuring the working-class ploughboys' manliness. By making devotion to commodities preeminent, men, as

Emerson stresses, become craven slaves to material pleasures and lose sight of the phenomenal nature of friendship—the fastening of everlasting bonds. As he sermonizes, "friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions, because we have made them a texture of wine and dreams, instead of the tough fibre of the human heart" (115). Other masculinist language crops up throughout "Friendship," indicating that Emerson, like the members of fraternal orders, envisaged the formation of male friendship as a means to insulate men from feminization. Crucially for Emerson, the provenance of this feminization is not women but the abject passivity found within capitalism. Men must disavow "the silken and perfumed amity" of passive consumerism and instead cultivate the networks of "tough fibres" that keep the oaken heart of male friendship beating. "I do not wish to treat friendships daintily," he pronounces, "but with roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frostwork, but the solidest thing we know" (116).¹¹⁶

The trope of the heart conveys that this disapprobation of effeminacy in male friendships is not concomitant with anxieties about male sentimentality and intimacy.¹¹⁷ Friendship is desirable and necessary because of the "new web of relations" that it effects, a "web" that it shares with "the laws of nature and of morals" (112, 115). On one hand, this web enables a person to fashion relations with other people so as to stave off the threat of insularity. Like Dickinson, Emerson seems to suggest that the "Soul selects her own Society" for particular reasons.¹¹⁸ Unlike Dickinson, the soul who desires friendship is unequivocally male. Although he surrounds himself within "a circle of godlike men and women variously related to each other," he mandates the "law" of friendship as demanding the ratio of "*one to one*" since it is "peremptory of conversation" (119). While three individuals may "merge their egotism into a social soul . . . [there are no] partialities

of friend to friend, no fondnesses of brother to sister, of wife to husband" (119). By putting the relation of "friend to friend" on par with "brother to sister" and "wife to husband," Emerson again highlights the intimacy between friends. However, whereas the other two relations unfold along the axis of gender difference, friends seek each other out because of their sameness:

A friend . . . is a sort of paradox in nature. I who alone am, I who see nothing in nature whose existence I can affirm with equal evidence of my own, behold now the semblance of my being, in all its height, variety, and curiosity, reiterated in a foreign form; so that a friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature.

(118)

Initially, Emerson's belief that an individual can find similarity in "a foreign form" could be read as a liberal attempt to transcend differences such as gender and race by redounding to the primacy of the soul. Yet as Emerson ruminates further, it becomes clearer what constitutes for him a friend's "foreign form": the agency and autonomy that constitute him as a separate masculine subject. A friend is one whose "foreignness" is predicated upon being another individual, "that rare mean betwixt likeness and unlikeness . . . that piques each with the presence of power and of consent in the other party" (120). The extent of difference in friendship for Emerson is circumscribed to the presence of two individuals who otherwise would share a great deal in common. In other words, the quality that determines the unlikeness of the two friends is the presence of a similar, yet different "manly furtherance, or at least a manly resistance" that constitutes each friend as a fellow, yet different man—as the paradoxical "not mine [that] is mine" (120).¹¹⁹

This is a vertiginous way of parsing friendship, a point that might lead some to

cast a jaundiced eye upon this framework and sense in its opacity a resistance to constituting bonds of sameness between different subject positions (viz., whites and blacks, whites and Indians, men and women). Most evident in Emerson's meditation is his insistence that friends must experience a penetrating empathy for one another. "Who hears me, who understands me, becomes mine," he notes early on, putting forth a metonymy that, to some extent, functions as a kind of bare-bones map for the essay itself. As Emerson reflects further on the nature of friendship, he fleshes out this map, deepening the empathic networks that yoke friends. In a letter that a man might write to "each candidate for his love," for example, he specifies that a friend must be "sure to match my mood with thine" while still maintaining a distance by "not presum[ing] in thee a perfect intelligence of me" (115). For Emerson, there needs to be both elements of sameness and difference in the expression of friendship so that a bond can exist without imperiling self-intelligibility or individuation. Friends, in other words, must be able to express a relation to one another for "[u]nrelated men give little joy to each other; will never suspect the latent powers of each" (120).

But what counts as sameness? Throughout "Friendship" Emerson begs the question, deploying Platonic imagery of two spirits uniting on "a higher platform" (123) when specifying the desired endgame of friendship. He seems to say that friendship is the flawed, earthly equivalent of the spiritual communion that awaits us in the afterlife. In life, however, Emerson treats friendship as a scrimmage that prepares men for the leveling force of death. The way he ultimately understands friendship as the closest thing to equality on earth stems from the "one to one" ratio between friends. "What [is] so delicious as a just and firm encounter of two, in a thought, in a feeling?" (112) This

encounter is not just because it erodes the constitutive borders that individuate the two friends *in terra mundis*. As Emerson clearly admonishes in his proposed letter to a friend, "dare I not presume in thee a perfect intelligence of me" (115) for this level of empathy cannot exist between mortals.¹²⁰ Rather, what makes this encounter just is that it is a stage in this honorable teleology. Mortal friendship, in other words, is an ascetic practice that presupposes the self-abnegation explicit in Christian death and resurrection:

I ought to be equal to every relation. It makes no difference how many friends I have, and what content I can find in conversing with each, if there be one to whom I am not equal. If I have shrunk unequal from the contest, the joy I find in all the rest becomes mean and cowardly. I should hate myself, if then I made my other friends my asylum. (115)

That one "ought" to be equal to every relation suggests that one is not. Those with whom friends form empathic bonds, then, become the test grounds for equality, giving us a taste of the liberating fluidity that awaits us beyond the grave. Emerson underscores this degree of the fluidity and intimacy when he explains that a "friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. . . . I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal, that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought" (117).¹²¹ Establishing equivalencies between people is impossible because certain immutable differences preclude the formation of a purely empathic bond. As such, friendship is a heuristic device preparing men for posthumous equality.

A salient aspect of Emerson's administration of intimate male friendship is that it contrasts with the triangulation of desire that gender theorists such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick maintain defuses the threat homoeroticism poses to the homosocial.¹²² For

Emerson in "Friendship," the objective "to be equal to every relation" demands this "law of one to one" because "the high freedom of great conversation . . . requires an absolute running of two souls into one" (119). Three prove to be a crowd since they set the conditions for asymmetrical relations. Only two can become friends given that friendship is based upon a degree of mutuality and reciprocity. "To my friend I write a letter," Emerson explains, "and from him I receive a letter. That seems to you a little. It suffices me. It is a spiritual gift worthy of him to give, and of me to receive. It profanes nobody" (121). But as he continues to opine about the mutuality of friendship, he provides a loaded example. When reminding friends that each must "know thyself" before knowing one another, Emerson alludes to a Latin proverb which he translates as

you can speak to your accomplice on even terms. *Crimen quos inquinat æquat*. To those whom we admire and love, at first we cannot. Yet the least defect of self-possession vitiates, in my judgment, the entire relation. There can never be deep peace between two spirits, never mutual respect, until, in their dialogue, each stands for the whole world. (121-2)

Emerson appears to reemphasize the importance of mutuality and reciprocity in friendship, particularly the way that this bond of equivalence preserves the individual autonomy of each person that, in turn, can be projected more largely onto society. Crucially, however, he misquotes the Latin proverb from Lucan's Pharsalia: "Facinus quos inquinat æquat" or "Villainy makes equal those it defiles."¹²³ The confusion of "crimen" (crime or guilt) with "facinus" might have been unintentional, but it is nonetheless meaningful. Whereas "facinus," particularly in the context of Lucan's work, connotes an evil deed done against the state with malicious intent (it is derived from the

verb “facio,” to make or bring about), “crimen” connotes guilt that is imposed upon a subject. Caleb Crain has wondered if Emerson uses the proverb and specifically “crime” as an oblique reference to homosexuality. Noting that he included it in an intimate letter to Samuel Gray Ward, a lover of Fuller’s with whom Emerson was smitten, Crain wonders if the “passage leads . . . to a rather perverse inference: Emerson would be able to relate to Ward more easily if, instead of loving the young man, he were to sin with him” (213). Although Crain’s reading of this proverb is steeped in biography, it is not wholly dependent upon it. As I have shown, Emerson frequently interchanges friendship, love, and desire so that the concepts can be conflated. Furthermore, he approaches friendship as an exercise for the fluidity and ethereal communion that await men in death. The result is a conception of friendship that anticipates the ultimate goal of spiritual reunion—the “deep peace between two spirits.” Emerson exhorts men not to interfere with or mediate the feelings—“the whisper of the gods,” as he calls them—they have for their friends (122). “Who set you to cast about what you should say to the select souls, or how to say any thing to such?” he harangues the reader. You must wait for “the necessary and everlasting [to] overpower you” so that then “thy heart shall speak.” As he appeals to the essential nature of feelings between friends, Emerson resurrects the topos of virtue:

The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one. You shall not come nearer a man by getting into his house. If unlike, his soul only flees faster from you, and you shall never catch a true glance of his eye. . . . In the last analysis, love is only the reflection of a man’s own worthiness from other men. Men have sometimes exchanged names with their friends, as if they would signify that in their friend each loved his own soul. (122)

Following his recitation of the Latin proverb and the “crime” that dare not speak its name, Emerson reminds men that the love they seek in one another awaits them in the next world. Although he understands the pull that physical expressions of this desire—the yen to “come nearer a man by getting into his house” —has on men, he remains steadfast. “The higher the style we demand of friendship,” he admits, “the less easy to establish it with flesh and blood” (122). However, although Emerson admits to the difficulty of a sexual relationship between male friends by resurrecting that old warhorse Platonic friendship, the fulfillment of male same-sex erotic desire is what awaits male friends in the ethereality. Only in death “shall we meet as water with water.” By placing the realization of desire between men in the celestial space where they “shall grasp heroic hands in heroic hands,” Emerson, in the end, envisions erotic desire between men as the final thrust of democracy (122).

In an essay on the conception of sexual difference in contemporary identity politics, Joan W. Scott puts forth a provocative point. “Placing equality and difference in [an] antithetic relationship,” she avers, “[H]as . . . a double effect. It denies the way in which difference has long figured in political notions of equality and it suggests that sameness is the only ground on which identity can be claimed” (46). As I have been demonstrating, the anxiety over alterity that pervaded nineteenth-century American cultural and society effectively imbued conceptions of sameness with a degree of preeminence and legitimacy. Driven by the directive to establish a racially homogeneous, unified national identity, Americans mounted social movements and constituted their identities based upon varying degrees of sameness and difference. One of my overarching concerns in the following three chapters will be how the proliferation of literary

representations of male same-sex desire coincided with the prevailing logic of sameness. As I will argue, literary representations by Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville register that significant authors in the American literary canon assayed that male same-sex desire related to this cultural logic of sameness, particularly as a means to insulate white men from the threats posed by sexual and racial difference.

¹ Michael Rogin clarifies that the prevailing thought among whites was that "people of color were not born equal, and their presence inspired republican nightmares" (Fathers and Children 27).

² Preston King, quoted in Eric Foner's Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (269).

³ Marx uses language noticeably similar to Tocqueville, who insists that a "permanent state of inequality does not simply give servants certain particular virtues and vices. It places them in a peculiar position in relation to their masters" (664).

⁴ "Racial knowledge," as Goldberg avers, is a pseudo-epistemology that "acquires its apparent authority by parasitically mapping its modes of expression according to the formal authority of the scientific discipline it mirrors" (28).

⁵ Toni Morrison makes a similar point when she speculates that "whether the major and championed characteristics of our national literature—individualism, masculinity, social engagement versus historical isolation; acute and ambiguous moral problematics; the thematics of innocence coupled with an obsession with figurations of death and hell—are not in fact responses to a dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence" (5).

⁶ Gossett also proclaims that the "nineteenth century was obsessed with the idea that it was race which explained the character of peoples" (244).

⁷ "It is a philanthropic [sic] and consoling reflection," Henry Clay argued, "[T]hat the moral and physical condition of the African race in the United States, even in a State of slavery, is far better than it would have been if their ancestors had never been brought from their native land" (The Papers of Henry Clay, volume 10, 373). Also see the first chapter in Frederickson's The Black Image in the White Mind, in which he notes that "slavery and racial discrimination, along with intemperance, war, and other collective evils, came to be regarded, not as social imperfections to be controlled and cautiously alleviated, but as sins which could be totally eliminated if all the individuals involved repented and immediately ceased to support institutions and practices out of harmony with the Gospel of Christ" (30). Ronald Takaki makes the case that in seventeenth-century America "English definitions of Indians and blacks . . . encouraged English immigrants to appropriate Indian land and black labor as they settled and set up production in the New World" (11). For more on this, see Takaki 11-5.

⁸ "I advance it therefore as a suspicion only," Jefferson proposes in Notes on the State of Virginia (1785), "[T]hat the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind" (150-1).

⁹ In Powder Keg: Northern Opposition to the Antislavery Movement, 1831-1840, Lorman Ratner notes that those "who subscribed to this dogma of the Negro's inferiority frequently objected to abolitionism, claiming it was impractical in a biological sense, as well as politically and morally" (68).

¹⁰ See Morrison, especially her astute observation that "in that construction of blackness and enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me" (38).

¹¹ See Takaki 113-4 for more on theories of black criminality.

¹² Agassiz, a Swiss naturalist who eventually immigrated to the United States in 1846, contended that the different races took shape in different geographical locations under the guidance of “the Deity.” See Gossett 59-61 for more on Agassiz’s contribution to nineteenth-century race theory.

¹³ James Freeman Clarke, a Boston Unitarian minister, best summarized the beliefs of monogenesisists when he pronounced in a sermon he delivered on Thanksgiving in 1842, “It is a mistake to speak of the African as an inferior race to the Caucasian. . . . It is doubtless different from this, just as this is also different from the Malay, the Indian, the Mongolian. There are many varieties in the human family” (qtd. in McPherson The Struggle for Equality 143-4).

¹⁴ Fredrickson 86. Gossett explains that Nott’s book “spread the polygenesist idea of the origin of races to a wider and more popular reading public. Even at the price of \$7.50, the first printing sold out immediately, and before the end of the century the book had gone through at least nine editions” (65). As Gossett notes, polygenesis became fully discredited by the 1870s once Darwinian evolution gained currency.

¹⁵ Tocqueville makes a similar pronouncement: “You may grant the Negro freedom but you will never manage to remove his position as an alien to a European” (400).

¹⁶ Fredrickson indicates that “proslavery theorists sought to deepen white anxieties by claiming that the abolition of slavery would lead to intermarriage and the degeneracy of the race” (The Black Image in the White Mind 49). He goes on to explain that the prevailing ideology of the time was that most differences could be overcome except race: “It was clearly implied, as a rule, that all whites in the United States could readily be assimilated by the dominant stock without altering basic national characteristics, though Democratic politicians with their large Irish and Scotch-Irish followings had to be wary in discussing this subject” (The Black Image in the White Mind 99). *Pace* Fredrickson, Foner takes a more cynical stance regarding assimilation in antebellum America, averring that “American society . . . was far from reflecting the melting pot ideal. Studies of a number of northern cities have concluded that immigrants tended to live in their own communities, and instead of desiring assimilation, they consciously strove to re-establish European traditions and values in the United States” (229). While I’m more swayed by Foner’s account, given the level of anti-Irish sentiment authored by the Know Nothings, Fredrickson is right to assert that there was less resistance to the assimilation of Caucasian immigrants.

¹⁷ As Fredrickson notes, a number of antislavery radicals “did not advocate intermarriage as a deliberate policy and felt that short-run miscegenation would actually decrease once the slavemaster lost control over his black concubines” (122). Foner explains, “The one great obstacle, as [the Republican party] saw it, was the antipathy of the non-slaveholding whites toward the Negro, and their fear that emancipation would lead to equality and intermixing of the races” (270). But, as he later explains citing an editorial that appeared in the New York Tribune, a number of Republicans did understand that “[e]quality is one thing, familiarity another” (292).

¹⁸ For more on this story, see Tackach 45-6. Similarly, an anti-Republican parade in New York City in 1860 featured floats that “showed a thick-lipped black embracing a white woman and a black man leading a white woman in the White House” (Takaki 114).

¹⁹ See Leon Litwack’s North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 for an extended study about the racism blacks faced in the North.

²⁰ Taken from Justice Samuel Nelson's concurring opinion supporting the Dred Scott decision. (Finkelman 81).

²¹ As George Rathburn, a Barnburner, put it, "I speak not of the condition of the slave. I do not pretend to know, nor is it necessary that I should express an opinion in this place, whether the effect of slavery is beneficial or injurious to him. I am looking to its effect upon the white man, the free white man of this country" (qtd. in Foner 61).

²² Another possible source of anxiety for whites was the size of the black population. As Henry Clay noted in a speech to the Colonization Society of Kentucky, in one slave-holding state "the slave stock had at last census, the superiority in numbers" (The Papers of Henry Clay, volume 8, 143).

²³ For more on the A.C.S., see Dain, Friedman, and Jay. The first president of the A.C.S. was Bushrod Washington, a southern slave owner who served as a Supreme Court Justice from 1798-1829 (White 689).

²⁴ Fredrickson explains that the colonizationists "attributed the apparently universal revulsion of whites to Negro equality to two interrelated factors, the differences in social background and pigmentation between the races. The fact that the Negro was, or had been, a slave and that the color of his skin was a permanent sign of his origin was enough to prevent for all time his acceptance as a social equal" (The Black Image in the White Mind 17). Tocqueville makes a similar argument when he explains, "As soon as Europeans took their slaves from a race of men different from their own, which many considered as inferior to the other human races and an assimilation with whom they regarded with horror, they assumed that slavery would last forever" (423). Clay argues against the emancipation of blacks in his speech to the Colonization Society of Kentucky, insisting that "the aggregate of the evils which would be engendered in society, upon the supposition of such general emancipation, and of the liberated slaves remaining promiscuously among us, would be greater than all the evils of slavery" (The Papers of Henry Clay, volume 8, 142). Finally, Chris Castiglia identifies a trend in which "[p]roponents of colonization . . . argue[d] that whites cannot change . . . [because] their prejudices [were] 'too deeply rooted to be eradicated'" (207).

²⁵ As Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin argued in 1859, colonization would "keep . . . Anglo-Saxon institutions as well as . . . Anglo-Saxon blood pure and uncontaminated" (qtd. in Foner 269).

²⁶ Dana Nelson, for example, has considered the "altero-referentiality" through which white men established their shared identity "only by emptying another person and mythologizing her as (their) 'Other'" (17).

²⁷ Castiglia makes this point in a less prolix fashion when he explains that the movement to expel blacks was based upon the *a priori* assumption that "the white subject [was] already constituted at the moment it address[ed] the condition of blacks from a position both apart from and superior to those marked as permanently 'other'" (193). In the Supreme Court's majority opinion on Dred Scott, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney refers to whiteness in such a way, explaining that the "word *white* is evidently used [in the first militia law of 1792] to exclude the African race" (Finkelman 67). More recently, critical race theorist David Theo Goldberg has explained that whiteness historically has circulated "as the residue of all identities it took itself not to be, all those it excluded as abject[;] whiteness is . . . a leftover identity" (9).

²⁸ White's description of the "unwritten character" of natural law can easily be applied to whiteness: "A distinguishing characteristic of natural law was its unwritten character: it was conceived of as a collection of principles that, while universally subscribed to, had not been codified, and for this reason it was regularly contrasted with 'positive,' 'municipal,' or 'public' law, by which was meant written law" (676-7). He later notes that the Marshall Court "contributed to the practical erosion of the legal rights of racial minorities . . . by tolerating the obvious contradictions between natural rights theory and the practice of racial discrimination" (681). The unwritten quality of whiteness, then, allowed for it to be naturalized to such a degree that it circulated as a universal. As a result, the white citizen became the universal subject of natural law, summarily making the white gaze the gaze of the law.

²⁹ Dr. Daniel Drake, a noted Midwest colonizationist, argued that "we do not need an African population. That these people whether bond or free, are, in every part of the United States, a serving people, parasitic to the white man in propensity, and devoted to his menial employments" (qtd. in Fredrickson 134). For more on the abstract identity of whiteness, see Richard Dyer's "White" and Nelson 5-7, 77.

³⁰ Fredrickson observes that "Southerners often went further and contended that Negro slavery was not only compatible with white equality but was the very foundation of it" (The Black Image in the White Mind 62). Nelson also notes that "the appeal of whiteness in the early United States was its promise to equalize male citizens" (105). Clawson identifies a similar phenomenon when she notes that in fraternal orders "egalitarianism was made possible by the exclusion of women, blacks, and ethnic minorities from the relevant social universe, a universe whose boundaries fraternal institutions helped to demarcate and guard" (110).

³¹ As Nelson explains, "the recognizing, diagnosing, and managing of 'difference' (the difference of democracy's Others) promised white men a unifying standpoint for national identity" (11).

³² See Wald's first chapter in Constituting Americans.

³³ Like his father Francis, Montgomery Blair, who later served as postmaster general under Lincoln, was sympathetic to colonization.

³⁴ Don Fehrenbacher describes Taney as "a bitter sectionalist, seething with anger at 'Northern insult and Northern aggression'" (The Dred Scott Case 311). The breakdown of how the justices sided is confusing since a majority did not endorse Taney's opinion. Rather, only two justices endorsed it, while two others dissented. The remaining four justices did not speak about black citizenship in their separate opinions since they either dismissed the case for jurisdictional reasons or simply signed onto the chief justice's opinion, as Justice James Wayne did, "without any qualification of its reasoning or its conclusions" (Finkelman 78). For a thorough overview of the case, see Fehrenbacher.

³⁵ As Paul Finkelman has explained, "The Court was politically out of balance: it was a democratic stronghold at a time when the party was dominated by its southern, proslavery wing" (29).

³⁶ Fehrenbacher echoes Lincoln's sentiment when he argues that "the true purpose of Taney's Dred Scott opinion [was] to launch a sweeping counterattack on the antislavery movement and to reinforce the bastions of slavery at every rampart and parapet" (The Dred Scott Case 341).

³⁷ Lincoln's main target for criticism in this speech was his debating partner Stephen A. Douglas, who lauded Taney's Dred Scott opinion.

³⁸ The exact extent of Lincoln's support of colonization remains a contested issue among historians. See Fehrenbacher's "The Deep Reading of Lincoln" (Lincoln in Text and Context), Neil Schmitz's "Refiguring Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1832-1865" (ALH 6.1), and Tackach's Lincoln's Moral Vision.

³⁹ Nelson notes that "early European representations of Native Americans had much more to do with cultural, rather than so-called racial, differences" (The Word in Black and White, 6).

⁴⁰ "Treaties and contracts negotiated between whites and Indians, whatever their language, had not been negotiated between equals. Indian tribes had ceded land, abandoned their settlements, or removes themselves from territory contiguous to whites because they did not have the force to resist the whites' presence" (White 705).

⁴¹ As White explains, the "message of Johnson v. McIntosh . . . was that the natural rights of human beings to dispose of property that they held by virtue of possession did not apply to Indians in America" (710). Although Marshall was sympathetic to the Indians' situation, noting in his opinion that their rights were not "disregarded," but "impaired" when earlier treaties were forged with the government, he concluded that these "fierce savages" were "incapable of being 'incorporated with the victorious nation' and thereby retain[ed] 'unimpaired' their rights to property" (710). For an acute discussion of how Johnson v. McIntosh records Marshall's struggle to use natural law to adjudicate land ownership, see Wald 30-3.

⁴² Included among the polygenetic works that swayed Americans was Frederick William Van Arminge's An Investigation of the Theories of the Natural History of Man (1848) which argued that whites were the only race able to continue progress.

⁴³ Tellingly, Parkman uses the term "mass" when describing a herd of buffalo ("two black masses of shaggy manes," 186). Such a use conveys his distaste for Indian communality as a manifestation of animal baseness and savagery, particularly vis-à-vis American individuality. Reflecting upon Parkman's evident hostile tone towards Indians, Frank M. Meola characterizes The Oregon Trail as "one of the best examples of the male Anglo-American ego confronting an environment that threatens to break it apart, but that also gives it a space in which to act out its masculinity" (5). Meola's observation highlights that the communalism intrinsic to Indian life in the nineteenth century circulated as a threat to the individualism at the heart of American life and governance.

⁴⁴ Even children borne from these marriages were beholden to their red ancestry's bestial dominance, a point that Parkman, a polygenesist, underscores in his ethnography through his frequent references to such "mongrel offspring" or "progeny" (The Oregon Trail 87, 94, 103).

⁴⁵ Although Morgan and Parkman thought differently about the Indian question, both men respected one another's work (Bieder 243).

⁴⁶ Although amalgamation and miscegenation are used as synonyms, the former preceded the latter. As P.T. Barnum explains in Humbugs of the World, when writing about the pamphlet entitled "Miscegenation" that was anonymously published in 1864, miscegenation "was coined by the combination of the Latin *miscere*, to mix, and *genus*, race; from these miscegenation—

mingling of the races. The word is as euphonious as 'amalgamation,' and much more correct in meaning" (205).

⁴⁷ Stephen P. Knadler draws such a parallel when he suggests that Parkman's investment in American history reflects his belief that "political, ethnological, and historical discourses were inextricably interwoven, and only the social management of the body's physical integrity would usher in a harmonious republican state quarantined from unsanitary outbreaks of civil disobedience" (223).

⁴⁸ Bieder 219.

⁴⁹ See White's analysis of the debate, particularly his observation that the "positions were, of course, two sides of the same coin: they both started with the assumption that Indians were different (primitive, childlike, savage) and that their differentness [sic] could not be tolerated" (White 706). Satz insists that "[c]ivilizing the Indians for their assimilation into American society never took precedence over pushing them outside the area of white settlement; it merely justified it" (2).

⁵⁰ White explains that the elite Cherokee who spearheaded the call for acculturation referred to those who wanted to preserve their tribal heritage as "aboriginal" (716).

⁵¹ The discovery of gold in northeastern Georgia in July of 1829 only strengthened the state's resolve to gain control of the tribal lands.

⁵² For a deft psychoanalytic analysis of the repercussions of figuring the relationship between Jackson and the Cherokees as one of a father and his children, see Rogin's Fathers and Children.

⁵³ Grossberg explains that in post-Revolutionary America "families began to shed their public, multifunctional forms and stand apart in an increasingly segregated, private realm of society" (Governing the Hearth 6). Eric Foner similarly notes that "the drive to work zealously in one's calling, the capital accumulation which resulted from frugality, and the stress on economic success as a sign of divine approval, all implied that men would work for an achievement of wealth and advancement in their chosen professions" (13).

⁵⁴ See chapter two of Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835, particularly her argument that women's work allowed men to "negotiate safely amid the cunning, treachery, and competition of the marketplace" (69). Finally, refer to Ruth Bloch's "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815," for a thorough overview of how motherhood and parenthood underwent significant changes during just thirty years.

⁵⁵ Feminist scholars have responded to the public/private paradigm in different ways. Some, particularly those writing in the 1970s and early 80s, have made the case for the utility of such a distinction as a means of understanding the complex gender politics of nineteenth-century America. See Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct, Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood, Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture, Gillian Brown's Domestic Individualism, Lora Romero's Home Fronts, and Jane Tompkins's Sensational Designs, just to name a few. Others have railed against how feminist historiography created a totalizing separation of spheres. Instead, as Nina Baym has done, feminist scholars must reexamine how some women were "far from conforming to any paradigm of sequestered, submissive, passive domesticity that we might

patronizingly attempt to impose on them according to some misguided millennial narrative of our own" (*Women Writers and the Work of History* 239). For more on this critical strain, see Linda K. Kerber's "'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History,'" Glenna Matthews's *Rise of Public Woman*, Mary P. Ryan's *Women in Public*, Elbert's *Separate Spheres No More* and Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher's *No More Separate Spheres*. Even more cogent have been critiques that the public/private distinction did not function in the same way for black women, whose enslavement rendered this very distinction impossible. For more on this, see Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, Carla Peterson's *Doers of the Word*, Houston Baker's *Workings of the Spirit*, and Hazel Carby's *Reconstructing Womanhood*.

⁵⁶ Bloch notes that "[t]he structural change that altered parental roles the most . . . was the gradual physical removal of the father's place of work from the home . . . [making] childrearing responsibilities . . . less diffused, more exclusively focused on mothers" (114). As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has explained, one of the upshots of this separation of spheres was the Cult of True Womanhood, which "prescribed a female role bounded by kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety and purity, and crowned with subservience" (13). Cott avers that domestic work locked women in the home from which there was no "means of escape" (*The Bonds of Womanhood* 74). Although I am sympathetic to Cott's account, I don't concur wholly. As texts such as Lydia Maria Child's *American Frugal Housewife* (1829) and *The Mother's Book* (1833), Lydia Huntley Sigourney's *Letters to Mothers* (1838), Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841), and Helen Brown's *The Mother and Her Work* (1862) clearly show, a number of women had no desire to tread beyond the amorphous perimeters of the domestic sphere, seeking instead to cultivate power in the private sphere. I find more convincing Barbara Welter's account that it was the Cult of True Womanhood, not simply domestic work, that made woman into "the hostage in the home" (372). For more on how the public/private distinction set the conditions for female cultural power, see Judith Fetterly's *The Resisting Reader*, Fetterly and Marjorie Pryse's *American Women Regionalists, 1850-1910: A Norton Anthology*, Mary Kelley's *Private Women, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America*, and Carolyn Johnston's *Sexual Power: Feminism and the Family in America*.

⁵⁷ Cott notes that "[i]n contrast with the self-abnegation required of women in their domestic vocation, religious commitment required attention to one's own thoughts, actions, and prospects" (*The Bonds of Womanhood* 140). For more on women's roles in the Second Great Awakening, see chapter two of Mary P. Ryan's *Cradle of the Middle Class*, chapter three of Smith-Rosenberg's *Disorderly Conduct*, and chapter four of Cott's *The Bonds of Womanhood*.

⁵⁸ Nelson has observed that in nineteenth-century America "the contrasts defining sexual difference are presented so emphatically, so repetitively, that they begin to feel somewhat strained" (138).

⁵⁹ Cott spells out this idea even more clearly in her last chapter. More problematically, Carnes asserts that "[m]iddle-class women were not the passive victims of an ideology of domesticity, but the architects of a bifurcated gender system that elevated their status even as it circumscribed their actions to the home" (*The Bonds of Womanhood* 111). As I have averred, women in nineteenth-century America, particularly through their cultivation of domesticity, actively supported the ideology of separate spheres. However, support for this multifaceted system is not equivalent to devising its blueprints, much less giving birth to it.

⁶⁰ Grossberg also points to the opacity of the public/private line when he explains that the reformist zeitgeist of the early nineteenth century “compelled family reformers to try and find a stable, broadly acceptable definition of the public interest in private households” (Governing the Hearth 11). Smith-Rosenberg pinpoints an actual crossing of this private/public boundary when she notes that “during the very years when bourgeois men began to formulate the Cult of True Womanhood, bourgeois women left the home in droves to purify the world” (89). However, middle-class women's departure from the home was always temporary and never permanent for, as Cott emphasizes, the male ministers heading these reform movements reminded women of their “place” in the domestic sphere: “Ministers used the concept of ‘woman's sphere’ to esteem female importance while containing it. In their sermons of the 1830s the theme of order in family and society took precedence, vividly emphasizing the necessity for women to be subordinate to and dependent on their husbands” (The Bonds of Womanhood 158). Cott explains that single women from the working classes, who often worked in factories and other industries outside of the home, were significant figures in the female religious community (The Bonds of Womanhood 136).

⁶¹ Rotundo and Klement note more generally the prevalence of fraternal orders and secret societies in mid-nineteenth-century America (63 and 1, respectively).

⁶² Clawson notes that brotherhood “was as much a part of the social relations of male dominance as the more recognized complex of male-female interchange” (45). Nelson similarly notes a connection between “fears of fragmenting national fraternity to men’s remedial domestic management of white women” (108).

⁶³ For my discussion of Odd Fellowship I draw largely upon Schmidt’s Fraternal Organizations, Clawson’s Constructing Brotherhood, particularly chapter four, and Carnes’ Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America.

⁶⁴ Clawson culls this data from a passage of Henry Stillson’s The History and Literature of Odd Fellowship, The Three-Link Fraternity (1897): “When any important event took place or the bickerings and unpleasantness of the times crept into the meetings, and when it looked stormy, the lodge ‘proceeded to harmony’; when, after a brief session, quietness was restored” (qtd. in Clawson, 119).

⁶⁵ As Clawson notes, by the 1820s the average consumption of alcohol in America reached a staggering “five gallons of distilled spirits per capita per year in the 1820s, nearly triple today’s rate” (157). Rotundo details that alcohol “was the universal solvent of male play” and “helped to lower inhibitions about socially proscribed activity; and, above all, it encouraged men's personal expressiveness” (201). For a more thorough analysis of alcohol in the antebellum workplace, see W.J. Rorabaugh’s The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition.

⁶⁶ Clawson goes on to aver, “In both practice and symbol, the call for temperance, especially when defined as total abstinence, represented an attack upon masculine identity as it was constituted during the first half of the nineteenth century” (162).

⁶⁷ As Smith-Rosenberg notes, “Temperance and abolitionist women asserted their right to speak publicly, to hold office in male organizations, to petition state and federal legislators, all in the name of a higher inner light” (Disorderly Conduct 130). Likewise Cott pronounces that “religious identity also allowed women to assert themselves, both in private and in public ways. It enabled them to rely on an authority beyond the world of men and provided a crucial support to those who

stepped beyond accepted bounds-reformers, for example" (The Bonds of Womanhood 140). See also Grossberg (10), Lystra (8), Ryan, Douglas, and Tompkins.

⁶⁸ For more on the antimasonic movement spearheaded by Protestant ministers and their devoted following, see Carnes's Secret Rituals 24-6. Douglas points to an article published by a Unitarian minister in the Christian Examiner in which he argues that "'Christianity [had] proclaimed the Gospel of the 'Ever Feminine' and showed 'the utter nothingness of masculine self-sufficiency'" (qtd. on 116).

⁶⁹ Carnes also explains that the "semi-dependence" and "semi-autonomy" that middle-class young men had experienced "all but disappeared by the mid-nineteenth century, replaced with intense and prolonged feminine nurture" (Secret Rituals 113).

⁷⁰ Clawson avers that "[b]y providing a masculine sphere, defined ritually, organizationally, and spatially, the fraternal order represented a refusal on the part of numerous men to endorse in toto domesticity's identification of the home as the primary source of emotional life for men as well as women" (164). The emphasis on the New Testament, particularly Christ, whose promise of redemption, salvation, and mercy, were part and parcel of the liberal theology that galvanized women reformers, was replaced by the eye-for-an-eye conviction of the Old Testament and the biblical figures Abraham and Isaac. This substitution highlights that central to these new rituals was "the reestablishment of father-son bonds" weakened by both men's extended absences from family life and women's sway over the household (Carnes, Secret Rituals 95). Carnes posits that the exclusion of references to Christ in fraternal rituals "can best be understood as an indirect assault upon women and women's role in the church" (79). Because of the anti-religious stance taken by the Freemasons, the Anti-Mason Party was formed in 1827 by religious leaders and their supporters, a preponderance of which were women.

⁷¹ As Carnes notes, the Odd Fellows, when devising the ritual, conflated Isaac, Abraham's son by Sarah, and Ishmael, Abraham's son by the enslaved Hagar. For more on this confusion and its significance, see Carnes 122-3.

⁷² Nelson similarly observes that "the adult man's symbolic humiliation in fraternal initiations reminded him to identify with male power" (186).

⁷³ Carnes underscores that "[h]ostility and affection were complementary expressions of the strong—often stifling—bonds of dependence between fathers and sons" (Secret Rituals 109).

⁷⁴ Black men were left with no option but to form separate and unequal orders. See Clawson 132-5 and Ratner 9. Shockingly, Carnes does not factor race into his analysis of nineteenth-century fraternal societies.

⁷⁵ As Maddox puts it, "If white America did not have a clear right to appropriate Indian land, it did at least have the right to appropriate *Indianness* and use it in the service of white America's claims to cultural independence and legitimacy" (41). Nelson proffers a similar interpretation when she explains, "The 'Indian' flexibly offered an admirable identity to share . . . , and an Other identity whose peculiarities needed 'civilizing' [. . .]. The abstracting identity of white/national manhood found one means for stabilizing its internal divisions and individual anxieties via imagined projections into, onto, against Indian territories, Indian bodies, Indian identities" (67).

⁷⁶ Actual red men were prohibited from joining the society. It was not until 1974 when the Improved Order of Red Men began accepting American Indian and black members (Schmidt 288-9).

⁷⁷ For more on the phenomenon of Anglo-Americans playing Indian, see Philip Deloria's Playing Indian. Nelson follows Rogin's lead when discussing "inindianation" as a psychoanalytic cultural narrative "that encapsulates men's tense, equivocal, simultaneous desires for equality and rank order, the longing to be part of a civic brotherhood and to gain exclusive recognition from the Father" (63).

⁷⁸ Morgan, for instance, accepted membership in the Order of Iroquois, believing that the order would facilitate the mending of fences between the two races.

⁷⁹ "The Native embodied traits that white Americans held in contempt and against which they defined themselves; at the same time, the Native offered a convenient emblem of indigeneity and antiquity that could be adopted and discarded at will" (Jackson 98). In her reading of Parkman's The Oregon Trail and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, Maddox arrives at a compelling conclusion that speaks to this very issue of how Indians came to circulate as insiders and outsiders. Noting the recurring myth of family in both works, she avers that both authors use it "as a model for an established and secure order that would be violently disrupted by attempts to accommodate those—in this case, the Indians—who do not 'naturally' belong to it. If the family myth substitutes similarity for difference, and thus precludes analyses of kinds of difference and the hierarchies of power and privilege they produce, then by specifically locating the Indians outside the mythic family, these writers implicitly equate the Indians with difference and, at the same time, with the free play of 'unnatural' forms of power" (172).

⁸⁰ More specifically, Ryan notes that among the residents of Oneida, New York, "[o]nly 18% were married in the age group twenty to twenty-four; a bare majority, 50.4%, were married in the age group twenty-five to twenty-nine" (179). Even more staggering is the marriage rate among the new middle and professional classes in the twenty-five to twenty-nine year age group: 35.3% and 26.7% respectively (179). Of course, these two classes comprised the preponderance of membership numbers in the larger orders such as the Freemasons and the Oddfellows. Richard Brown notes that the "California Gold Rush of 1849 . . . was symbolic of the aggressive competitiveness with which Americans pursued individual advancement" (150).

⁸¹ Mitchell published Reveries using the *nom de plume* "Ik Marvel." Rotundo registers that young men in the nineteenth century "saw the women who attracted them as lures that drew them back into the cage of domesticity" (105). In The Age of the Bachelor, Howard P. Chudacoff emphasizes that the bachelor occupies a kind of "autonomous status" in American culture which allows him to "construct more of his own time schedules unencumbered by the needs of family members; he does not have to coordinate with others" (11). In contrast, a married man is bound by "the communal obligations of the husband, who has responsibilities to a group (wife and children)" (11). Likewise, Rotundo explains that members of men's clubs "complained to one another about the dullness of mixed company and the limits women placed on the enjoyment of life" (201).

⁸² Jay Fliegelman has explained that "by the end of the eighteenth century the perception of spouse as property had become antiquated" (Prodigals and Pilgrims, 137). See also Cott 76-83. While this reevaluation of matrimony entered legal discourse in the nineteenth century, it had circulated in American since the late eighteenth century. As Fliegelman notes, "The debate as to

whether marriage was essentially a property transfer between father-in-law and suitor or a sacred contract between lovers was a very real one in eighteenth-century America—one that reflected a larger debate as to whether property or personal rights were more sacred, as to whether the possession of the former or the exercise of the latter conferred upon men a more real independence" (135). In Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America, Karen Lystra traces how the notion of romantic love gained popularity in mid-nineteenth-century America. Though, as Fliegelman highlights, the "romantic love complex" was in fact spawned in the eighteenth century, only to then flourish in the nineteenth century (137).

⁸³ Robert Griswold makes a similar point when he asserts that the "valorization of women's family responsibilities gave women some leverage to critique and to redefine 'appropriate' male behavior. If women were truly the moral guarantors of society, if social stability, the welfare of the next generation, and the future of the republic rested on women's shoulders, if marriage was really a relationship founded on mutual respect and affection, then men needed to change their behavior" (101).

⁸⁴ See Cott's "Passionlessness" and Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood." More specifically, Cott avers that "women might hail passionlessness as a way to assert control in the sexual arena—even if that 'control' consisted in denial" (233). This phenomenon was even more remarkable because the jurists who "redefined" the rules of matrimony were men, themselves, (women could not serve as jurors).

⁸⁵ The number of people living in urban areas increased from five percent in 1800 to 20 percent in 1860 (Takaki 75).

⁸⁶ Chudacoff puts the bachelor rate in the age range of twenty-five to thirty-five around 40 to 50 percent, and one-third for all ages (29).

⁸⁷ Chudacoff, 33; Ryan, 167-8, 184; Clyde Griffen "Reconstructing Masculinity" 190. Ryan points to the Panic of 1857, caused when the stock market faltered and a ship carrying gold from California was lost during a hurricane (152).

⁸⁸ Chudacoff points out that "men comprised over 90 percent of the state's total population in the late 1840s and early 1850s, and over 70 percent were in the age range of twenty to forty" (29).

⁸⁹ Wealthier bachelors often took residence in residential hotels where the staff maintained their domestic surroundings. In an editorial on "The Decline and Fall of Hotel Life" that appeared in the May 2, 1857, edition of Harper's Weekly, the editors acknowledge that while hotels are not conducive to raising families, "resident bachelors still—wisely perhaps—hang their hats there." For more on this, see Rotundo's American Manhood, particularly chapter three ("Male Youth Culture").

⁹⁰ The first American branch of the YMCA was started in Boston in 1851. Ryan asserts that "'Odd' fellows were simply domestic anomalies, solitary men, whom 'business, pleasure, or necessity call far away from the homes of their youth, and the society of their heart—unknowing wither they are going, or what may befall them in a land of strangers'" (177). Here Ryan quotes A.B. Grosh's "Odd-Fellowship: Its Character and Tendency," an essay on Oddfellowship published in Utica in 1843.

⁹¹ In The Young Lady's Friend (1837), Elizabeth Farrar deploys the language of sameness for a

different purpose when instructing girls to avoid premarital intimacy: "Sit not with another in a place that is too narrow; read not out of the same book; let not your eagerness to see anything induce you to place your head close to another person's" (293).

⁹² Chudacoff likewise highlights that the desire to be surrounded by those who were similar impelled men to move to boarding homes. "Living and eating with peers whose conditions and aspirations were similar to their own," he explains, "[W]orking-class bachelors created communities that . . . resembled a twentieth-century fraternity house" (33).

⁹³ Newfield goes on to argue that the "antebellum 'association' linked autonomy and unity in a tremendous range of ways, and the period was remarkable for being as much the age of associations as it was the age of the individual" (The Emerson Effect 67). Rotundo mounts a similar argument when he asserts, "By absorbing the desire for male attachment and diffusing it over a broad membership, all-male clubs could provide an outlet for deep emotional needs without threatening the individual autonomy or psychological armor that were basic parts of a man's public identity" (91).

⁹⁴ Smith-Rosenberg explains that in order to understand intimate friendships between men and men and women and women in nineteenth-century America, "one must relate them to the structure of the American family and to the nature of sex-role divisions and of male-female relations, both within the family and in society generally" (54). Of course, Smith-Rosenberg's call for situating these relationships within these contexts has guided my thoughts in this chapter, as well as in this dissertation.

⁹⁵ As historians including Rotundo have admonished, since homosexuality did not exist as a discrete taxonomy until the tail end of the century, delimiting the precise meanings of same-sex erotic desire in the nineteenth century is always problematic. See Rotundo, Peter Gay The Tender Passion 202, and Smith-Rosenberg. Jonathan Ned Katz's Gay American History and Gay/Lesbian Almanac are the most comprehensive works that uncover evidence of male and female same-sex erotic desire before the birth of the homosexual. Most of the entries for dates before 1880 deal with colonial laws condemning and punishing those who engaged in sodomy.

⁹⁶ Rotundo goes on to assert that "the romantic friendships between men may have received stronger cultural support than the bonds between females" (83).

⁹⁷ The echoes of Freud, intentional or otherwise, are noteworthy, particularly the way that the male homosexual is written off as a subject whose waywardness in the circuitry of Oedipality effectively bars him from entering a "serious, determined" sexed adulthood. By describing intimate relations between men as "passionate and whimsical," Rotundo, by default, insinuates that intimate relations between men and women are not so. In chapter six, on love, sex, and courtship, his analysis of love letters in which men admitted their feelings to women and vice versa suggests otherwise.

⁹⁸ For instance, when considering the prevalence of "socially proscribed activities" among fraternal members, Rotundo surmises that the "urban demimonde of prostitution and drug use, of heavy gambling and homosexual nightlife drew a portion of business and professional men, though they were probably small in number compared to the devotees of card games or baseball" (200). Characterizations such as these suggest a less-than-meticulous consideration of how sexual desire between men could exist outside this world of "homosexual nightlife"; how, to use a twenty-first century concept, there were differences between men who were drawn to milieus

more intelligibly organized around sexuality and those men whose sexual activities with other men did not profoundly shape or inform their identities.

⁹⁹ In an editorial entitled “When Shall We Marry?” that appeared in the March 7, 1857 edition of Harper’s Weekly, the editors explain that this change toward when to marry is based upon financial solvency:

We agree with the political economists, for the most part, that it is essential, as a check to pauperism, for a man to consider before he marries whether he has, or is likely to have, the wherewithal to support a family. We do not think it prudent that any one should inconsiderately—like the old woman in the shoe—burden himself or herself with so many children that he or she may be puzzled what to do. (145)

¹⁰⁰ Clawson notes that fraternalism helped to “alleviate the social dislocations caused by the individualistic, market-oriented economic relations” (83). Fraternal orders, in other words, buttressed the capitalist economy by creating spaces in which men could temporarily come together and thus continue the ruse of friendly competition. For more on the fraternalism/capitalism nexus, see Carnes 31-2. The need to demarcate male individuality contrasts with the close, intimate bonds that women shared in nineteenth-century America. See Smith-Rosenberg 53-76.

¹⁰¹ As Newfield notes, “The straight man’s familiar patriarchal networking harbors within it a continual suspicion of deviance” (93).

¹⁰² Dana Nelson arrives at a similar conclusion when she explains that “the radical social ramifications of democratic ‘brotherly love’ threaten at least equally to undermine the city’s ‘purity’ in a riot of sexual excess, violent pleasures, disorderly mixing, and uncontrolled hybridity” (146).

¹⁰³ As Rotundo explains, “all-male clubs could provide an outlet for deep emotional needs without threatening the individual autonomy or the psychological armor that were basic parts of a man’s public identity” (91). See Nelson’s National Manhood, especially the first chapter in which she avers that the Constitution takes as axiomatic “a virtual (abstracted, imagined) fraternity” (34).

¹⁰⁴ By the turn of the century, competition between men became marked by a homoerotic valence, suggesting that capitalism absorbed one of its threats and transformed it into a means of preservation.

¹⁰⁵ However, as David Montgomery mentions, these changes had more of an impact on businesses that provided for the industrial plant and less on the organization of production and labor in the plant itself (3).

¹⁰⁶ As Clawson explains, “The independent, fully adult artisan was now defined not by his control over property and his status as a self-employed person, but rather in his possession of skill. The power and thus the manly independence of skilled workers now resided in the considerable autonomy they retained over their work and in their awareness of their essential role they played in organizing production and controlling the details of the labor process” (166). See also Foner 32-3. As I mentioned earlier, one of the central premises of earlier vocational orders such as the Freemasons was that men could achieve mastery of their crafts and, through earnest industry and

labor, eventually become their own employers. As such, ownership and dominion in business became intertwined with white middle-class manhood. Foner also notes that in mid-nineteenth-century America, the “aspirations of free labor ideology were . . . thoroughly middle-class, for the successful laborer was one who achieved self-employment, and owned his own capital—a business, farm, or shop” (17).

¹⁰⁷ Brown emphasizes that some skilled workers “objected to having their time closely supervised in the impersonal setting of the factory . . . yet compared to Britain, such resistance to modernization was rare” (131).

¹⁰⁸ Brown notes that by 1860 Americans began to endow corporations with agency since they “had commonly become . . . agent[s] of competition in transportation, commerce, financing, and manufacturing” (150).

¹⁰⁹ Nelson underscores that “the maintenance of class hierarchy within a fictive space of equality . . . produced a structural tension [in fraternity] that required constant rerouting, constant management” (77). Furthermore, as she later argues, the “strong imperatives for men’s self-control, for bodily and identity boundary-maintenance (‘individualism’) responded to the massive social and economic changes accumulating at mid-century” (185).

¹¹⁰ Rotundo also observes that work in the mid-nineteenth century “helped to connect a man’s inner sense of identity with his identity in the eyes of others, and the expectations of other were bound to larger social conditions” (168).

¹¹¹ As Nelson argues, “Rather than conceptualizing (equalizing) friendships between men as a model for democracy, national manhood embodied democracy in the competitive, self-subordinating individual” (22). Moreover, competition between middle-class men as adults often mirrored the games of the youth culture taking shape in nineteenth-century America. See chapter three of American Manhood.

¹¹² Rotundo notes that “male work and sociability mixed promiscuously” (197). He also uses as an example “the alternating rhythm of competition and kinship that bound lawyers in the same locale” when reflecting on this historical trend (198).

¹¹³ Although I approach Emerson’s “Friendship” as an example of mid-nineteenth-century American philosophy, the essay is more literary than philosophical. Caleb Crain, for instance, notes that Emerson and his coterie “interacted on terms more emotional than rational, and correspondingly, the sense to be made of the essay ‘Friendship’ is not philosophic but dramatic” (220). Instead, as Crain argues, readers should approach the essay as Emerson “min[ing] the literary tradition of the philosophy of friendship, including Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Bacon, and Montaigne.”

¹¹⁴ I am reminded of Lysis in which Socrates arrives at the conclusion that “love, and desire, and friendship would appear to be of the natural or congenial” (39). Also, as Caleb Crain discloses, Emerson quotes lines from Francis Bacon’s essay on love, not the one on friendship (221).

¹¹⁵ See chapter two of Jay Grossman’s Reconstituting the American Renaissance in which he offers an engaging discussion about Emerson’s repudiation of the corporeal, especially in relation to Whitman’s inclusion of “Enfans d’Adam” in Leaves of Grass.

¹¹⁶ Emerson's *oeuvre* is awash with these references to femininity as abject. For example, in Nature he argues that the "high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will" (28).

¹¹⁷ For more on how Emerson perceives sentimentality as part of masculine culture, see Julie Ellison's "The Gender of Transparency: Masculinity and The Conduct of Life."

¹¹⁸ P 303, 1. Emerson offers a more prosaic version of Dickinson's poetic thought, noting that the "soul environs itself with friends" (114).

¹¹⁹ Again, Emerson places this desirable "manly resistance" in opposition to an abjectly feminine "mush of concession" he loathes to discover in another individual.

¹²⁰ He later goes on to reiterate this point more dramatically when he pronounces, "There can never be deep peace between two spirits, never mutual respect, until, in their dialogue, each stands for the whole world" (122).

¹²¹ Crain notes that Emerson transitioned from experiencing ecstasy in friendship in Nature "as if he were a 'transparent eye-ball'" to expressing it "as though he were *inside* an eyeball—in fact, swimming in it" as he became closer to his friends such as Samuel Gray Ward (213).

¹²² See especially chapter one of Sedgwick's Between Men.

¹²³ V, 289. While Emerson might have read Lucan's Pharsalia, he more than likely came across the proverb in Montaigne's Essays (Volume 13, Chapter 34, "Observation on the Means to Carry On a War According to Julius Caesar").

Chapter Two

“The entangled life of many men together”: *Fellow Feeling and the Penetrative Threat of Sameness in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Blithedale Romance*

“The Blithedale Romance is, in an almost incredibly cryptic way, an intelligible product of the obsessed Hawthorne whose private themes have become so predictable.”

—Frederick C. Crews, The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne’s Psychological Themes (194).

"Sin is a queer thing. It isn't the breaking of divine commandments. It is the breaking of one's own integrity."

—D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, (101).

Literary critics have thoroughly scrutinized the “paint and pasteboard” (2) narration in The Blithedale Romance (1852) that Miles Coverdale uses to recount the “illustrious society of Blithedale” (98).¹ In so doing, however, some have overlooked Hawthorne’s puckish disclosure of the lacuna separating “the outward narrative and the inner truth and spirit of the whole affair” (3). More recently, feminist and lesbian and gay literary critics, accustomed to this gulf owing to the culturally mandated silence surrounding challenges to gender and sexual mores, have unraveled the novel’s Gordian knot of sexual and erotic politics to suss out Coverdale’s conflicted and often simultaneous desire for Zenobia, Priscilla, and Hollingsworth. These studies verify that at the crux of the novel is Hawthorne’s meditation on Eros in an age preoccupied with the cultural freight of sexual difference.

As I argue, Hawthorne offers the "more than brotherly" (38) relationship between Coverdale and Hollingsworth as an example of a homoerotic fraternity that aims to circumvent the unmanly threats posed by women and sentimental culture. His homoerotic representations, however, are guided by the premise that the aegis of sameness that unites these men poses a significant threat to their individuality and equality. In section one I reflect on Coverdale's inspiration for joining Blithedale, above all else his belief that the commune would counteract the atomization he feels as a bachelor. Central to the regeneration of manhood, he avows, is the formation of brotherhood that insulates men from the culture's feminizing sentimentality. Section two revolves around the anxieties over sameness and difference that charge Hawthorne's representations of fraternity in Blithedale. I pay special attention to mapping out the homosocial terrain on which Coverdale and Hollingsworth stand and eventually falter. The brotherhood they share eventually unravels because each propounds an articulation of fraternity that is incompatible with the other. Coverdale's eventual renunciation of the Blithedale community is the focus of the third and final section. As I demonstrate, he comes to comprehend an intimate fraternity as a zero-sum game in which one brother must abolish his desires for the sake of the other.

I. "[M]anhood is melted into curtsies"²: Sexless in the City

"To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (27).

"O for a manly life in the camp."

—Walt Whitman, "First O Songs for a Prelude" (line 49).

The second issue of The Dial, published in January of 1842, featured “Social and Political Reform: Plan of the West Rosbury [sic] Community,” an essay by the eminent suffragist and abolitionist—and Hawthorne’s sister-in-law—Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. Forewarning readers about the “different social evils” pervading society, Peabody sets forth the reasons for initiating Brook Farm, the experimental utopian community upon which Hawthorne based Blithedale. Her manifesto stresses that the agrarian community emerged out of a desire to return to the “religious and moral life worthy the name” imperiled by the nation’s reckless embrace of modernity. Akin to Emerson, who in “Friendship” heralds the emasculation of brotherhood by culture’s “perfumed and silken amities” (118), Peabody disparages the “crowded condition . . . [of cities that] produces wants of an unnatural character, which resulted in occupations that regenerated evil, by creating artificial wants.” The mid-nineteenth-century emergence of the metropolis concerned Peabody and others, who conjectured that such a demographic shift threatened people with alienation from nature and one another.³ “Whoever is satisfied with society as it is,” she decrees, “whose sense of justice is not wounded by its common action, institutions, spirit of commerce, has no business with this community.”

The draw of nature and repulse of the “greedy, struggling, self-seeking world” (20) are the very reasons Miles Coverdale gives for affiliating with Blithedale. Echoing Peabody, Hawthorne interleaves clues in the beginning pages of Blithedale indicating that individual consumption has overtaken community as a mode of sociality.⁴ The novel opens with the pithless poet yearning for a world that will make him into a man. Coverdale immediately establishes that for some time he had been ensconced in his “cosey pair of bachelor-rooms . . . with a closet right at hand, where there was still a

bottle or two in the champagne-basket, and a residuum of claret in a box, and somewhat of proof in the concavity of a big demijohn" (10). The populous, yet anonymous city, in which he is surrounded by "buildings, on either side . . . pressing too closely . . . insomuch that our mighty hearts found barely room enough to throb between them" (11), poses for him "[t]he greatest obstacle to being heroic" (10), a point he elaborates upon:

Whatever else I may repent of, therefore, let it be reckoned neither among my sins nor follies, that I once had faith and force enough to form generous hopes of the world's destiny - yes! - and to do what in me lay for their accomplishment; even to the extent of quitting a warm fireside, flinging away a freshly lighted cigar, and travelling far beyond the strike of city-clocks, through a drifting snow-storm. (11)

Through the recurring imagery of masculine oppression—of "mighty hearts" imprisoned within torpid bachelor rooms, of a debilitating melancholia for a heroic masculine "force"—Hawthorne pinpoints "the luxurious life" (37) as Coverdale's impetus for fleeing the "dreary," "dingy," and "dusky" (11) city "in quest of a better life" (10).

Along the lines of Peabody's treatise, Hawthorne implicates the wealth and privilege afforded by modernity as instituting Coverdale's detachedness and solitude. Left to his own devices, the poet languishes in a crippling, masturbatory space.⁵ Though he lives alone, the confinement and insulation he experiences in this domestic space is significant, particularly at this historical juncture. As I discussed in chapter one, the decline of the marriage rate in the nineteenth century quickly gave way to the institutionalization of a new life phase for men. Some bachelors remained at their parents' home, while others moved into primarily all-male boardinghouses. Wealthy men such as Coverdale could afford to live alone, allowing for creature comforts but at the

cost of insulation. Despite their situation, bachelors were assigned a liminal status of being both inside and outside the home and hearth in the nineteenth-century logic of domesticity. As bachelors became more prevalent in American cities, social reformers began to view them as "troubling presence[s]" (Snyder 3). This feeling was mutual since some men treated bachelorhood as "anomalous, problematic, and probably immoral" (Warner, "Irving's Posterior" 773). Moreover, other men impugned their liminality as bachelors for causing their cultural emasculation. The "heroic" details Hawthorne uses to describe Coverdale's flight reflect this sentiment, signaling an overarching conflict between heroic masculinity and domestic sentimentality.

The hazards domesticity poses to masculinity become even more explicit as Coverdale recounts his harrowing journey to Blithedale. Using an almost mock-heroic narrative, he documents that alienation from traditional forms of masculine agency and the ensuing feminization motivate his escape "from the system of society" (13). En route to Blithedale, though, he discovers that he is not alone in deciphering domesticity as adverse to autonomous masculinity. Deciding to quit his "comfortable quarters," (10) he joins a band of men headed to Blithedale amid "the heart of the pitiless snow-storm." "Not till a February north-easter shall be as grateful to us as the softest breeze of June" (12), these men convey to him, will they be able to "call [them]selves regenerated men."⁶ Invoking the cultural restoration championed by Brook Farm members such as Peabody, Hawthorne singles out men as in dire need of regeneration. "It was our purpose . . . to give up whatever we had heretofore attained," Coverdale recalls, "for the sake of showing mankind the example of a life governed by other than the false and cruel principles on which human society has all along been based" (19). His shoddy segue

from the generic rhetoric of regeneration to pronouncing domesticity's assault on masculinity serves as yet another of Hawthorne's reminders that beset men such as Coverdale view society's "false and cruel principles" as offering them nothing but "nonsense and effeminacy" and an "unheroic" (54) life.⁷

Hawthorne designates the men's relation as a "brotherhood" as it signifies what these men actively seek out: an affiliation organized around the cultivation of manhood and the care and devotion for one another. Although Coverdale initially includes women in this cultural regeneration, heralding "the blessed state of brotherhood and sisterhood" (13), fraternity remains his touchstone, laying bare the homosocial circumference of his world. The phenomena Coverdale observes on the bumpy road to Blithedale suggest that his alienation from masculinity and community is in fact endemic among American men. He adduces this after the band of brothers encounters a man that "had no intelligence for [their] blithe tones of brotherhood . . . [and a] lack of faith in [their] cordial sympathy" (12). At another point in their peregrination, they pass a "ken of deserted villas, with no foot-prints in their avenues; and past scattered dwellings, whence puffed the smoke of country fires" (12). These remnants of a pre-industrial society insinuate that men such as Coverdale decipher the sentiment of anti-modernity that galvanized mid-nineteenth-century utopian movements as intersecting with their melancholia for manhood and fraternity. Re-adopting an organic model of masculinity, according to this logic, assures their place within the natural order while helping to stave off the pitfalls of modernity.⁸ The pilgrimage to Blithedale is the first step in regeneration these men accomplish, evinced by Coverdale's off-hand observation that they had "made such good companionship with the tempest, that, at [their] journey's end, [they] professed

[themselves] almost loth to bid the rude blusterer good bye" (12). He further details their success by grafting a stark comparison between their old surroundings with their new ones, emphasizing that public hearth of Blithedale, with its "right good fire . . . built up of great, rough logs, and knotty limbs, and splintered fragments of an oak-tree" (12-3), "contrast[s]" (13) with his precious "coal-grate" in his "cosey" apartment (10).

To his surprise, Coverdale discovers that the desire to transcend an oppressive social system is the foundation on which the counterpublic rests.⁹ His hopes, however, are quickly dashed once it becomes apparent that the countercultural Arcadians frequently encounter difficulty creating a complete rupture from mainstream society. This holds especially true when it comes to gender antagonisms. Although Coverdale recognizes that women support the regeneration of culture, he remains skeptical about their ulterior motives. Zenobia's announcement that "women . . . will take the domestic and indoor part of the business . . . for the present" (16) engenders doubt, compelling him to openly question her motives:

"What a pity," I remarked, "that the kitchen, and the house-work generally, cannot be left out of our system altogether! It is odd enough, that the kind of labor which falls to the lot of women, is just that which chiefly distinguishes artificial life—the life of degenerated mortals—from the life of Paradise. Eve had no dinner-pot, and no clothes to mend, and no washing-day." (16)

Coverdale's distrust of women stems from his conviction that they are reproducing the very systems the community repudiates.¹⁰ Of course, as Hawthorne's oft-cited censure of "the scribbling mob of women" suggests, sentimental and domestic fiction often interpreted the private sphere as women's bailiwick. Implied in Coverdale's denigration

of domestic work is his rejection of gynosocial or women-run realms. Zenobia's responses that the Arcadians "shall find some difficulty in adopting the Paradisiacal system, for at least a month" and that only later will those "who wear the petticoat will go afield, and leave the weaker brethren to take our places" (16), however, reflect that she believes either a complete rupture from extant discursive practices and material realities is impossible, or, more cunningly, that the importation of domesticity will conserve the power women have tapped into within the private sphere. The first instance suggests that the Arcadians must gradually transform these discursive practices through inhabitation.¹¹ Coverdale's belief that the sexual division of labor and the regeneration of manhood are irreconcilable suggests the second of these possibilities.

To make the poet's current of thought apparent Hawthorne diagrams this axiom that treats the culture's feminization as a symptom of degeneration. Coverdale does not hold Zenobia responsible for importing the logic of separate spheres; rather, he impugns a "feminine system" devoid of the "certain warm, and rich characteristic" (17) that God bestowed upon Eve. This curious theorem is the first clue that his understanding of femininity is inextricable from the biblical mythos of the Fall.¹² His equation of femininity with degeneration also effectively disparages women's signifying practices. This becomes clearer when he charges that Zenobia, with her "outlandish," feminine flower in her hair (41), "caused [their] heroic enterprise to show like an illusion, a masquerade, a pastoral, a counterfeit Arcadia" (20-1). His envisagement of the counterpublic as a "heroic enterprise"—a stark contrast with "Sunny Glimpse" (34), the "too fine and sentimental" name that Zenobia nominates—registers that explicit in the struggle for male heroism is the resistance to feminine artifice and sentimentality.¹³

Owing to these lingering anxieties over feminine duplicity and ruination, Coverdale remains conflicted over whether or not women should be constituents of the counterpublic. As his treatment of women such as Zenobia and Priscilla evinces, central to the project of regenerating "Man" is the re-interpellation of women as men, though always imperfectly so. An upshot of this revision is the cessation of the discursive circulation of female femininity. Masculinity, on the other hand, persists as a kind of palimpsest that bears the memory of past cultural inscriptions. Coverdale is quick to remind readers of the inherent malevolence of femininity when he notes that "[o]ne felt an influence breathing out of [Zenobia], such as we might suppose to come from Eve" (17).¹⁴ This allusion to Eve exposes that Coverdale treats femininity—not the logic of sexual difference per se, owing to the survival of masculinity—as a nagging aftereffect of man's Fall. The poet's treatment of femininity as divine castigation impels him to conceive of a way to place it under erasure within the Blithedale counterpublic:

While inclining us to the soft affections of the Golden Age, [Blithedale] seemed to authorize any individual, of either sex, to fall in love with any other, regardless of what would elsewhere be judged suitable and prudent. Accordingly, the tender passion was very rife among us, in various degrees of mildness or virulence, but mostly passing away with the state of things that had given origin. (67)

Without spelling it out, Hawthorne designates primal bisexuality as implicit within the regeneration of manhood.¹⁵ But this points to one of many of Coverdale's contradictions: how can bisexuality exist when there is no "bi" with which to be sexual? If women, denuded of femininity, circulate as imperfect men, then isn't sexuality "always, already" homosexual, figuratively speaking at least? Hawthorne tiptoes around this subject, but the

many details he slips into this passage—the Golden Age, an epoch in mythology which preceded the advent of women, its “soft affections” and “tender passion”—register the resemblance of homosexual desire and the same-sexed society for which Coverdale pines.¹⁶ His redoubled desire for the Paradisiacal and Golden Age means that as long as women such as Zenobia and Priscilla continue to signify some aspect of degenerate femininity, they will continue to tug at the knot that binds Blithedale’s men.¹⁷

This tension between female femininity and countercultural Blithedale becomes even tauter as Coverdale forges relationships with his fellow Arcadians. Initially, he proposes that the onus of eradicating women’s discursive practices does not fall solely upon women. Men must deprogram themselves, too, as evinced by his struggle to envisage Zenobia as something other than a modern-day Eve. However, he is frequently unwilling to repudiate femininity *tout court*, laying bare his insincerity over scrapping the framework of sexual difference for the express purpose of shoring up male privilege. For example, his inquisition over Zenobia’s marital status illustrates the determinative role sexual difference continues to play in his imaginary:

If the great event of a woman's existence had been consummated, the world knew nothing of it, although the world seemed to know Zenobia well. It was a ridiculous piece of romance, undoubtedly, to imagine that this beautiful personage, wealthy as she was, and holding a position that might fairly enough be called distinguished, could have given herself away so privately[.] (43)

By heralding marriage as “the great event of a woman's existence”—a position that Fuller excoriated in “The Great Lawsuit” (1843)—he wrenches to transcend mores so that

Zenobia's marital history becomes equivalent to "a ridiculous piece of romance." This meditation attests to his irresolute resistance to the discursive circulation of femininity.

Despite the desire to shear sexual difference from the cultural fabric, Coverdale reckons with its omnipresence. In the process, he deduces that articulations of sexual difference—especially those that bracket male privilege—might be worth saving. Rather than state this plainly, Hawthorne dramatizes this tenet by depicting his narrator within an internal struggle to ferret out lingering cultural narratives that prop up sexual difference:

Yet, sometimes, I strove to be ashamed of these conjectures. I acknowledged it as a masculine grossness—a sin of wicked interpretation, of which man is often guilty towards the other sex—thus to mistake the sweet, liberal, but womanly frankness of a noble and generous disposition. Still, it was of no avail to reason with myself, nor to upbraid myself. Pertinaciously the thought—'Zenobia is a wife! Zenobia has lived, and loved! There is not folded petal, no latent dew-drop, in this perfectly developed rose!'—irresistibly that thought drove out all other conclusions, as often as my mind reverted to the subject. (44)

Despite feeling "ashamed" about his "masculine grossness" that causes him to impulsively speculate about Zenobia's history, remorse does not stop him. In defiance of his own principle to wholly discount this "sin," he attempts to neutralize the threat she poses to the counterpublic.¹⁸ Hawthorne's treatment of this vacillation suggests that sexual difference and the fantasies that spin from it are embedded within psychology and, thus, almost impossible to ferret out. These two passages also bring another of Coverdale's hypocrisies into plain view. Whereas he resists carrying over the sexual

division of labor because of the threat of feminine degeneration, he reifies the social convention of matrimony contingent upon this very cleavage.

Zenobia is not the only woman who hinders Coverdale's plan to overwrite femininity. Although Priscilla unknowingly creates tension among community members, Coverdale classifies her servile femininity as complementary to the regeneration of manhood. This helps to explain the stark contrasts that the poet repeatedly establishes between the "bitter" (15) Zenobia and the "happy" (55) Priscilla. Whereas Zenobia has a "perfectly developed figure" (17) marked by its "womanliness" (41), Priscilla is "a slim and unsubstantial girl" (25); whereas Zenobia is known by her "imperial" (13) *nom de plume*, Priscilla keeps her "quaint and prim cognomen" (28); whereas Zenobia is marked by "her native strength" and "passionate force" (74), Priscilla is a "delicate . . . instrument" (70) loved for her "weakness and irregularity" (68). Priscilla inhabits the self-negating, male-affirming ground of True Womanhood as she enacts Hollingsworth's belief that a woman's "place is at man's side. . . . The heart of true womanhood knows where its own sphere is, and never seeks to stray beyond it!" (113-4).¹⁹ But Hawthorne's representation suggests that there is blindness in Coverdale's "insight." In seeing Priscilla as enabling the regeneration of manhood, the poet never acknowledges that her very presence ensures the discursive circulation of femininity.²⁰

The femininity that Priscilla enacts is not the kind touted by nineteenth-century women reformers such as Catharine Beecher, who envisioned the logic of separate spheres as a *modus operandi* for transforming women into engineers of the home, family, and, more largely, the nation.²¹ Rather, Priscilla emboldens men by immolating her autonomy. As critics have spelled out, Hawthorne's characterization of her as enslaved

by patriarchal power highlights her passive circulation among men.²² This reception is understandable given her characterization as "shadowlike" (71) or "blown about like a leaf . . . [without] any free-will" (158). Another function she performs stems from the handmade silk purses she fashions for men, an odd act within a counterpublic devoted to the socialist politics of Fourierism.²³ In producing them, Priscilla stitches together fiscal accumulation and male potency:

Their peculiar excellence, besides the great delicacy and beauty of the manufacture, lay in the almost impossibility that any uninitiated person should discover the aperture; although, to a practiced touch, they would open as wide as charity or prodigality might wish. I wondered if it were not a symbol of Priscilla's own mystery. (33)

Coverdale's rumination links these purses to the prodigality of male genitals, above all else "the aperture" that only those with "a practiced touch" can open. The "mystery" of the purses is that they regenerate masculine potency and agency, two characteristics Coverdale pines for while languishing in his bachelor rooms. The discovery that Priscilla is the Veiled Lady only confirms her willingness to sacrifice herself for the sake of men. While her mediumship causes her individual identity to be undercut by men's fantasies, it is never a complete erasure as she continues to bear the inscription of man's Fall. "[W]hosoever should be bold enough to lift" the veil, Coverdale explains, "would behold the features of that person . . . whom he loved; or quite as probably, the deadly scowl of his bitterest enemy"(102). The Veiled Lady's mutability—her paranormal ability to reflect men's desires while evoking postlapsarian deceit—records that the scars of feminine duplicity remain on women's bodies. In the fable, Theodore's reticence to kiss

the feminine specter is fueled by this curious brew of desirous and abject femininity. While Priscilla's anatomized purses interpellate men as economically and sexually potent, the threat that her femininity poses to men lingers behind her girlish veil.²⁴

The Poeian allegory of the Veiled Lady re-enacts the threat that feminine duplicity poses to men—a widespread threat, owing to the Veiled Lady's "too numerous" (5) sisterhood. Problems arise at Blithedale when men begin to compete for Priscilla. I want to close this section by exploring Zenobia's interpolated narrative of the Veiled Lady as another way women undo "the knot of dreamers."²⁵ By recollecting this fable in his own narrative, Coverdale registers that women are either unable or unwilling to forge an equivalent to the "blithe tones of brotherhood" (12).

As I have discussed, men look to Blithedale as a means through which they can re-establish a "bond of . . . Community" (75) and reconstitute manhood. The bond between women, however, does not have as auspicious a future, at least in Coverdale's imaginary. One of his most egregious faults as a narrator is the broad brush he uses to paint the nuances of gender. To be sure, these strokes lay bare his problematic understanding of sexual difference. He characterizes girls as "incomparably wilder and more effervescent than boys," whereas young men and boys "play according to recognized law, old, traditionary games, permitting no caprioles of fancy" (68). Passages such as these in which Coverdale falls back upon gender stereotypes cast further doubt on his commitment to disavow femininity.

Even more noteworthy is his characterization of women as enigmas whose actions bear "the true Sibylline stamp, nonsensical in its first aspect, yet, on closer study, unfolding a variety of interpretations" (6). This aside reminds readers that Coverdale's

own myopic drive to regenerate manhood biases him when it comes to “understanding” women. When he surveils Zenobia and Priscilla at different points in the novel, he frequently struggles to crack the code of their cryptic exchanges.²⁶ Observing Priscilla selflessly worship Zenobia, he pronounces that “[t]here is nothing parallel to this . . . nothing so foolishly disinterested, and hardly anything so beautiful . . . in the masculine nature” (31). Coverdale deciphers sorority as a hierarchy predicated on self-sacrifice, submission, and inequality. As he indicates, Zenobia never adopts the role of Priscilla's sister, but rather sees herself as her “duenna” and “maiden-aunt” (72). Worse are his depictions of the women as in a bond of servitude (31, 81) and dependence (82).

These details certainly call into question Coverdale’s reliability as a narrator. Blithedale, however, does not rest on the factualness of his account as Hawthorne uses him as a kind of cultural barometer or gauge. By treating Coverdale’s narration as typical of mid-nineteenth-century American men’s attitudes, Hawthorne contends that the anxiety over masculinity is endemic to this historical moment. This becomes more evident when the sisters’ competition for Hollingsworth leads to their estrangement. Once Zenobia envisions Priscilla as her erotic rival, she sheds all civility. Coverdale relates different instances of these tensions which spill into the community, the agent of which for him is tellingly Zenobia. When he spies the two women picking flowers on May Day, he observes her adorning Priscilla’s hair with blossoms. Coverdale initially delights in the quasi-sapphic intimacy between these two women. However, he quickly adds that, unlike the ostentatious jeweled flower in Zenobia’s hair, there “had been stuck a weed of evil odor and ugly aspect” in the arrangement which he then links to “a gleam of latent mischief—not to call it deviltry—in Zenobia's eye, which seemed to indicate a slightly

malicious purpose in the arrangement" (54). The "gleam" later spreads to her entire mien, which "would have made the fortune of a tragic actress" (73).

This motif of feminine artifice recurs throughout the novel, especially in "Zenobia's Legend," the chapter that features the yarn about the Veiled Lady. The implicit threat that the Veiled Lady poses to men serves as the linchpin of the fable. As Coverdale recalls, after Zenobia tells the legend, she ominously explains that "when the Veiled Lady vanished, a maiden, pale and shadowy rose up amid a knot of visionary people, who were seeking a better life" (106). The connection between Priscilla and the Veiled Lady becomes apparent to the community when Zenobia portends that the phantom has "made herself your most intimate companion" and will "fling a blight over your prospects" (107). She then punctuates her legend by placing a piece of gauze over Priscilla's head, which causes "her auditors" to hold "their breath, half expecting . . . that the Magician would start up through the floor, and carry off our poor little friend" (108). In so doing, Zenobia transubstantiates the Veiled Lady from an evanescent subject of legend to one steeped within a threatening materiality. By making Zenobia the mouthpiece of a story culminating with a man reclaiming his female "bond-slave, forever more" (108), Coverdale suggests that she is willing to forego her vested interest in women's reform for self-aggrandizement.²⁷ He harps on this again when he spies Zenobia take Hollingsworth's hand and place it on her breast. Equating this with her "kne[eling] before him, or fl[inging] herself upon his breast," he notes that he "could not have been more certain of what [this] meant" (116): her neglect of her duty as a "female reformer" (41) for the chance of romantic fulfillment.

Coverdale ultimately decides that sisterhood has only a literal meaning and, as such, can never function as a mode of communality. Zenobia's final disapprobation of Hollingsworth intimates this to the poet, who revisits his earlier characterization of the relationship between the sisters. She begins her rebuke by continuing her earlier feminist exegesis about "the injustice which the world did to women, and equally to itself" (111). Sermonizing from atop the pulpit, she execrates Hollingsworth as self-absorbed:

Now, God be judge between us . . . which of us two has most mortally offended Him! At least, I am a woman—with every fault, it may be, that a woman ever had, weak, vain, unprincipled, (like most of my sex; for our virtues, when we have any, are merely impulsive and intuitive,) passionate, too, and pursuing my foolish and unattainable ends, by indirect cunning, though absurdly chosen means, as an hereditary bond-slave must—false, moreover, to the whole circle of good, in my reckless truth to the little good I saw before me but still a woman! A creature, whom only a little change of earthly fortune, a little kinder smile of Him who sent me hither, and one true heart to encourage and direct me, might have made all that a woman can be! But how is it with you? Are you a man? No; but a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism! (200-1)

By explaining that Eliot's pulpit was once the site of John Eliot's many sermons "to an Indian auditory" (110), Hawthorne suggests that it is ionized by an organic iconoclasm and counterhegemonic ideology.²⁸ Zenobia's cooption of the postlapsarian rhetoric of feminine weakness amplifies Hollingsworth's self-serving flouting of the Christian principles of empathy and self-abnegation. "Self, self, self!" she charges twice, adding, "You have embodied yourself in a project" (201). No longer the foul weed in Priscilla's

garden, Zenobia suddenly becomes a source of "admiration" for Coverdale as she falls prey to "Hollingsworth's scorn" (209).²⁹

Coverdale adduces from this new appreciation of Zenobia that while she creates factions among community members, the project of regenerating men—at least as men such as Coverdale express it—impedes her from establishing sororal intimacy. Forced to inhabit circumscribed roles in this new Arcadia, women, regardless of their actions, are fated constantly to grind against the limits that nail them in place.³⁰ As Coverdale mentions in passing, women “are not natural reformers, but become such by the pressure of exceptional misfortune” (112).³¹ Another factor Coverdale attributes to the failure of communal sisterhood and, more largely, the entire Blithedale experiment is Hollingsworth's monomania. By making fraternal dedication and investment the circumference of the blacksmith's goals, Hawthorne hints at the incompatibility of the regeneration of manhood and sorority. But as I will now discuss, Coverdale's realization that Hollingsworth has hijacked the project for his own self purposes causes him to estrange himself from a brother who veils despotism in fraternal eroticism.

II. “A singular anomaly of likeness co-existing with perfect dissimilitude” (48): Same Sex, Different Self

"For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique."

—Emerson, “Nature” (30).

“Love both propounds and resolves the contradictions of individual selfhood.”

—Michael Warner, “Thoreau's Bottom” (59).

I want to continue to plot the circulation of sameness and difference in Blithedale, particularly as these concepts inflect Coverdale's iteration of fraternity. By scrutinizing the fellow feeling between Hollingsworth and him, I show that they abide by competing models of homosociality. On one hand, Hollingsworth's vested interest in prisoner reform raises the stakes in the counterpublic's regeneration of manhood, placing men at the omphalos of his emotional, erotic, and political concerns. Coverdale, on the other hand, circuitously expresses his desire for Hollingsworth through Zenobia and Priscilla in order to stave off the twin threats of penetration and submission implicit in a direct, unmediated relationship with the blacksmith.

The polyvalent relationship between Hollingsworth and Coverdale proves difficult to untie as it shifts throughout Blithedale. However, despite its fluxional state, there remains a constant variable: an abiding homoeroticism. D.H. Lawrence, who bitchily consigns Priscilla to the role of "the little psychic prostitute" (107), homes in on this constant that "surpass[es] the love of women. . . . When Nathaniel wants to get well and have a soul of his own, he turns with hate to this black-bearded, booming salvationist, Hephaestos of the underworld" (106). This characterization provides me with an ideal starting point in my analysis of how sameness and difference shape their relationship. As an alternative model of eroticism that "surpasses" the love of women, homosexuality terrorizes Coverdale when he realizes that the aegis of sameness that draws him to Hollingsworth precludes him from having "a soul of his own."³²

Although homogeneity eventually comes to order the two men's worlds, the brooding relationship between them actually unfolds along a complicated axis of sameness and difference. Coverdale's initial desire for the blacksmith is almost covetous,

evinced by the desires he projects onto Hollingsworth's virile body with the hopes of matching his ruggedness blow-for-blow. In this way, Hawthorne establishes Coverdale's intention to equal the blacksmith's inflexible devotion to the regeneration of manhood. Hawthorne dramatizes this complex process of identification when Hollingsworth tempestuously blows into the novel. Upon setting eyes on him, Coverdale falls prey to his virility and erotic pull, declaring him "as much like a polar bear as a modern philanthropist" (25).³³ He repeats this analogy, calling him a rugged, virile "tolerably educated bear" (27) and comparing him to a "tiger" (34). This preoccupation with manliness is difficult to discount, owing to Hawthorne's unmistakable and at-times comic representation of Hollingsworth's phallic resonance. Coverdale, for instance, sizes him up as "massive and brawny well befitting his original occupation, which . . . was that of a blacksmith" (27). Hollingsworth also installs phallic symbolism to establish his authority. When the poet praises his "tenderness," he reproaches him and claims that "the most marked trait in [his] character is an inflexible severity of purpose" (40). This same language arises when Coverdale describes Hollingsworth's reform project as a "rigid and unconquerable idea" (122) for which he plans the "erection of a spacious edifice" (88).

While Coverdale's adulation of Hollingsworth's phallic command plays a critical role in establishing intimacy between the two men, the blacksmith-turned-philanthropist exhibits another trait that serves a purpose just as important. Without undercutting his phallic presence, Hollingsworth exhibits both masculine and feminine characteristics. For the poet, this spells out the possibility of life without women. As further evidence, he explains that the blacksmith's declaration that he "hammer[s] thought out of iron, after heating the iron in [his] heart" (63). The undercurrent of this acknowledgment is that his

theories and practices are pierced by sentiment—fiery, robust sentiment, but sentiment nonetheless. As he looks into “those eyes, which lay so deep under his shaggy brow,” Coverdale feels “warmed and cheered” (39). For the poet, this sentimentality is congruent with Hollingsworth’s masculine will or drive. As he continues to dig beneath the philanthropist’s virile exterior, he uncovers further evidence of “a tenderness in his voice, eyes, mouth, in his gesture, and in every indescribable manifestation, which few men could resist, and no woman” (27). Although the implications of this transcendent desirability are initially opaque, they quickly come to dominate Coverdale’s narration. Since he and the blacksmith share adjoining, “thinly partitioned” (36) sleeping quarters, he becomes subjected to “the solemn murmur of [Hollingsworth's] voice . . . compelling [him] to be an auditor of his awful privacy with the Creator” (36). By being privy to such intimate advances, Coverdale acknowledges that he and the blacksmith “grew more intimate” (37).

Hollingsworth’s embodiment of both masculine and feminine traits inspires Coverdale to see him as providing access to masculine articulations of sympathy and eroticism that are coextensive with—and perhaps mutually constitutive of—the teleology of the regeneration of manhood. When the poet takes ill, his infirmity affords him with a chance to experience fraternal care and devotion and, more saliently, the possibility of a world without women.³⁴ The onset of his illness occurs when, besieged by the austerity of the counterpublic, he reminisces about his pleasures in the city, including his daily “noontide walk among the cheery pavement, with the suggestive succession of human faces” (37). Once the illness runs its course, though, he is purged of the societal miasma that left him unmanned within his bachelor rooms. Through the “inexpressible comfort”

(38) of Hollingsworth's own vigil strange, he reemerges a regenerated man. The language Hawthorne uses to describe Coverdale's response to this uxorial care is striking:

Most men—and, certainly, I could not always claim to be one of the exceptions—have a natural indifference, if not an absolutely hostile feeling, towards those whom disease, or weakness, or calamity of any kind, causes to falter amid the rude jostle of our selfish existence. The education of Christianity, it is true, the sympathy of a like experience, and the example of women, may soften, and possibly subvert, this ugly characteristic of our sex. . . . But there was something of the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth; nor was he ashamed of it, as men often are of what is best in them, nor seemed ever to know that there was such a soft place in his heart. (38-9)

As these generic conventions of sentimental fiction—including such pathos-laden sentiment as "a soft place in his heart"—suggest, Coverdale interprets the rugged blacksmith's tenderness as a gender inversion. On some level, Hollingsworth's gender transitivity evokes the Transcendentalist tenet of dualism within Nature, a concept that philosophers such as Fuller espoused to supplant overdetermined gender distinctions with an organic androgyny.³⁵ More forcefully, however, this example of male femininity assuages Coverdale's fears of feminization. Embedding the "woman" within the blacksmith's morphology—not within the realm of artifice or affect—naturalizes his femininity while keeping it securely within his legibly masculine frame. Interpreting Hollingsworth's femininity as compatible with fraternity, he accepts it, adding, "Happy the man that has such a friend beside him, when he comes to die!" (39).³⁶

Despite Coverdale's bliss in finding a man whose morphology can conterminously consist of the best qualities of both genders, a threat simmers. Wary of Hollingsworth's iron, inflexible masculine will, he starts to uncover traits that suggest the blacksmith is dedicated less to the beneficiaries of his philanthropy and more to the philanthropic plan itself. This particular threat takes shape as Coverdale comes to terms with this homoerotic desire and its relation to Hollingsworth's "impracticable plan for the reformation of criminals" (34). The argument the two men have over the tenets of Fourier compels Coverdale to charge that his friend "had come among us, actuated by no real sympathy with our feelings and our hopes, but chiefly because we were estranging ourselves from the world, with which his lonely and exclusive object in life had already put him at odds" (51). His investment in prisoner reform is so fanatical that Coverdale deduces the philanthropic obsession will always be a "closer friend" (51) than he will ever be. His assertion that Hollingsworth "had grown to be the bond-slave" (51) to this plan inaugurates the subtext of male submission which characterizes Hollingsworth as becoming mastered by his own principles.

The anxiety over submission becomes even more pronounced when Hollingsworth uses an erotically charged appeal to inveigle him to join his venture. Rather than feel seduced by this attention, however, Coverdale writhes while subjected to the blacksmith's objectifying gaze.³⁷ Becoming another man's object of desire exacerbates his fears over divestment of agency and incites new ones such as becoming a repository for these desires at the cost of his own. But most of all, Hollingsworth's erotic interludes force him to come to grips with the fact that the blacksmith's brotherhood entails the dissolution of fraternal equality. The language these men use when hashing out

their separate stances records a fraternal devotion to homogeneity within otherwise competing visions. Coverdale, for instance, expresses his regret for not joining Hollingsworth's reformist project by reaffirming his fidelity to fraternal sameness. "I heartily wish that I could make your schemes my schemes," he says, "because it would be so great a happiness to find myself treading the same path with you" (53).

Hollingsworth's response ratchets up this eroticism by re-invoking the intimacy of their friendship that initially united them: "But how can you be my life-long friend, except you strive with me towards the great object of my life?" (53). Referring to his prisoner reform project in such a way, Hollingsworth avows Coverdale's portrayal of it as the blacksmith's "lonely and exclusive object in life" (51). The brotherly appeals—especially his plea to become his "life-long friend" and later his "friend of friends" (125)—conflates the rehabilitation of degenerate brothers with the interpellation of the poet as an erotic object. Coverdale, who struggles to shore up his autonomy, interprets Hollingsworth's seduction as an attempt "to mak[e him] a proselyte to his views" (53). As he sees it, a non-Platonic relationship with such a phallic man will lead to his being "ruled by [his] own sex" (112) and becoming someone else's "lonely and exclusive object."

This conclusion spells out to Coverdale the critical difference between the fraternal network of sympathy he forged earlier and the one enacted by Hollingsworth. Whereas the former valorizes equality among men and does not place autonomy or individuality under erasure, the latter requires that one man become "the mirror of [another man's] purpose" (65).³⁸ Unlike Coverdale's aspiration earlier in the novel to equal the blacksmith's phallic resonance, this form of mirroring serves as forceful evidence of Hollingsworth's unbounded narcissism. His longing to become a "life-long

friend” with an exact copy of himself more than suggests a correlation between narcissism and homoeroticism.³⁹ While this age-old fallacy informs Hawthorne’s depiction of same-sex desire, at the crux of his representation of homosexuality in Blithedale is a trenchant threat to the inviolability of the male body and, more largely, a man’s autonomy.⁴⁰ This becomes clearer as Hollingsworth struggles to convince his friend to join him in the project of prisoner reform. Sensing that he is losing him, Hollingsworth pleads to Coverdale that “there is not the man in this wide world, whom [he] can love as [he] could [him]” (124). That the blacksmith proclaims this love while “h[olding] out both his hands” (124) registers either the physicality of this desire or the desperate measures he is willing to go to get his man. Fueling Coverdale’s response is his anxiety over the effects of being subjected—or, perhaps more appropriately, objected—to the erotic desire of another man:

As I look back upon this scene, through the coldness and dimness of so many years, there is still a sensation as if Hollingsworth had caught hold of my heart, and were pulling it towards him with an almost irresistible force. It is a mystery to me, how I withstood it. But, in truth, I saw in his scheme of philanthropy nothing but what was odious. (124)

As in The Scarlet Letter, when Chillingworth “d[i]gs into the poor clergyman's heart” (116) in the hopes of uncovering his dark secret, Hawthorne candidly represents physical expressions of homoeroticism as a means of coercion. Coverdale’s reason for resisting the blacksmith’s interludes is revealing: if he capitulated, “Hollingsworth's magnetism would perhaps have penetrated [him] with his own conception of all these matters” (124). Being penetrated by the teleology of Hollingsworth's penal endowment that was “too

gigantic for his integrity" (124), as the poet suggests, is tantamount to being penetrated by the man himself.

Vexed by Hollingsworth's reaction, Coverdale struggles to comprehend it by projecting his own feelings onto him. This struggle produces one of the most curious responses from the poet who, at least until this point, is relatively forthright in expressing feelings for his friend. In the first of his many "confessions," he confides that "[o]ne other appeal to my friendship—such as once, already, Hollingsworth had made—taking me in the revulsion that followed a strenuous exercise of opposing will, would completely have subdued me" (126). Unlike when he gives an unambiguous "no" to Hollingsworth's invitation to be his brother-in-arms, he is oblique when admitting that he was not entirely beyond persuasion. Hawthorne's convoluted syntax only brings more attention to Coverdale's lumbering stealth. The main clause of the confession ("[o]ne other appeal to my friendship would completely have subdued me") and its first subordinate clause ("such as once, already, Hollingsworth had made") are easy enough to follow, relaying that despite his struggle to do otherwise, Coverdale still will "subdue" himself for the sake of "friendship." But he uncharacteristically refuses to elaborate upon this one friendly appeal. Is it Hollingsworth's uxorial succor? The appeal to regenerating manhood? Struggles to fill-in-the-blank are simply begging the question as to why Coverdale is being so coy. The final subordinate clause only roils matters further: "taking me in the revulsion that followed a strenuous exercise of opposing will." That Hawthorne sets off the first clause with em dashes suggests this clause is pursuant to it. Following this syntax, then, the one other appeal by which Coverdale might be persuaded would also cause him to experience revulsion at the hands of a dominator. Hawthorne's use of

ambiguous language within this passage reflects the polyvalence of Hollingsworth's friendship. As an individual struggling to sustain legibility, Coverdale attests to the seductive power of subduing one's self for the sake of friendship and brotherhood. This passage is also charged with an energy that, while not explicitly sexual, is impelled by the conflicted eroticism implicit in a man's submission to another.⁴¹

The realization that Hollingsworth seeks to proselytize others and turn them into his clones impels Coverdale to revisit the "more than brotherly attendance" the blacksmith bestows upon him earlier in the novel. As I discussed, the woman molded into Hollingsworth's robust frame suggests for the poet a world without women. Coverdale's admission that Hollingsworth had "caught hold of [his] heart," however, implicitly ties him to the generic conventions of domestic sentimentality, especially republican motherhood. No longer contained within Hollingsworth's robust manly frame, the woman emerges to penetrate Coverdale's heart and colonize his sympathies. Hollingsworth's teleology entails an exclusively male world in which men practice a feminine form of sentimentality in order to save men's degenerate souls. Hollingsworth intuits Coverdale's thoughts when the poet inquires about Zenobia's and Priscilla's "part[s] in [this] enterprise" (124). To countervail this accusation, he continues to re- evoke the homosocial dimension of his plan to persuade Coverdale. "Why do you bring in the names of these women?" Hollingsworth asks, adding, "What have they to do with the proposal which I make you?" (125). The blacksmith's coy response is, of course, an obvious attempt to veil this connection to sentimentality and moral didacticism. Even more importantly, it confirms Coverdale's suspicion that Hollingsworth's brotherhood demands that he adopt the blacksmith's vision at the cost of his "own optics" (125).

III. "Realities keep in the rear": Bottoming Out in Blithedale

"If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the woman being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it."

—Gayle S. Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" (174).

"For a man to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being 'interested in men.'"

—Eve Sedgwick, Between Men (89).

As I have been discussing, the nagging threat of submission vexes Coverdale as his intimate brotherhood with the phallic Hollingsworth coalesces. Hawthorne conjures the bogeyman of penetration to redouble this anxiety over male passivity, particularly as it manifests in the syntax of male homosexual acts. In this section, I continue to probe Coverdale's decision to return to the city. As I show, his harmonious reemergence in society, when read alongside his rocky homoerotic attachment, is the first step in his renunciation of the Blithedale counterpublic. Central to his reintegration is the reassurance he discovers in the systems he earlier disavowed. While his embrace of mainstream society deepens the gulf separating him from Hollingsworth, it is not tantamount to his repudiation of the homosocial. Rather, still craving a fraternal network of equality, Coverdale adopts a model of homosociality in which men route their desire for one another through women so as to stave off the twinned threats of submission to and penetration by another man.⁴² His unassuming discovery that mainstream society hinges upon this very understanding of homosociality leads him to see Hollingsworth's model for what it is: a top-to-bottom hierarchy.

Coverdale's decision to eschew Blithedale coincides with a sonorous shift in his narration in which he unabashedly refers to his fellow feelings for Hollingsworth. This

candor suggests that he sees no reason to obscure this affection because it is a thing of the past. But nothing could be further from the truth. Despite earlier evading the blacksmith's penetrating touch, he confesses that the conflict with his once intimate brother still effectively "penetrated to the innermost and shadiest of [his] contemplative recesses" (128). His final encounter with his adversary lugubriously recalls their earlier "passage-at-arms" (127):

I had a momentary impulse to hold out my hand, or, at least, to give a parting nod, but resisted both. When a real and strong affection has come to an end, it is not well to mock the sacred past with any show of those common-place civilities that belong to ordinary intercourse. Being dead henceforth to him, and he to me, there could be no propriety in our chilling one another with the touch of two corpse-like hands, or playing at looks of courtesy with eyes that were impenetrable beneath the glaze and the film. (133)

Although hyperbolic, the metaphor of death that Coverdale employs serves as the death knell for this affair. Whereas he earlier felt vulnerable to the blacksmith's penetrating advances, the bereavement over the termination of "a real and strong affection" coincides with the reemergence of "impenetrable" men. Nevertheless, his "impulse" to reach out one final time registers the vestiges of Hollingsworth's magnetic sway. This becomes evident when, upon his return to Boston, "the entangled life of many men together, sordid as it was, and empty of the beautiful, took quite as strenuous a hold upon [his] mind" (135). Continuing with the Platonic disapprobation of physicality, an "entangled life" maintains a safe physical distance between each man by displacing friendly and erotic entanglements onto the macrostructure of society.⁴³ By redounding to the Platonic realm

of intellect, however, Coverdale belies his conflicted desire for physical intimacy, insinuating that his entanglement with Hollingsworth is far from broken.⁴⁴

The poet's return to mainstream society triggers the recurrence of "the effeminacy of past days" (135). He resists returning to "the torpid life of the book" (137), opting instead to spy upon people from the window of the boardinghouse in which he takes residence. By placing Coverdale's scopophilia in opposition to his earlier passivity as a reader, Hawthorne intimates that voyeurism serves as a vehicle for his engagement in "adventurous conjectures to read the hieroglyphic" (149) of the social. At first, he interprets the phenomena surrounding him as components of "a mechanical diorama" (136), re-invoking systematic mindlessness: "[a] gray sky; the weathercock of a steeple" (137); and "that little portion of the backside of the universe" which includes "here and there an apology for a garden" (137-8). Before Coverdale left for the counterpublic, he incriminated this gray mechanical diorama in his entombment as a bachelor. Upon his return to society, however, he analyzes it under a different lens, seeing it as an Eden where "singularly large, luxuriant and abundant" fruit grows in "soil [that] had doubtless been enriched to a more than natural fertility" (137). Through these details, Hawthorne suggests that his narrator, like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, had been home all along.

Coverdale feels comfortable enough in his role as a voyeur that he claims to be able to finally lift the veil enshrouding the order of things and his place in them. Such a transformation implies that Hawthorne's sides with a model of sociality for which the individual subject is the privileged hermeneutic agent. But this interpretation neglects to reckon with Coverdale's new perspective, above all else its replication of Hollingsworth's

autocracy.⁴⁵ Shedding the tentativeness he exhibited earlier when struggling to comprehend Hollingsworth, he adopts a more assured, almost omniscient narrative voice:

It is likewise to be remarked, as a general rule, that there is far more of the picturesque, more truth to native and characteristic tendencies, and vastly greater suggestiveness, in the back view of a residence, whether in town or country, than in its fronts. The latter is always artificial; it is meant for the world's eye, and is therefore a veil and a concealment. Realities keep in the rear, and put forward an advance guard of show and humbug. (138)

His flood of meditations starkly contrasts with his earlier feelings of being subdued at Blithedale, recording Hawthorne's criticism that the heteronomy of communalism undermines individual sovereignty. "No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity," Coverdale pronounces, "if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people without periodically returning into the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old stand-point" (130). As an interpretive mode, however, the poet's voyeurism is hardly impartial or respectful of the subjects objectified by his scrutinizing gaze. Subtle as he may be, Hawthorne, hinting that the poet is in fact reproducing the blacksmith's despotism, forges a telling chiasmus between Hollingsworth's monomaniacal teleology and Coverdale's monologic voyeurism. Notwithstanding his criticism of his former friend for ruthlessly imposing his sphere onto others, Coverdale does the very same thing, transforming others into static and voiceless objects in order to shore up his eroding sense of self.

The observations the poet makes while looking out his rear window register that his new-found perspective empowers him to subject the world to his gaze so that he can

clearly see his place in it. They also signal that the poet is somewhat conscious of his autocratic voyeurism, evidenced by his desperate attempt to legitimize it. This becomes especially clear when, conjecturing about the semiotics of the family home, he discounts the front as an artificial façade and heralds the private pleasures that await those who enter its rear. Such a noteworthy analogy is seemingly at odds with his earlier anxieties over penetration: whereas the front of a house he associates with women, particularly how, through their artifice, they are "meant for the world's eye," the back of the residence he relates to "the long-established haunts of men" (138).⁴⁶ Is this rear entry no longer threatening to him since he is the one who forces his way in? While this might play a role in mollifying the anxiety the rear caused Coverdale in the past, this reference intimates that he understands his peering not as a duplication of the Hollingsworthian "terrible," "all-devouring," "self-delusive," and "masculine" egotism (52, 66, 74, 114), but more as an avenue through which "the spectator gets new ideas of rural life and individuality" (139). In this way, he demarcates the difference between the blacksmith's ordering of the world and his: whereas the former is an unsolicited imposition of one's sphere of thought onto a subject-as-object, the latter yields an understanding of the object-as-subject.

This distinction, however, is problematic since Coverdale's phantasmatic observations reveal more about him than they do about his objects.⁴⁷ Even he is somewhat conscious that the world is a product of his consciousness, remarking that a dove that he watches vanishes from his sight, "as did likewise the slight, fantastic pathos with which I had invested her" (141). When scanning the backside of the boardinghouse, he itemizes its denizens: a young man primping in a mirror, two well-dressed children—a boy and a girl—looking out a window, and an older man interacting with his children.

These details of the domestic sphere are seemingly innocent. The way he synthesizes them, however, is not:

It was a papa, no doubt, just come in from his counting-room or office; and anon appeared mamma, stealing as softly behind papa, as he had stolen behind the children, and laying her hand on his shoulder to surprise him. Then followed a kiss between papa and mamma, but a noiseless one; for the children did not turn their heads. (140)

The imposition of this heteronormative framework resonates with his desire to impose a determinate and subtly ideological reading onto an otherwise unstable social text.⁴⁸

While he assigns these people subject positions, they remain objects within his field of vision, registering yet again the structural congruence of his and Hollingsworth's autocratic order of the world.

But while the two men are analogous in that they privilege their own voices while silencing others, are they homologous, as well? The heterosexual family that appears just as Coverdale struggles to secure his narratorial authority serves an important purpose. By imposing a heteronormative narrative onto society in which subject positions are determined through the matrix of sexual difference, Coverdale is able to eradicate the enduring fears over sameness and homogeneity.⁴⁹ As I have explored it, Hollingsworth's vision for the Blithedale community is inherently homosocial, a point with which the two men agree, as evinced by Coverdale's melancholia for a sexually homogeneous world. While they agree on the preeminence of the homosocial, however, they are at variance over what constitutes such a realm. Whereas the blacksmith continues to exclude women in his reformist vision, residing in the sometimes-indiscernible overlap between the

homosocial and homosexual, the poet, contrary to his earlier interpretation of women as defective men, sees them as necessary evils. As Coverdale fawns over the family, he tells himself, "I thank God for these good folks! . . . I have not seen a prettier bit of nature, in all my summer in the country, than they have shown me here in a rather stylish boarding-house" (140). Hawthorne's depiction of this bliss indicates that the circumscribed gender roles of the heteronormative family provide men that crave autonomy and community with a system that ensures their circulation as discrete, sovereign entities.⁵⁰

Discreteness, however, does not come at the cost of obviating sameness, at least as Coverdale conceives of it. Whereas earlier he was troubled by the aegis of sameness that drew him to Hollingsworth, the homogeneity of these families heralds his arrival at a community in which men inhabit the same subject positions in different family units. In this way, women—or more exactly their discursive circulation as wives within this conceptual structure—act as cordons between men preventing the dissolution of male individuality. Coverdale begins to intimate this as he spies on the occupants of the boardinghouses. Parsing the images that comprise this *mise en scène*, he remarks that "there was a general sameness . . . [among these houses] . . . that [he] could only conceive of the inhabitants as cut out on one identical pattern" (139). Although this observation might suggest an oppressive uniformity that is antithetical to individualism, such a possibility doesn't factor into Coverdale's thoughts. Instead, he explains that all of these shared elements unite these different families as a community. These families, as he perceives, "all had the same glimpse of the sky, all looked into the same area, all received just their equal share of sunshine through the front windows, and all listened to precisely the same noises of the street" (139). That they share these experiences does not hinder

Coverdale from "resolv[ing] this combination of human interests into well-defined elements" (139). By assigning each family member a sexed subject position, it dawns on Coverdale that the logic of sexual difference he earlier sought to superannuate provides him with the ability to see each of these groups of people as "well-defined elements." The mediated subject positions of the family, in other words, ensure differentiation in a world in which "[m]en are so much alike, in their nature, that they grow intolerable unless varied by their circumstances" (139). The heteronormative family, Hawthorne suggests, allows for the simultaneity of variation and likeness among men, ensuring both their autonomy and ability to work collectively to shore up their cultural dominance.⁵¹

Just as Coverdale arrives at this liberating realization, though, he confesses that the "train of thoughts which, for months past, had worn a track through [his] mind" persist, leaving him feeling "tormented" and "impotent" (142). Such angst plays out in the poet's unconscious, causing his "three friends . . . to encroach upon [his] dreams" (142). Their emergence in his dream records Hawthorne's continuing interest in psychology, particularly the struggle to make the memory of desire resistant to the tow of repression. That he dreams of the three together as an erotic unit signals a connection between desiring man and woman together as a unit and defusing the threats that homoerotic attraction pose to men.⁵² Such an arrangement evokes a kind of love triangle, a figure whose vectors represent an erotic competition. For Coverdale, however, it is more complicated as the rivalry of which he is a part involves three other people. Although this might suggest that the triangle is insufficient when plotting this erotic constellation, it still gauges the power struggle and iniquities among these four characters.⁵³ This is especially apparent when the poet recounts one of his jarring dreams in which

Hollingsworth and Zenobia, standing on either side of [his] bed, had bent across it to exchange a kiss of passion. Priscilla, beholding this—for she seemed to be peeping in at the chamber-window—had melted gradually away, and left only the sadness of her expression in my heart. There it still lingered, after [he] awoke; one of those unreasonable sadnesses that you know not how to deal with, because it involves nothing for common-sense to clutch. (142)

The kiss results in the forging of an affective bond between Hollingsworth and Zenobia in which each plays an equal role in the exchange. Despite his inaction, Coverdale plays a determinate role in his interpellation as a participant in the romantic bond through his narration.⁵⁴ This osculation, then, serves as evidence of a democratic network of desire in which men and women serve as agents.

Priscilla's dwindling presence, however, calls into question the democratic nature of this desire. The inscription of her sadness on the poet's heart crucially provides him with a means through which he can express his erotic desire—and consequent melancholia—for Hollingsworth. Along with Coverdale, Priscilla witnesses the private exchanges between the lovers. In his current of thought, though, she cannot maintain the critical distance needed to remain a voyeur, causing her to identify with them to such an extent that her own presence evanesces.⁵⁵ Her manifestation as the Veiled Lady, however, turns her into a body that matters because of her function as a metonymic route Coverdale follows to safely express his desire for Hollingsworth.⁵⁶ Coverdale's awareness of this homosocial stratagem is initially vague, evinced by his realization that she "always seemed like a figure in a dream" (155). Her symbolic resonance comes into focus when, upon his return to the counterpublic, she glides over to him "as if attracted

by a feeble degree of magnetism" (155). This aside signals Coverdale's awareness of his own anodyne mesmeric abilities—the same abilities exhibited by the blacksmith that resulted in their estrangement. Whereas serving as a medium for Hollingsworth's cause engenders Coverdale's angst over submission, for Priscilla it is preternatural, essentializing her role as a viable conduit between men.

The quandary for Coverdale is that he loses access to Priscilla once he renounces the counterpublic. A threat Hawthorne implies in this consequence is the return of the torment and impotency that provoke this dream. Left with no other choice, he seeks out Moodie, the only person he knows connected to Priscilla, "for the purpose of ascertaining whether the knot of affairs was as inextricable, on that side, as [he] found it on all others" (160). The brief journey that ensues challenges his assumptions about the very meaning of fraternity. Coverdale knows where to find Moodie since he is "well acquainted with the old man's haunts" (160). Of course, this is reminiscent of his earlier excursus on the "the long-established haunts of men" (138) accessible through the "realities ke[pt] in the rear." In this vein, Moodie's haunt—a tavern replete with wasted men—proves to be the rear window peering into the old man's languorous soul. Coverdale's initial reaction to the tavern, while not entirely positive, is not exactly critical, either. "It was a reputable place enough," he notes, "affording good entertainment in the way of meat, drink, and fumigation" (160). As he soaks up the drunken escapades, he explains that the "boozy kind of pleasure" (160) he experiences gives way to a sobering reality. While scanning the tavern, he identifies an "oil-painting of a beef-steak," "the lifelike representation of a noble sirloin," and other vulgar realist portraits of food. At first, he admires the verisimilitude of the portraits, remarking that "[a]ll of these things were so perfectly

imitated, that you seemed to have the genuine article before you” (162). But admiration quickly gives way to despair when he stumbles across a portrait of “a ragged, bloated New England toper, stretched out on a bench, in the heavy apoplectic sleep of drunkenness. The death-in-life was too well portrayed. You smelt the fummy liquor that had brought on this syncope” (162). Whereas the portraits of food “took away the grossness from what was fleshiest and fattest, and thus helped the life of man” (162), this portrait packs them back on and brings the masculine sublimation depicted in the portrait to life before his very eyes.⁵⁷ The “spectacle” (162) of the tavern recalls Coverdale’s decadent bachelor quarters, a point Hawthorne stresses by including demi-johns in both places (10, 161). The significance of this similarity does not escape the poet’s notice, forcing him to understand his insulation at the opening of the novel as not localized, but systemic.

As if this were not enough, Hawthorne includes another scene in which the degenerate state of brotherhood forces Coverdale to doubt the viability of regenerating manhood. For, as the poet discovers, fraternity has become both enfeebled by dependency and co-opted by mesmerists and other confidence men who exploit its benevolent rhetoric for self-aggrandizing purposes. Immediately following the dispiriting spectacle at Moodie’s tavern, Coverdale floats about feeling like “an exorcised spirit that had been driven from its old haunts” (179). This feeling of immateriality, however, gives way to catharsis when he attends a command performance of Priscilla as the Veiled Lady. Although he is drawn in by her dramatic performance, he is more stirred by Westervelt’s prefatory expatiation on “a new era that was dawning upon the world; an era that would link soul to soul, and the present life to what we call futurity, with a closeness that should

finally convert both worlds into one great, mutually conscious brotherhood” (185). This appeal to a transcendent fraternity, naturally, re-incites Coverdale’s lingering torment over brotherhood. Hollingsworth’s presence in the audience, however, dredges up memories of his appropriation of the rhetoric of fraternity, causing the poet to see through Westervelt’s “delusive show of spirituality” and declare his vision as “imbued throughout with a cold and dead materialism” (185). With his fantasy of a brotherhood based on equality in ruins, the poet is left to wonder if “[e]ither there was no such place as Blithedale, nor ever had been, nor any brotherhood of thoughtful laborers” (190).

The revelation that intimacy and vulnerability render brotherhood highly susceptible to being commandeered by autocrats, however, is not the reason Coverdale provides his readers for leaving the counterpublic. His excuse that he “was in love—with—Priscilla” comes from out of left field. Despite its dubiousness, this confession actually sheds light on the complex circuitry of desire Hawthorne appears so keen to set off. I want to close this chapter by mulling over the implications of this pseudo-confession, beginning with the poet’s final interaction with Zenobia that instigates it. As I demonstrate, his realization that Zenobia also wriggles under the despotic thumb of the blacksmith re-ignites anxieties over his submission and feminization, thereby rendering her an ineffectual pathway. Almost systematically he reroutes his desire for Hollingsworth through Priscilla through the act of declaring his love for her. By concluding his novel on such a note, Hawthorne pronounces outright sameness among men incompatible with fraternity as it blurs the lines between individuals, leading to the dissolution of order. As he proposes, only within the gestalt of heterosexuality can men experience an intimate brotherhood that venerates democratic individualism.

Hawthorne drops a few subtle clues establishing the bond of subjection that Coverdale and Zenobia share. But while readers have the benefit of the printed text to attest to these hints, the poet is left to grope through the darkness. His intent to "exorcise [Zenobia] out of the part which she seemed to be acting" (153), for instance, precedes his feeling like "an exorcised spirit that had been driven from its old haunts" (179) when he gives up Blithedale once and for all. Later, when Coverdale encounters Zenobia in the city, he senses "Hollingsworth's native power" which leads him "to discover that [the blacksmith's] influence was no less potent with his beautiful woman, her, in the midst of artificial life, than it had been, at the foot of the gray rock" (154). Of course, the irony is that Hollingsworth's preternatural influence over Coverdale has been a constant throughout the novel. But the poet cannot connect the dots because doing so would mean that on some level he has consciously embraced passivity. It is not until Westervelt's lecture, though, that the poet finally begins to perceive the yoke he shares with Zenobia. As the Veiled Lady stands entranced before the audience, Westervelt explains that mesmerism is "this miraculous power of one human being over the will and passions of another; insomuch that settled grief was but a shadow, beneath the influence of a man possessing this potency" (183). Such a characterization of the mesmerist's powers is painfully familiar to Coverdale who, along with Zenobia, spends most of the novel subjected to Hollingsworth's "iron sway" (112).

With the evidence mounting, Coverdale finally admits what readers have suspected all along: that both he and Zenobia were in love with the same man who "could hardly give his affections to a person capable of taking an independent stand, but only to

one whom he might absorb into himself" (154). His admission of this intersection, which occurs in the intimately titled chapter "Zenobia and Coverdale," is warily cagey:

It suits me not to explain what was the analogy that I saw, or imagined, between Zenobia's situation and mine; nor, I believe, will the reader detect this one secret, hidden beneath many a revelation which perhaps concerned me less. . . . [I]t seemed to me that the same self-same pang, which hardly mitigated torment, leaped thrilling from her heart-strings to my own. (205)

"It suits me not to explain?" "It seemed?" This passage is salient in that Coverdale alludes to, but never fully confesses, that the romantic thralldom that zinged Zenobia's "heart-strings"—an act that does, in fact, mitigate torment—did so to his, too. His refusal to clearly "explain" the analogy contrasts with his earlier candid admission that he was "intimately connected . . . with perhaps the only man in whom she was ever truly interested" (210). That he so forthrightly admits to this delicate bond suggests that it was not the sole cause of his eschewal of the utopian community. Instead, his caginess in acknowledging that he felt the "self-same pang" as Zenobia implies that inhabiting a submissive position sparks his concern.

Although Zenobia initially aggravates Coverdale's prolonged apprehension over feminization, she eventually mollifies him by reminding him of his access—and her lack thereof—to a degree of mobility.⁵⁸ As she stresses, whereas he can at least physically distance himself from Hollingsworth's tyranny, she has no option other than to submit to it, as well as the "secret tribunals [that] . . . judge and condemn" (198) her for contesting male authority. In line with the poet's earlier screed against preserving the divisive fiction

of sexual difference, she purports that, as long as femininity continues to connote servility and weakness, women will remain subordinate to men:

There are no new truths, much as we have prided ourselves on finding some. . . .
[I]n the battlefield of life, the downright stroke, that would fall only on a man's steel head-piece, is sure to light on a woman's heart, over which she wears no breastplate, and whose wisdom it is, therefore, to keep out of the conflict. . . .
[T]he whole universe, her own sex and yours, make common cause against the woman who swerves one hair's breadth out of the beaten track. (206)

Zenobia's analysis of the dynamic intersection of gender and power reminds Coverdale that his masculinity, while subverted by Hollingsworth, persists nonetheless and ensures him access to male privilege. Moreover, it serves as yet more evidence for the poet for the necessity of sexual difference. Convinced that he and Zenobia are not exchangeable elements of Hollingsworth's "one mode of life" (153), the poet sheds this unmanly melancholia and departs, leaving her to "a woman's doom" (206).⁵⁹

Coverdale's confession might serve as an alibi for his heterosexuality, but it plays an even more important role in his larger teleology to regenerate manhood. Given his instinct that Zenobia cannot serve as a viable conduit to Hollingsworth, his declaration of unrequited love for Priscilla shouldn't come as much of a surprise. That he egregiously baits readers by promising to divulge a "secret"—one that he later admits is already apparent to readers—serves as further evidence that the only thing reliable about his narration is his unreliability:

There is one secret—I have concealed it all along, and never meant to let the least whisper of it escape—one foolish little secret, which possibly may have had

something to do with these inactive years of meridian manhood, with my bachelorship, with the unsatisfied retrospect that I fling back on life, and my listless glance towards the future. Shall I reveal it? (227)

Taking the poet at his word demands that readers discount the penetrating crisis over masculinity that has dogged him throughout the novel. It also presumes that his principal allegiance to and cultural activism on behalf of his fellow men and brethren is secondary to his love for a woman. As I would argue, though, Hawthorne, never one to provide such a pat, conventional ending, plasticizes this confession in order to demonstrate that men such as his narrator have a vested interest in cloaking the circuitry of homosocial desire. Placing this infamous confession at the novel's end garners even more suspicion, making it difficult to ignore the man behind the curtain or, in this case, the page.⁶⁰

Coverdale's desperation to shore up this—any—heterosexual love triangle lays bare his intent to divert an investigation of Priscilla's function in the homosocial. By trotting out the triangulated logic of heterosexual desire, Coverdale deflects attention from his desire for Hollingsworth and, more largely, the nexus of homoeroticism and homosociality.

Priscilla's dramatic transformation at the end of the novel into Hollingsworth's watchful guardian, though, suggests another interpretive possibility for Coverdale's confession, one that is even more in line with his two-hundred-page struggle to regenerate manhood. Returning to the counterpublic for Zenobia's funeral, he finds the "ghost-child" (172) Priscilla "retaining her equilibrium amid shocks that might have overthrown many a sturdier frame" (222-3). She serves as a ballast for Hollingsworth, whose unmanned state does not escape the poet:

I observed in Hollingsworth's face a depressed and melancholy look that seemed habitual; the powerfully built man showed a self-distrustful weakness, and a childlike, or childish, tendency to press close, and closer still, to the side of the slender woman whose arm was within his. (223)

Coverdale's framing expresses Hollingsworth's condition as a kind of divine "retribution" (223) for Zenobia's suicide. Even more crucial to understanding the significance of this gender inversion is that Priscilla has come to embody the very traits the poet has sought out since the opening of the novel. His desiring of her masks his envy of her intimacy with the ailing philanthropist and the access to the masculine agency this proximity affords her, the latter of which eluded him throughout his "meridian manhood" (227).⁶¹

While these thoughts bring to light the variant roles women play in Coverdale's model of homosociality, they all beg the question: if he is in love with Priscilla, why does he not actively pursue her? A possible reason rests in the poet's seemingly offhand reference to her "slender arm within" Hollingsworth's. Of course, the depiction conveys that the once powerful blacksmith relies on a manly woman to shore him up. More obliquely, though, this observation that Priscilla's arm was within the blacksmith's dredges up Coverdale's earlier anxieties over "the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth" (38-9). As I have discussed, empowered women flummox the poet and his investment in male sovereignty and autonomy. The steeled Priscilla cloaks her power in "a deep, submissive unquestioning reverence, and also a veiled happiness in her fair and quiet countenance" (223). "[V]eiled" behind "submissive unquestioning reverence" to male authority, Priscilla's newfound power reenacts Coverdale's lingering panic about feminine duplicity and emasculation. The "upbraiding

glance" (223) she gives him as he attempts to talk to the child-like Hollingsworth also marks her transformation from an object of possession into a disciplinary subject. Positing that Coverdale's decision to eschew Blithedale is determined solely by this erotic fails to reckon with these anxieties over the morphology of gender. By keeping guard over Hollingsworth in their "small cottage" (223), the once "shadow-like girl" becomes the "very small one [who] answers all [of his] purposes" (223).⁶² Notwithstanding the unmediated access Priscilla has to the blacksmith, Coverdale realizes that loving her "too" promises the same unmaning fate.

¹ Jonathan Auerbach posits, "By making Coverdale the sole medium through which Blithedale is represented, Hawthorne gives us little to choose between the minor poet's delusions and his insights" (104). See also Levine, Mitchell, and McElroy and McDonald, among others.

² In Much Ado About Nothing, Beatrice pronounces:

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly Count Comfect; a sweet gallant, surely! O! that I were a man for his sake, or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving. (Act IV, Scene 1, line 302)

As I mention at the close of this chapter, this line mirrors Zenobia's critique of the double standard to which women are subjected in patriarchal culture.

³ For more on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on American culture, see Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden, Siegfried Giedion's Mechanization Takes Command, Henry Nash's Virgin Land, and Thomas P. Hughes's American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970. Perhaps Nash sums it up best when he explains that the "static ideas of virtue and happiness and peace drawn from the bosom of the virgin wilderness . . . proved quite irrelevant for a society committed to the ideas of civilization and progress, and to an industrial revolution"(119).

⁴ Gillian Brown also observes that Coverdale "indulges all his tastes and enjoys the privacy that others cannot penetrate" (111). A salient analogue to Coverdale is the patrician "huckstress" Hepzibah in The House of the Seven Gables. Whereas he can withdraw from society because of his access to commodities, she must open her ancestral mansion to the public to sell items. These two characterizations record Hawthorne's engagement with America's shift from an aristocratic economy to commodity culture.

⁵ In two editorials that appeared in consecutive issues of Harper's Weekly, the editors express concern over the conditions of the scene of writing. "Literary men are essentially sedentary in their habits," the editors warn in "Effect of Literary Occupation upon the Duration of Life" (January 17, 1857). Earlier in a January 10 editorial entitled "How Shall We Keep Warm," a concern is expressed that "[s]edentary people, who neither breathe, eat, nor exercise as they should, will necessarily be in an unwholesome condition, and have unwholesome sensations." Donald Grant Mitchell's Reveries of a Bachelor (1850), written under the pseudonym Ik Marvel, serves as an aperture into the part-maudlin, part-joyous world of the bachelor. Michael Warner has traced a similar understanding of bachelorhood in the writings and correspondence of one of Hawthorne's literary colleagues, Washington Irving. Irving, as Warner explains, adopted a "moral ambivalence" ("Irving's Posterity" 773) toward bachelorhood in his own life in that he valued the latitude he had as a bachelor while mournful of his exclusion from reproductive sexuality. Irving's correspondence and The Sketch-book (1819-20) record his attempt to re-conceive of writing so that literary production becomes somewhat akin to sexual reproduction. At the crux of Irving's anxiety, Warner insists, is the fact that bachelorhood in the age of modernity threatens the very model of patriarchal descent:

Empty modernity creates a moral dilemma of self-transcendence for the individual. "It throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him

entirely within the solitude of his own heart.” It guarantees that this moral dilemma will be felt as a problem of time: a broken relation to ancestors and descendants, the reproductive metonyms for the past and posterity. (“Irving’s Posterity” 781)

Invoking Tocqueville’s observation about the isolation caused by outright individualism, Warner suggests a link between modernity and the emergence of the liminal category of bachelorhood. This discussion of Irving illuminates my analysis of Coverdale, especially the acknowledgment of the psychosexual turmoil engendered by bachelorhood. The purported aversion from reproductive heterosexual also fueled the anti-onanist/male purity movement of the nineteenth century. In “Fireside Chastity: The Erotics of Sentimental Bachelorhood in the 1850s,” Vincent Bertolini discusses that mid-nineteenth-century culture grew to envisage bachelors as threats to male sexual purity. Whereas married men were seen as pillars of faith and moral turpitude, bachelors became linked to a variety of sexual maladies that highlighted their existence outside the codified bonds of marriage. As Bertolini notes, one of the most common pathologies linked to bachelors was spermatorrhea, or the involuntary loss of semen, which revealed “two of the period’s primary sociosexual anxieties: excessive male sexuality and decreased procreativity” (23). Bertolini’s ruminations intimate that Coverdale characterizes male poets who sentimentally pine away in their closed quarters as they figuratively masturbate onto the page. For a provocative point of contrast in which confinement is seen in positive terms, see Karen Sanchez-Eppler’s Touching Liberty in which she argues that Emily Dickinson “inverts the mechanisms of discipline and claims confinement as a mode of liberation” (111). That Dickinson felt liberated by confinement within her home suggests the long-held axiom that understood the domestic sphere as a place in which women carved out power.

⁶ Later, Coverdale notes that bad weather functions as “a symbol of the cold, desolate, distrustful phantoms that invariably haunt the mind, on the eve of adventurous enterprises, to warn us back within the boundaries of ordinary life” (18).

⁷ Given the extent of influence of the domestic sphere, it isn’t surprising that the figure of the enfeebled, almost cuckolded man appears in mid-nineteenth-century American literature. For instance, in “Eighteen Sixty-One” Walt Whitman buoys his case for the heroic American poet by mocking a “pale poetling seated at a desk lisping cadenzas piano” (3). For more on this poem from Drum Taps, particularly how it records misogyny in Whitman’s works, see Jay Grossman’s and my Brothers in Arms.

⁸ As Brown notes, in line with real-life nineteenth-century utopian projects, Blithedale is “[s]ituated on the fringe of society, in the woods, in vanishing rural America” (Brown 105).

⁹ Although some might dismiss the term “counterpublic” as jargon or theory speak, I find it especially useful in discussing Blithedale. Nancy Fraser has explained that “[o]n one hand, [counterpublics] function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics” (124). Evan Carton notes that Coverdale’s frequent use of the word “system” is not coincidental and establishes his dislike for any codified practice that overpowers or trumps his agency and individuality. For more on this, see Carton’s discussion of Coverdale’s conflicted relationship to varying types of social and ideological systems (The Rhetoric of American Romance 233-4). See also Brown’s Domestic Individualism in which she considers that the fear of subjection to a system of desire precipitates Coverdale’s return to bachelorhood.

¹⁰ Baym explains that the members "re-create the oppression they left behind, because they are not free" (The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 186).

¹¹ Some critics have speculated that Hawthorne's characterization of her as self-serving records his disdain for women's reform, particularly as it manifested in sentimental fiction. There is a consensus among critics that Zenobia is a not-so-veiled representation of the noted feminist Sarah Margaret Fuller. Although the parallels between the two are salient, the most persuasive evidence comes from Hawthorne himself (through his mouthpiece Coverdale):

This (as the reader, if at all acquainted with our literary biography, need scarcely be told) was not her real name. She had assumed it, in the first instance, as her magazine signature; and as it accorded well with something imperial which her friends attributed to this lady's figure and deportment, they, half-laughingly, adopted it in their familiar intercourse with her. (13)

¹² Brown explains that domestic work "evokes man's alienation from nature and fall from Edenic balance . . . [and] epitomizes degenerate labor and the economy of scarcity and struggle utopian socialism was to replace" (99). In "Hawthorne's Anti-Romance: Blithedale and Sentimental Culture," Ken Egan, Jr., observes that "[t]he text does not advocate a complete break with its culture's gender-coded spheres of activity" (49). As I argue, the text does not "advocate a complete break"; rather, Hawthorne suggests that such a break is illusory.

¹³ Brook Farm was actually located in Happy Valley, a local moniker for Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts.

¹⁴ Earlier in the chapter, Zenobia refers to herself as "the first-comer" (15), marking her as the commune's unofficial Eve. Hawthorne redoubles Coverdale's view of femininity as an aegis of cultural ruination when he notes that "there was a glow in her cheeks that made me think of Pandora, fresh from Vulcan's workshop" (23).

¹⁵ Oneida, a utopian community in upstate New York founded in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes, organized its counterpublic around the renunciation of monogamy and the installation of a communal form of desire.

¹⁶ James Mellow makes a similar point:

On the surface, it would appear, the author was discussing purely heterosexual attachments, but the vagueness of the terminology — 'it seemed to authorize any individual, of either sex, to fall in love with any other, regardless . . . ' — offers a discreet hint that 'the tender passion' might encompass less conventional forms as well. The passage represents one of the few moments . . . when Hawthorne, in guarded fashion, hints at possibly homosexual attachments. (397)

While I appreciate his recognition of "possibly homosexual attachments" in the novel, the characterization of homosexuality as "less conventional" forecloses upon the possibility that it can function alongside "conventional" systems such as heteronormativity. Some critics have read Coverdale's renunciation of sexual difference as undermining conventional conceptions of gender and sexuality. For instance, in "'The Tender Passion Was Very Rife Among Us': Coverdale's Queer Utopia and The Blithedale Romance" Benjamin Scott Grossberg asserts that "Blithedale is a place of queer desire and queer gender, a place where the discrete categories of man, woman,

heterosexual and homosexual are set up to be undermined" (7). It is important to remember that Blithedale takes place in a peculiar moment in American history when communities such as the one in Oneida, New York, renounced and separated themselves from mainstream culture. Asserting that in Blithedale gender and sexuality are understood as polymorphous or even queer, however, is problematic because men such as Coverdale and Hollingsworth aim to obliterate femininity in order to preserve manhood. For an engaging, more modern analogue, see Bidy Martin's "Sexualities without Genders and Other Queer Utopias," especially her critique of some queer theorists' simplification of gender.

¹⁷ Berlant alludes to the intersection of homoeroticism and homosociality in The Scarlet Letter when she indicates that

the narrator's dream of a utopian world of men invests the male gender (but not the male body) with another, purer kind of power. The madness of the law is due to its libidinousness: but in a world without women, men will not need to 'regulate' alien subjects. . . . In utopia, love will reign, transfiguring men into their ideal, disembodied, 'spiritual relations.'" (The Anatomy of National Fantasy 120)

A drive for a homosocial and proto-homosexual utopia links both novels, suggesting the sway sameness had on men during Hawthorne's time.

¹⁸ See Porte who, quoting Phillip Rahv, notes that "[r]endered anxious . . . by her power to stir thoughts and feelings that he seems always to have avoided, Coverdale continually makes 'a positive effort to bear up against the effect which Zenobia sought to impose'" (136).

¹⁹ Priscilla pronounces that she is happy with her Blithedale family members, exclaiming, "I will live and die with these!" (71). For more on the Cult of True Womanhood, see Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct in which she explains that "the new bourgeois men of the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s formulated [this cult], which prescribed a female role bounded by kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety and purity, and crowned with subservience" (13). As Zenobia says, "She is the type of womanhood, such as man has spent centuries in making it" (113). See Bell's discussion of Priscilla in The Development of American Romance in which he asserts that "she is a literalization of a fictional stereotype, the sexless, 'girlish' woman" (188-9). Also see Porte's discussion of the opposition between Zenobia and Priscilla in The Romance in America, as well as T. Walter Herbert's Dearest Beloved in which he avers that Zenobia's "feminist argument goes down to self-defeat in keeping with . . . the ideal of 'true womanhood' that became dominant in the 1830s and 1840s" (12).

²⁰ Baym makes a similar point when he indicates that Priscilla functions as "the perpetual reminder of ideals that the community has presumably tried to reject" (The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 198).

²¹ I am thinking here of Coverdale's own phantasmatic displacement onto Priscilla in "Hollingsworth, Zenobia, Priscilla" when he compares her smile to "a baby's first one" (68). More tellingly, he also states that "Priscilla's life, as I beheld it, was full of trifles that affected me in just this way" (69). For an interesting parallel with The Scarlet Letter, see Scott Derrick's 'A Curious Subject of Observation and Inquiry': Homoeroticism, the Body, and Authorship in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter" in which he argues that Dimmesdale's writing of his Election Day Sermon is fueled by "feminine inspiration, supplied by Prynne in the forest, [which] yields the masculinizing text with which the novel closes" (319).

²² See Baym's The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 197, Mellow 395, Herbert 21, and Levine 147.

²³ Priscilla tells Coverdale that the hand-sewn night-cap "is for use, not beauty" (47). Her endowing men with these symbols of potency serves as a provocative parallel to Walt Whitman's "Broad-Axe Poem" in which he traces women's responsibility for shaping the phallus and, thus, men. For more on this, see Moon's discussion in Disseminating Whitman.

²⁴ Interestingly enough, in a photographic essay in Harper's, Camille Paglia describes the purses designed by the "[t]hong-snapping White House Jezebel" Monica Lewinsky as "metaphor[s] for woman's body as plush pockets, man's demiparadise" (133). The press's representation of Lewinsky during the impeachment scandal as desperate rich girl seduced by hierarchy and power is yet another uncanny parallel she shares with Priscilla.

²⁵ "A Knot of Dreamers" is the title of chapter 3.

²⁶ Another symptom of this "Sibyl line stamp" is Coverdale's inability to gauge completely the kind of sisterhood between Zenobia and Priscilla. As readers later discover, the two are in fact half-sisters. For Coverdale, though, the relationship remains frustratingly opaque. A subtle degree of eroticism manifests in many of his observations about Priscilla and Zenobia:

She went towards Priscilla, took her hand, and passed her own rosy finger-tips, with a pretty, caressing movement, over the girl's hair. The touch had a magical effect. So vivid a look of joy flushed up beneath those fingers, that it seemed as if the sad and wan Priscilla had been snatched away, and another kind of creature substituted in her place. This one caress bestowed voluntarily by Zenobia, was evidently received as a pledge of all that the stranger sought from her, whatever the unuttered boon might be. (32)

This reading of this exchange evokes his earlier discussion about the opacity of women. To some extent, this observation evokes a kind of straight male fantasy of lesbian sex. Yet his tone is refreshingly delicate and sensitive when describing the erotic charge which, as he mentions, seems to bind the two intimately. Importantly, this observation follows Zenobia's explanation that "[t]here is no pleasure in tormenting a person of one's own sex, even if she do favor one with a little more love than one can conveniently dispose of."

²⁷ Porte asserts that "in doubly 'destroying' Priscilla by means of her legend, Zenobia demonstrates her superiority as both an artist and a woman, the interdependent attributes associated with her archetypal role" (135). C.J. Wershoven in "Doubles and Devils at Blithedale" also notes that Zenobia's "feminism is readily relinquished, for [it] is merely a costume, one of Blithedale's many disguises" (47). Finally, Baym, proclaiming that Zenobia reproduces the sexist ideology which forecloses the possibility of her liberation within the Blithedale community, posits that "[w]hen she throws the veil over Priscilla she plays the role of jailor herself" (The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 198).

²⁸ As Berlant discusses, Eliot's pulpit serves as "the place of sexual, juridical, and theological confrontation" ("Fantasies of Utopias" 45). As the site where heated discussions about sexual difference occur, Eliot's pulpit for Coverdale is the bedrock on which the Blithedale community stands. A point that Berlant does not consider in her argument stems from Coverdale's description of the land on which the pulpit emerges:

But the soil, being of the rudest and most broken surface, had apparently never been brought under tillage; other growths, maple, and beech, and birch, had succeeded to the primeval trees; so that it was still as wild a tract of woodland as the great-great-great-great grandson of one of Eliot's Indians (had any such posterity been in existence) could have desired, for the site and shelter of his wigwam. These after-growths, indeed lose the stately solemnity of the original forest. (110)

Like the haunting scene of primal American violence in The House of the Seven Gables in which the Pyncheon patriarch divests the "native" or indigenous Maule of his property, Hawthorne seems intent to point to yet another example of how the genesis of the nation is based upon white appropriation of native land. While the forest that surrounds Eliot's pulpit is just as verdant and unhewn as it was when Eliot began to proselytize the Algonquins, Coverdale's assertion that "the stately solemnity of the original forest" was missing imparts a sense of paradise lost, especially in terms of the native land stripped from the Indians because of their barbarism. This reference to the loss of the "original forest" also re-invokes the recurring image of the postlapsarian, creating a parallel familiar to those in nineteenth-century America between the once-innocent status of the "originary" couple and the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

²⁹ This confrontation at Eliot's pulpit, of course, is a continuation of the earlier one in which Zenobia, according to Coverdale, eventually submits to Hollingsworth when she proclaims, "Let man be but manly and godlike, and woman is only too ready to become to him what you say!" (115). Coverdale indicates that "[w]omen almost invariably behave thus" and poses the question which he answers in this later exchange at the pulpit: "What does the fact mean? Is it their nature? Or is it, at last, the result of ages of compelled degradation? And, in either case, will it be possible ever to redeem them?" (115).

³⁰ In the novel's preface, Hawthorne characterizes Zenobia somewhat sympathetically, describing her as "the high-spirited Woman, bruising herself against the narrow limitations of her sex" (3).

³¹ This reading is more sympathetic to Zenobia than Baym's, who pronounces her "a bad advocate for feminism because she has no sense of sisterhood" (199). To her credit, Baym does amend her critique of Zenobia, noting that "as a social creature she] cannot imagine any function in life other than adhering to some man whose superiority will enhance her own status" (199). Seeing her "enslaved" by "the patriarchal ideal of manhood" embodied by Hollingsworth (200), Baym approaches Zenobia as a product of her own odious environment who is left with few, if any, options. Still, I cannot help but observe that Baym fails to record accurately that the Blithedale men, above all else Coverdale, constantly undermine Zenobia's sisterly feminism. When reading the re-telling of the fable of the Veiled Lady, for instance, Baym claims that Zenobia's failure to establish a sisterly bond with Priscilla reveals her "fatal man-centeredness. . . . Here is an opportunity wasted, a challenge not responded to. And here is a criticism of Zenobia, not because she is a feminist, but because she is not feminist enough" (The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 199). Baym also insists that "Coverdale is right to be appalled when she weakly acquiesces in Hollingsworth's ferocious diatribe against liberated women" (200). While her criticism of Zenobia is understandable, Baym fails to ask if sisterhood is rendered structurally incongruous with the masculinist reformation enacted by the Blithedalers.

³² Lawrence's conflation of Coverdale with "Nathaniel" is noteworthy, especially in light of the intense relationship between Hawthorne and Melville. For more on eroticism and its impact on conceptions of individuality, see Brown's abbreviated discussion of "the issues of self-definition and self-protection . . . in erotic relations" between the two men (112). Although Brown asserts

pointblank that "the imperatives of individuality make [Coverdale and Hollingsworth's] intimacy impossible" (112), she neglects to offer a thorough analysis of how same-sex desire renders male individual identity problematic. Given her focus on the consumer culture emerging within nineteenth-century America, though, the absence of this discussion is understandable.

³³ Hollingsworth's sinewy body and feral glance could serve as an allusion to Thoreau's ideal of the American philosopher. Writing against the tradition of scholars laboring in their ivory towers, Thoreau in Walden (1849) celebrates the man who theorizes while performing manual labor and, conversely, incorporates aspects of this labor into his theories. "The success of great scholars and thinkers," Thoreau claims, "is commonly a courtier-like success, not kingly, not manly. They make shift to live merely by conformity, practically as their fathers did, and are in no sense the progenitors of a nobler race of men" (Walden 9). Interestingly enough, Thoreau follows this screed against compulsory conformity by posing a question with a familiar concern: "But why do men degenerate ever?" (9). Linking degeneracy to the overcivilized philosopher who attains his daily existence by means inconsistent with the quotidian life of the common man, Thoreau reviles the effete lives of men who live in environs similar to Coverdale's bachelor rooms.

³⁴ Baym argues that Coverdale's illness is archetypal, "The outer man has been renewed, but the inner man persists the same" (The Shape of Hawthorne's Career 190).

³⁵ "Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman" (Woman in the Nineteenth Century 310). For more on Fuller's critique of these rigid distinctions of sexual difference, see Pfister's The Production of Personal Life and Mitchell's Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery.

³⁶ The same cannot be said for Zenobia, who brings Coverdale some of her "not-very-skillfully" made gruel (40) and causes the invalid to wish "that she would let [him] alone" (45). Particularly telling is the causes of his discomfort. For him, she is a "riddle" (45) and an "enchantress" (42), who conterminously channels desire and abjection. Central to this riddle is his concern that she has "given herself away" (44), leaving him feeling "defrauded" (44). When read alongside Hollingsworth's nurturing, Zenobia comes to embody the threat of a wily womanhood with "no severe culture" and a "mind . . . full of weeds" (41).

³⁷ Brown makes a similar point about Coverdale's anxiety when it comes to the perils of consumer culture. "The experiences in Coverdale's sick-chamber disclose and amplify the danger in his usual consumerist pleasure: the risk of subjection to desire" (110).

³⁸ As Ishmael before him, Coverdale realizes that he must preserve his self-integrity or risk enslavement to "an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie" (Moby-Dick 173). In the chapter "The Mast-Head," Ishmael notes the danger of losing one's sense of self:

In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like Wickliff's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over.

There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch, slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Cartesian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop

through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists!" (Moby-Dick 173)

³⁹ Members of the temperance movement in Victorian America prefigured Freud's speculation that there existed causality between narcissism and homosexuality. A number of these theories stemmed from the fallacy that chronic masturbation, largely conceived of as sex with one's self, would result in falling in love with one's self. See Warner's "Thoreau's Bottom" and "Homo-Narcissism; Or, Heterosexuality." In terms of primary texts, see Sylvester Graham's Lecture to Young Men on Chastity (1834) and Rev. John Todd's The Student's Manual (1834) and The Young Man (1845), just to name a few.

⁴⁰ Lee Edelman has argued that "the notion of sodomy has come to include in its figural orbit a challenge to the bourgeois gentleman's most valuable and hence most anxiously defended property: the interiority that both signals and constitutes his autonomous subjectivity, and thus the authority whereby he controls the meaning of his signifying acts" (Homographesis 126). Likewise, Leo Bersani notes that "nothing is more threatening to the culturally enforced boundaries between men and women than a man participating in the jouissance of real or fantasmatic female sexuality" (Homos 122).

⁴¹ The idea that submission was central to some strains of Transcendentalism might appear paradoxical, if not outright problematic. In a similar vein, suggesting that some men willingly submitted might seem apocryphal, particularly given the anxiety over autonomy endemic to this historical moment. Historians and cultural theorists, however, have approached male submission as a tacit assumption in the discursive practices of the nation, particularly the juridical. In The Emerson Effect, Newfield explains that while anxieties over individual identity plagued transcendentalist writers such as Emerson, submission was understood as constitutive of male subjectivity. Ideating a lineage between Transcendentalism and contemporary American liberalism, Newfield demonstrates that both models of political thought share a dedication to laissez-faire governance and a concurrent "devotion to 'common power'" (19). What becomes erased by this seemingly paradoxical allegiance to individual freedom and shared power is compulsory submission to the centralized government. The inalienable rights afforded to American citizens required submission to the laws of the land. Ultimately Newfield's analysis illustrates that Emerson believed the individuation provided by the laws of democracy did not engender completely autonomous subjects. Rather, as a precursor to what he calls corporate individualism, Emerson's view of self-governance constituted "a halfway democracy . . . [that] defines freedom as individual movement and personal growth, but accompanies these with the pleasurable loss of self-governance" (The Emerson Effect 13). In Emerson's own words, "nature," which includes "society," is not simply a "discipline" but discipline, itself ("Nature" 36). While Newfield's primary focus falls on Emerson's conflation of free selves with free markets, enabling late-capitalist corporations to claim rights as individual entities, his speculation that Emerson's eroticization of both inequality among and dependence upon male friends helps to illuminate Coverdale's bizarre confession that ends "A Crisis." One can easily extrapolate Newfield's acute reading of Emerson onto this scene in which Hawthorne probes the same vexed intersections between individualism, male friendship, homoeroticism, and submission.

⁴² Warner makes a similar point in his analysis of Thoreau's conflicted homoeroticism:

Thoreau may represent his desired relation to the other man in part as a "homo" relation, but he cannot imagine a sexual practice appropriate to this desire. The practices of sex among men were, we might remember, still codified in languages very different from that

of a liberal self/other antinomy. Thoreau could be expected to know the classical discourse of erotic pedagogy or the Christian discourse of sodomy, but neither of those discourses describes relations of sameness and mutuality. They both describe significantly unequal relations between essentially dissimilar men. . . . [F]or Thoreau any representation of the corporeal practices of "homo" sexuality—an erotics of sameness and difference among men—had to be imagined by displacement. ("Thoreau's Bottom" 71-2)

Of course, Gayle Rubin and Eve Sedgwick have been critical to my understanding of the homosocial, particularly its conflicted overlaps with homosexuality.

⁴³ To be sure, the theme of entanglement continues with the recurring imagery of knots within the novel, registering further the various levels of constitutive binding engendered through the processes of communal and affinitative identification. In trying to uncover queer impulses in *Blithedale*, Grossberg has averred that in the novel "the word 'knot' . . . always resonates romantically. . . . Coverdale's erotic desire also invests the characters as a group, an 'inextricable knot.' He does not just want each individually; he wants them all together" (13, 14). While I agree with Grossberg that vectors of desire within the Blithedale community are complex and problematize heteronormative conceptions of static or stable desire, I am troubled by his assertion that the "inextricable knot of polygamy" (91) that binds the four together is synonymous with the entanglement of men Coverdale encounters when he leaves Blithedale. For, in fact, Hawthorne uses these two idioms to discern between different types of connections.

⁴⁴ In her analysis of the love plot in *Blithedale*, Berlant opposes Coverdale's "urgent need to make love and to make others love" ("Fantasies of Utopia" 51) with Hollingsworth's valorizations of "passions that are not of the body" (*Blithedale* 50). While I agree that such a distinction helps us to see the different investments each man has in the Blithedale project, it does neglect the moments in which these men intentionally ape each other's language of love. For example, Hollingsworth's nursing of Coverdale reveals the philanthropist's willingness to use physicality to convert his patient. In the same vein, Coverdale's earlier romp into futurity in which he sees himself as a muse for future poets signals his willingness to dabble in the Platonic.

⁴⁵ Brown records a similar observation when she notes that Coverdale's

erotic objects become, in mediumistic fashion, transparencies for yet other objects or concepts. It might be said that Coverdale loves the objects he views for the various paths of reference they map. Following Coverdale's optical series of displacing images, we can begin to see how the voyeur evades (as he courts) the danger of his own subjection through the referentiality of his objects." (120)

⁴⁶ Coverdale links femininity and performativity earlier in the novel when characterizing Zenobia. "It was wronging the rest of mankind," he claims, "to retain her as the spectacle of a few. The stage would have been her proper sphere" (41).

⁴⁷ Carton notes, "By his own admission, Coverdale's mental penetrations into the lives of others constitute his way of 'making my prey of people's individualities, as my custom was'" (240).

⁴⁸ Auerbach approaches this scene similarly, asserting that "Coverdale first narrows his vision to focus on discrete objects and then unites these isolated objects to form a configuration—a plot—which makes provisional sense of the world" (100-1).

⁴⁹ Warner has greatly informed my reading of the heterosexual family in Blithedale. In "Thoreau's Bottom," Warner asserts that

Heterosexual romance . . . interprets gender difference as a sign of the irreducible phenomenological difference between persons. Women and men at present can be counted on to have different histories, different relations to power, different rights of access to their own bodies, even different rights of access to thinking of themselves as selves or objects. In the legitimating structure of heterosexuality these systematic inequalities and relations of power are interpreted as mere difference, reassuring individuals that in desiring the other they are not desiring themselves. (65)

As I have been discussing, homosexuality, especially Hawthorne's representation of it as narcissistic, suggests that a person in desiring the other in fact desires themselves. The result is the undercutting of individuation and the destabilization of power.

⁵⁰ Characterizing this comment as "Coverdale's one unambiguously passionate affirmation in the novel" (159), Levine positions it as a response to the sentimental fiction of republican motherhood, particularly "the imaging of the enclosed family as a restorative and stabilizing haven in a heartless world calls attention to outside instabilities, confusions, and plottings" (159).

⁵¹ Teresa Goddu reflects on Hawthorne's interest in The House of the Seven Gables in what is now broadly called the homosocial. She argues that the marriage between Phoebe and Holgrave "creates an alliance of limited exchange" (124) between men, evoking the kind of circulation that feminist anthropologists such as Gayle Rubin have written about at some length.

⁵² In addition to the chapters entitled "Hollingsworth, Zenobia, Priscilla" (IX) and "The Three Together" (XXV), Coverdale often lumps together the three characters further suggesting they function as a discrete unit within his imagination. For instance, when Coverdale affirms his allegiance to the Blithedale endeavor, he notes that Hollingsworth "and Zenobia and Priscilla, both for their own sakes as connected with him—were separated from the rest of the Community, to my imagination, and stood forth as the indices of a problem which it was my business to solve" (65). Later in his narrative, Coverdale mentions the three together and explains that they "had absorbed my life into themselves" (178). For other examples of this syntactic consolidation, see also 109, 128, 143, 188 and 189.

⁵³ Sedgwick explains that the figure of triangle functions "as a sensitive register precisely for delineating relationship of power and meaning, and for making graphically intelligible the play of desire and identification by which individuals negotiate with their societies for empowerment" (Between Men 27).

⁵⁴ Levine notes that the "double role as spectator and narrator of melodramatic romance, the role he would have relinquished had he converted to Hollingsworth's cause" (144).

⁵⁵ From a psychoanalytic perspective, Priscilla's melting within Coverdale's dream is salient. Freudian accounts of scopophilia treated women as unable to sustain a separation or critical distance from the objects within their gazes because of their inherent lack. As a result, women over-identify with the image, conflating it with their malleable senses of self. Men, due to their ownership of the phallus, conceptualize their individual identities in more complex ways that ultimately bestow a sense of plenitude onto them. Women, then, as the film theorist Mary Ann Doane has emphasized, are "more closely associated with the surface of the image than its

illusory depths, its constructed three-dimensional space which the man is destined to inhabit and hence control" (44). See also Laura Mulvey.

⁵⁶ Brown's deft analysis of the Veiled Lady has informed my reading. As she posits,

In contrast to the unmistakable sexuality Zenobia embodies, the Veiled Lady's identity appears allusive and indistinct. She tantalizes Coverdale by constantly mystifying or deferring her meaning. For voyeurs like Coverdale, the medium is the message precisely because of her metonymic and metaphoric possibilities. Coverdale finds a perfect voyeuristic object in the Veiled Lady: a sight that never solidifies into certainty. (122)

⁵⁷ Levine approaches Moodie and his brethren similarly, explaining that they "sustain themselves through alcoholic inebriation, idle fantasy, and decadent entertainments" (Levine 141).

⁵⁸ Hawthorne's conferring of cultural insight to Zenobia is difficult to discount, as evinced by the commentary she sets forth in this chapter. Frustrated over the double standard that permits Coverdale to change his mind and return to society while keeping her tied to the failing Blithedale, she rebukes him by saying, "Had you been here a little sooner, you might have seen [your emotions] dragged into the daylight. I could even wish to have my trial over again, with you standing by, to see fair-play!" (197).

⁵⁹ Coverdale's ignorance concerning this privilege vis-à-vis her able grasp on the dynamics of society and culture has inspired feminist critics such as Baym to detect in Blithedale Hawthorne's acute understanding of gender biases in mid-nineteenth-century America. Moreover, Zenobia's analysis of power—one that is at odds Coverdale's earlier insistence that free-minded women undermined the ethos of the utopian community—signals Hawthorne's comprehension of the cultural machinery that reacts to women's challenges to male authority. For a man who once assailed the "damned mob of scribbling women" for infiltrating the homosocial palace of literary art, this acknowledgment is noteworthy.

⁶⁰ Critics have split when it comes to making sense of this confession, with some taking Hawthorne's bait and others deriding it. Mitchell, for example, avers that Coverdale's choice of Priscilla "confirms, for the record, his final allegiance to the 'true woman' who has triumphed over Zenobia. . . . If Hawthorne intends to reveal anything by Coverdale's confession, it is that the unmasked narrator, for all his seeming differences, is essentially the same man as Hollingsworth" (202). McElroy and McDonald, on the other hand, are dismissive of Coverdale's confession, but for the wrong reason. Within their dubious argument, his admission helps to establish their grassy knoll that proves Coverdale's complicity in Zenobia's "murder." Highly critical of this particular reading, Auerbach instead labels Coverdale's admission "infuriating" in that it conveniently re-authorizes his narration (107). Likewise, Levine deems "Coverdale's pitiful concluding lines" a "desperate effort to obtain confessional relief by lifting the veil of his melodramatic account to reveal its underlying truth" (156). Coverdale's confession, in short, raises more questions than it does answers.

⁶¹ Levine also indicates that Coverdale's disclosure "should perhaps be taken as a confession of his love not for Priscilla but for her situation. Priscilla takes refuge with the masterful Hollingsworth in a country cottage; in fact, in a fine reversal, the 'protective and watchful' Priscilla offers the self-professed murderer a vigilant guardianship" (156). One could argue that describing Priscilla as "protective and watchful" places her firmly within the maternal. However, this reading conflicts with Coverdale's earlier disgust for feminine manipulation of sentiment and

emotion (e.g., the earlier scene in which Hollingsworth reaches for his heart, imitating the cultural activism of republican motherhood). Also, envying motherhood contradicts his resolute dedication to the regeneration of manhood and fraternity.

⁶² Although a bit melodramatic, I find myself moved by Mitchell's closing comments about Hollingsworth's modulated relationship with Priscilla: "[P]ressing 'close, and closer still' to his Priscilla, he will be close enough to be absorbed by her, close enough then, finally, to have no spirit to haunt, no 'side where Priscilla was not'" (219).

Chapter Three

“A Promise to California”: California, Male Same-Sex Eroticism, and the Logic of Sameness in Walt Whitman's Blue Book

“Americans’ quest for union via sodomy, buggery, and the crime against nature—or the allegation of such a quest—followed the westward movement of the frontier, roughly mirroring the nation’s expansion from sea to shining sea.”
—Jonathan Ned Katz, Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality (62).

“Is not the America West side of the Mississippi destined to preponderate over the East side?”
—Walt Whitman, Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts (1943).

Readers have long venerated Walt Whitman for his celebratory depictions of male homosexuality. Throughout Leaves of Grass, this desire blossoms in nature, countermanding the prevailing belief in mid-nineteenth-century America of its aberrance. More recently, questions have cropped up as to why Whitman challenges society’s abjuration of homosexuality while leaving unchecked or, in some cases, promoting its dominant beliefs about women and blacks.¹ In their defense, many critics have recognized these problems while gingerly chastising readers for holding the nineteenth-century poet to twenty-first century standards.² Although these gentle rebukes challenge readers to have realistic expectations of Whitman, in making them critics have not

accurately explained the extent to which these prejudices inform his representational practices and, more largely, what some have called his imagined “homosexual republic.”³

This chapter is guided by two interrelated claims. The first and overarching one posits that Whitman’s representations of homosexuality in Leaves are indicative of a sustained political program to reconstitute white American men by appealing to racial and sexual homogeneity. The second and more specific claim argues that his frequent references to California suggest that he envisioned the state as the site where this reconstitution of fraternal bonds could take place.

I focus on the 1860 edition of Leaves, for in it Whitman begins to conceive of his book as “the Great Construction of the New Bible” (Notebooks 1:353), recording “the self-consciously prophetic role that [he] assumes as he sets out to spread . . . the moral foundation of the American republic and the base of a new religion of humanity” (Erkkila, Whitman the Political Poet 98). The 1860 Leaves is also critical to my study, for it is the first edition in which Whitman added “Enfans d’Adam” (later anglicized as “Children of Adam”) and “Calamus,” two clusters integral to understanding what Michael Moon sees as the “primary claim of the Leaves project: that sexuality is fundamentally a political matter because it is never simply ‘sexual,’ that is, unrelated to other economies in the culture besides the erotic” (159). The 1860 edition displays such a systematic understanding of the politics of the nation as it struggles to define itself. Published on the eve of the Civil War, it bears the impress of the nation at loggerheads.⁴ Although he appears to remain neutral in reflecting the competing sides of the culture war, his representations of the nation’s struggle, especially when read in juxtaposition with his prose works, help to illuminate his viewpoints.

Moon's thorough analysis in Disseminating Whitman of the many versions of Leaves is the gold standard for textual studies in Whitman scholarship. Having said this, though, I want to consider an important edition that has eluded scrutiny. Walt Whitman's Blue Book is the poet's own copy of the third edition that, as the subtitle mentions, contains "his manuscript additions and revisions" for the fourth edition published in 1867. He bequeathed it in 1890 to Horace Traubel, one of his three literary executors, who transcribed on a blank opening page a comment the poet made to him:

"You fellows value these curios more than I do. This will help you to see how the book grew, if that is anything. But I guess you would know how it grew if you never possessed the book. The book is a mile-post" and he went on. "This gives a glimpse into the workshop. It is wonderful to me how great a store you fellows have got to set on these things. God be with you!"

The Blue Book features Whitman's scribbled copyedits and handwritten enclosures pasted into the book. The result is a metatext that, similar to Emily Dickinson's variants, warrants the reader's active participation more than most literary works.⁵ Although he enacted a majority of these revisions in the fourth edition, there are many he did not, some of which elucidate the role the West and California played for him as an Arcadia that was distanced from, but contiguous with, the rest of the polarized country.

During his lifetime, Whitman only traveled as far west as Denver, a trip he made in September of 1879.⁶ With the exception of this sojourn and his three-month stint in New Orleans 31 years earlier, he remained in the East. Akin to Dickinson, though, his highly informed imagination provided him with a great deal of mobility.⁷ Reading Whitman's representation of California alongside the racial and sexual politics of its

statehood discloses that varying degrees of homogeneity dictated his democratic teleology. Highly coveted by the American government for its rich lodes and proximity to the Pacific, California served as a benchmark attesting to the triumph of Manifest Destiny and America's exceptionalism. Five years prior to the first publication of Leaves, California became a free state under the auspices of the Compromise of 1850. Anti-slavery proponents cottoned to California's distance from the rest of the nation, believing it would insulate the state from the institution of slavery and, more largely, the sticky wicket of racial difference. Whitman's references to the state suggest that he believed its fecund territory, left fallow by American Indians and Mexicans, was ideal for his Adamic men. Although the exact numbers differ from study to study, the conclusion is resoundingly the same: California was largely male.⁸ Living in the unsettled West required improvisation, above all else when it came to setting up house.⁹ Some men decided to go it alone, while others opted to live together or communally and "revel in the fellow-feeling—the floods, the gushes, the warm glows of friendship—that grew out of shared domestic tasks and intimate caretaking" (Johnson 138). Despite continuing to assign gender values to types of labor (e.g., mining/masculine, nursing/feminine), these men adopted new domestic arrangements that emerged out of an abiding devotion to fraternal care and intimacy.

I. Inside Outsiders: Territorial Expansion and the Crisis of Racial Homogeneity

“The figure inside/outside cannot be easily or ever finally dispensed with; it can only be worked on and worked over—itsself turned inside out to expose its critical operations and interior machinery.”

—Diana Fuss, “Inside/Out” (1).

"Let faces and theories be turned inside out[.]"
—Walt Whitman, "Chants Democratic" (section 5 line 8).

As literary critics have established, in the opening poems of Leaves the self circulates as fluid and relational, destabilizing notions of absolute difference as it covets similarity and equality.¹⁰ The self that spins from this democratization of identity is legible, yet still in process, thereby assuring the continuance of a broad network of relations. It bears mention that, with a few exceptions, Whitman imported these opening poems from the previous editions of Leaves published in 1855 and 1856. The material that he added to this third edition signals an abrupt thematic change in which his "'I' no longer stretched and widened to embrace all aspects of cultural experience" (Walt Whitman's America, Reynolds 476). Written at the zenith of territorial expansion, the 1860-1 edition records a nation spilling outside its once-delimited borders. Historians have observed that while most Americans supported territorial expansion because it spread democracy, politicians and early political scientists fretted over how this "unsettling the population" (Turner 30) attenuated the coherence of the fledgling nation. The division among the states over the intertwined issues of federalism, state sovereignty, the Indian question, and slavery only exacerbated this angst. In this section I focus on Whitman's extrapolation of the "efflux of the soul" onto the nation and its citizens as a means to allay anxieties over this rift.¹¹ He defuses the threat difference poses to a national identity by highlighting sameness, insisting that extending this identity to the people of the West will fortify the nation.

The Blue Book opens with a fascicle featuring Whitman reworking the first stanza of "Proto-Leaf," the inaugural poem of the third edition of Leaves. He revises the poem so that its action commences before the readers' eyes, effectively drawing them into the

poem. In this first stanza, he block cancels the laundry list of adjectives that begins the poem ("Free, fresh, savage, / Fluent, luxuriant, self-content, fond of persons and places," 1.1-2) and replaces them with a participial phrase stressing the immediacy of his life and poetry ("Starting from fish-shape Paumanok, where I was born"). Beginning his sojourn in his native Long Island, he "roam[s] many lands" (1.3), including the "southern savannas" (1.4), the "Dakotah's woods" (1.7), California (1.6), and territory around "the flowing Missouri" (1.12).¹² The traversal of the states continues in sections 10 and 55, in which he acquaints himself with the "[c]hants of the prairies" (10.1) and those of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, among others. Significantly, he revises stanza 10, removing most of the references to specific states with one key exception: "Chants going forth from the centre from Kansas + thence equi=distant / Shooting in pulses of fire ceaseless to vivify all."¹³ Locating the nation's "heart" from which the systole and diastole originate, he claims that a common bond unites this nation tautened by its "dilation" ("Walt Whitman" 112.1).¹⁴ He entreats his readers to forge an intimate bond with his book and, thus, him:

Take my leaves, America!
 Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are
 your own offspring;
 Surround them, East and West! for they would
 surround you,
 And you precedents! Connect lovingly with them, for
 they connect lovingly to you. (13.1-4)¹⁵

Whitman uses his "leaves" to rally his audience—"America"—around the nation's promises of comity and freedom. He adds to the first line "take them South + take them

North," designating these two regions as in particular need of his restorative words. Eschewing provincialism and taking up "vast, trackless spaces" (6.1), he endeavors to bind the country together by acceding to a national identity.

Reconstituting the nation through poetry serves as a leitmotif for Leaves. Later in the first section of "Chants Democratic," Whitman proclaims himself "the bard of These States [who] walks in advance, leader of leaders" (24.1). "Fall behind me, States!" he announces, characterizing himself as the every man "[o]ne man, before all — myself, typical, before all" (33.1-2). But along with this self-aggrandizing proclamation, he acknowledges that "the States" are his primary inspiration. "These States are the amplest poem," he announces, "the crowds, equality, diversity, the Soul loves" (16.1, 6). Whitman replaces what "the Soul loves" with "vehement tugs and trials." In a poem commemorating "the organic compact of the first day of the first year of the independence of The States" (28.4), this tonal shift is significant. In light of significant court decisions such as Dred Scott (1857) and Cherokee Nation (1831), the need to preserve the delicate balance of power between the federal and state governments gripped nineteenth-century American political and juridical thought. While *E Pluribus Unum* memorialized the metonymy connecting the nation and its people, it also served as a mnemonic reminder that autonomous states comprised this hallowed compact.¹⁶

Whitman's advocacy of states' rights did not impinge upon his belief in a centralized, federal government. Throughout Leaves, he deploys at times exhaustive inventories of these differences within America, ranging from "occupations" to "chants" to "States." By crafting a mantra of geographically diverse "chants," he draws the states together and brings the margins to center.¹⁷ The result is "comity . . . between all The

States” so that “no one State may . . . be subjected to another” (“Proto-Leaf” 20.1-2).¹⁸ America’s success, as he avows later in the first section of "Chants Democratic," rests on "confer[ring] on equal terms with each of The States" (3.3).

As evinced by his many editorials published during his two-year tenure (1846-7) as editor for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Whitman rallied around the nation's lunge westward. Opening the West to Americans seeking advancement would countervail the uneven distribution of wealth and accretion of power in the East.¹⁹ America’s growth, as he sees it, offers a chance for national regeneration in an era when territorial expansion started to diffuse what had been a homogeneous country:²⁰

O expanding and swift! O henceforth,
Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and
audacious,
A world primal again — Vistas of glory, incessant
and branching,
A new race, dominating previous ones, and grander
far,
New politics — New literatures and religions — New
inventions and arts. (61.1-5)

Passages such as this relate that Whitman, a devotee of Jefferson and Jackson, perceived expansion as a way for common Americans to realize self-sufficiency among limited government. In this primal world, the long-anticipated Americans would ascend as a “new race,” part and parcel of which are "[n]ew politics," "[n]ew literatures and religions," and "[n]ew inventions and arts." The repeated desire to “make it new” echoes

Young America's dictum that only a distinctly American literature would bring about a distinctly American identity and culture grounded in its own people and land.²¹ Whitman follows this stanza with another catalog that details the heterogeneity of this national identity. Alongside him exist "immigrants continually coming and landing" (63.2), "the wigwam," "the hunter's hut" (3), "ploughmen," "miners" (9), "mechanics," and "Presidents . . . dressed in working dresses" (10). As he heralds in "Walt Whitman," this "chant of dilation or pride . . . show[s] that size is only development" (112.1, 3).

Sensitive to lingering concerns over expansion, Whitman analogizes the efflux of the self with that of the nation, explaining that his ability to find himself anywhere in America is indicative of the nation's indissolubility. Yet again the distinction between inside and outside crumbles as the sign of democracy circulates between the states of the Union as well. "O such themes! Equalities!" he announces (37.1), eschewing "poems with reference to parts . . . [b]ut . . . with reference to ensemble" (46.1, 2).²² From these states he will "make a song of the Great Nation one + indivisible, whatever happens" (20).²³ The indivisibility of the nation—"the organic compact of These States," as he calls it in "Chants Democratic" (1.2)—is what enables him to cross state lines as he puts the growing nation to verse. America, he emphasizes, rests on "indissoluble compacts" (2.1) among "[i]nterlinked" and "[i]nextricable lands" (55.2, 14). In "Walt Whitman," he sheds even more light on this continuum by binding the interior psychic spaces of identification with the exterior physical terrains of "the great nation, the nation of many nations, the smallest the same, and the largest the same" (78.5). His "singing" of himself and others reminds readers that the republic is constituted upon the equivalence and

comity of the states. The "Kentuckian, walking the vale of the Elkhorn" (78.8) or a "Hoosier, Badger, [or] Buckeye" (9) stand with him as fellow Americans.²⁴

Unlike the equivalences within the opening clusters, the interior sections record the threat the Civil War poses to national unity. Following the metaphysical peregrinations of "Walt Whitman," the mood changes from a "joyous sweep" to a "masterful sweep, the warning cry of the eagle" ("Apostroph" 14). Within the opening of the "Apostroph," the preface of "Chants Democratic and Native American," Whitman cautions his readers of imminent doom: "Do you not hear the cock crowing? / O, as I walk'd the beach, I heard the mournful notes foreboding a tempest . . . / O I heard, and yet hear, angry thunder" (11-13). Despondent over the storm looming on the horizon, he pronounces, "O I believe there is nothing real but America and freedom! / O to sternly reject all except Democracy!" (17-8). The revisions Whitman suggests in this section are noteworthy. In blue ink he adds "the West" in lines seventeen and eighteen immediately following "America" and "except," creating a metonymy between the "West," "America," and "Democracy."²⁵ He proposes other edits, block canceling passages in which he laments the loss of his "South! O longings for my dear home!" (35). He does not record any revisions for these crossed out lines, instead ominously writing within the margins what would come to haunt him: "Wars!" With his "dear home" of the South (New Orleans?) imperiled, a forlorn, fragmented appeal emanates: "O Libertad! O union impossible to dissever! / O my Soul! O lips becoming tremulous, powerless!" (53).

A similar sentiment appears within the first section of "Chants Democratic," first titled "Many In One," then "E Pluribus Unum," only finally to be changed to "America isolated I sing."²⁶ This renaming is significant since, as I would contend, it suggests that

Whitman accedes to the South's *de facto* secession. He realizes the folly of evoking America's motto of national diversity, replacing it with a tragic image of the nation "isolated . . . against the remainder of the world." Within this first book of "Chants Democratic and Native American" he welcomes the breadth of the nation by proclaiming that he "reject[s] none" (1.3) and "[a]ll is eligible to all" (4.1). This familiar refrain of equality becomes tempered by an addition that foreshadows the nation's self-destruction. Resurrecting the self-affirming sentiments of "Walt Whitman" in which he insists that "[w]e are the most beautiful to ourselves, and in ourselves," he pencils in "If we are lost, O mother, O sisters dear, no victor else has destroy'd us. By ourselves we go down to eternal night." America, as Whitman augurs, is destined for an internecine war.

It is important that at this point in "Chants Democratic," Whitman is "self-poised in the centre [of the nation], Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks to scorn."²⁷ Buffered from the ultraist politics of slavery, he embraces a centrist position that organically coalesces on the free soil of the frontier.²⁸ Even here, though, he cannot escape the baleful disunion that threatens the states. As he roams the capacious prairie, a phantom confronts him to remind him of what he's forgot:

As I wandered the Prairies alone
at night,
A Phantom, gigantic, superb,
With stern visage, arrested
me,
Chant me a poem, it said, that
breathes my native air alone,

Chant me a song of
the throes of Democracy;
(Democracy, the destined conqueror-
yet treacherous lip-smiles
every where,
And death and infidelity at every
step.) (insert)

The phantom, which appears in a handwritten addition glued to the ms., registers that the debate over slavery inspired some of these revisions. As with most literary hauntings, phantoms or ghosts signal “canonized bones . . . [that] have burst their cerements” (Hamlet, 1.4.47-8) or past injustices that warrant rectification.²⁹ In this particular instance, the phantom warns that America has strayed from its democratic path. Later in section twenty, Whitman, in another handwritten addition, documents that this same voice “demand[ed] bards, the greatest of them only can men be fused into the compact organism of a nation” (1).³⁰ The phantom's mandate for a poem about “the throes of [d]emocracy” yet again marks Leaves as a kind of *novus* epic that versifies the history of the nation-state. This encounter compels Whitman to characterize the “throes” of the country as an unavoidable step in what will become democracy’s glorious triumph.

He revisits this same point a few stanzas later, recording his diffidence toward this internal struggle. Amidst one of his many catalogs about the nation’s diversity, Whitman directly refers to “the tremulous spreading of hands to shelter [slavery] – the stern opposition to it, which ceases only when it ceases” (1.17.40). Perhaps skeptical of the aloofness of this line, he replaces it with the more histrionic “murderous, treacherous

conspiracy to raise it upon the ruins of ALL THE REST.” He makes other revisions that further impugn slavery: “On & on to the grapple with it, the you over the Scorning assassin! Then its [sic] your life or ours be the tug – & respite no more.”³¹ Whitman's acrimony toward slavery is important to remember when the “gigantic and superb Phantom” emerges. Linked to “death” and “infidelity,” two terms that connoted the South’s secession, slavery he deems injurious and undemocratic.

Immediately following his characterization of slavery as the nation's "assassin," he restates his hope for the "days of the future, I believe in you!" (18.4). The concern with futurity impels him to explain in another handwritten addition, "I isolate myself for your own sake." Isolated from the North/South divide in battleground states such as Kansas and Nebraska, Whitman begins to look even further west for a new world uncorrupted by slavery. This vision, as he points out, is constitutive of his poetic vocation. "Of the idea of perfect and free individuals, of that the bard of These States walks in advance," he announces, adding, "The attitude of him cheers up slaves, and horrifies despots" (24.1-2). Roaming through the West and looking for a new direction in which to take the nation, Whitman seeks out "voices of greater orators . . . [;] I pause — I listen for you" ("Apostroph" 56). Perhaps to emphasize that he takes his lead from his fellow poets of the prairie, he edits this line, replacing "greater orators" with "bards of Missouri." However, he later strikes through "of Missouri" and replaces it with a location that served as a benchmark of Manifest Destiny: "Californian."

II. "[F]or those that have never been mastered!": California's Promise of Racial Homogeneity

“The ideal of homogeneity originated with men of a moderately reformist persuasion, for it derived initially from the conservative antislavery sentiment of the early Republic.”

—George Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind (322).

The addition of "bards Californian" in "Chants Democratic" suggests that by the 1860s Whitman started to look to California as a place where a distinctly American voice would emerge.³² That he imagines these bards only after the phantom confronts him suggests that he saw the state as the free soil on which Leaves would grow.³³ Historians often downplay California's role in hastening the Civil War by resurrecting the North/South schism. The push for statehood ignited a Congress already bitterly divided over the issue of slavery. The contentious passage of the Missouri Compromise in 1820 had already prohibited slavery north of 36° 30'. But with the newly acquired territory from the Louisiana Purchase came newly mounted battles over the extension of slavery. The 1846 Wilmot Proviso, ardently supported by Whitman, sought to ban slavery from any territory acquired through the Mexican-American War and simply resulted in the redrawing of the same divisive battle lines.

By December of 1848, Polk, who Whitman backed, sensed the resistance to the extension of slavery to the West and pushed for the redrawing of the lines established by the Missouri Compromise so that they encompassed the newly acquired territories. For most of 1849, this presidential appeal fomented acrimony in an already discordant Congress. Shortly before his death, John C. Calhoun, the pro-slavery senator from South Carolina, foretold that California's admission would cause the "destruction of the equilibrium between the North and the South, a more intense agitation of the slavery

question, a civil war and the destruction of the South” (qtd. in Hunt 7).³⁴ With the passage of the Compromise of 1850, the issue surrounding California's admission was somewhat settled—though not to everyone's liking—and the territory was admitted into the Union as a free state. In return, the borders of Texas, a slave state, were enlarged and no conditions were set for the other acquired territory. Despite the prohibition against slavery in California, the institution's influence persisted in areas such as Los Angeles, where labor was needed for the many lode-rich mines.³⁵

The years leading up to statehood were marked by swift changes in attitudes toward blacks, enslaved or free. Remarkably, some accounts of early Californian life record that "white Californians and Indians accepted Negroes as equal individuals before 1848 and even intermarriage among the three groups was not frowned upon" (Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery, 60). When America's interest in the territory crested, however, this quickly changed as whites from the Midwest and East immigrated, bringing with them disruptive attitudes about racial difference. Included among them was Free Soilism, a political platform that came together when members of the antislavery Liberty party banded together with antislavery Whigs and Democrats disenchanted with their respective parties. Whitman was one of these Democrats. As I discussed in chapter one, the Free Soil platform supported a national platform that allowed slavery to continue in the South for the sake of states' rights and national cohesion (with qualifications, of course). But the party, whose slogan was “free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men,” objected to extending slavery to new territories, insisting that a free West would help poor white men—a group with whom Whitman identified—find work.³⁶

Some settlers, apprehensive about California's political future, took the Free Soil tack in opposing the extension of slavery. In a March 15, 1848, article in The Californian, the editors enumerated their reasons for opposing slavery:

First, it is wrong for it to exist anywhere. Second, not a single instance of precedence exists at present in the shape of physical bondage of our fellow men. Third, there is no excuse whatever for its introduction into this country (by virtue of climate or physical conditions). Fourth, Negroes have equal rights to life, liberty, health and happiness with the whites. Fifth, it is every individual's duty, to self and to society, to be occupied in useful employment sufficient to gain self-support. Sixth, it would be the greatest calamity that the power of the United States could inflict upon California. (qtd. in Hunt 2)

This seems to exceed even some arguments put forth by abolitionists. More astonishing is the creed that blacks were human beings worthy of the pursuit of liberty. But the editors make a swift turnaround as they espouse Free Soil opinions:

Seventh, we desire only a white population in California. Eighth, we left the slave states because we did not like to bring up a family in a miserable, can't-help-one's-self condition. Ninth, in conclusion we dearly love the 'Union,' but declare our positive preference for an independent condition of California to the establishment of any degree of slavery, or even the importation of free blacks. (qtd. in Hunt 3)

The goal of a black-free California was realistic seeing that by 1849 blacks comprised roughly one percent of the state's population (Lapp 1).³⁷ As the gold rush continued to intensify and more Americans started to pour into the state, concerns became more

prevalent that with Southern prospectors would come enslaved and freed blacks. If California allowed blacks to enter, as the argument went, its promise of equal opportunity among limited government would be squelched.

The race issue dominated the agenda of California's first legislature in 1849, notwithstanding the small number of blacks within the state. Despite Los Angeles's pro-Southern sympathies, opposition to slavery and freed blacks was puissant in the mining districts of Southern California, populated mostly by white frontiersmen who feared being crushed by prospectors who relied on slave labor. In fact, the state was rife with anti-black sentiment, evinced by the majority of delegates at the constitutional convention opposed to any black presence.³⁸ In hammering out the state's constitution, the delegates called for the legislature to enact laws that would "effectually prohibit Free persons of color from immigrating to and settling in this State, and to eventually prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into the State for the purpose of setting them free" (Hunt 37). Some delegates hoped for a more sweeping exclusion policy, though this never came to pass as most feared it would jeopardize Congress's ratification of the state constitution.

Nevertheless, the issue lingered after the convention. In his inaugural address in 1849, Peter Burnett, an independent Democrat and California's first governor, reopened Pandora's box when he urged the legislature to enact an exclusion law barring blacks from the state. His case rested on the alleged threat that blacks posed to social harmony:

Our position upon the Pacific, our commercial and mineral attractions, would bring swarms of this population to our shores. Already we have almost every variety of the human race among us—a heterogeneous mass of human beings, of every language and of every hue. . . . If measures are not early taken by this State,

slaves will be manumitted in the slave States, and contracts made with them to labor as hirelings for a given number of years, and they will be brought to California in great numbers. (Burnett)

Burnett's rhetoric reflects the nation's growing antipathy toward heterogeneity. Evoking the threat of a massive "swarm," he makes the case that California is already "heterogeneous" enough. Initially he appears to include blacks as one of the "variet[ies] of the human race." His reference to them as "that species of property," however, records that for him human beings could also be chattel. Even more trenchant is Burnett's reference to blacks as a "class of population," a conflation central to the Free-Soil economics of race. Although he maintains that native Californian blacks would have *de jure* rights, his insistence that these people don't exist clarifies his intent "to keep them out." The exclusion bill drafted in the legislature's first session failed by one vote due to Whig opposition (Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery, 71-2). Another bill appeared a few months later, and two more in 1857 and 1858, all of which were voted down or perished in committee. By the end of the Civil War, California, along with many other states, lifted all restrictions against blacks.

For a book that records a nation at loggerheads over slavery, Leaves holds surprisingly few references to it. Those that do appear, with a few notable exceptions, are primarily straightforward representations that reflect the heterogeneity of public opinion in mid-nineteenth-century America.³⁹ Throughout Leaves, Whitman represents the gamut of positions in the debate over slavery. In the second poem of "Enfans," later "From Pent-Up Aching Rivers," Whitman becomes an auctioneer in a slave auction (26). Earlier in section 54 of "Walt Whitman," which would eventually become part of section 10 of

"Song of Myself," he adopts the persona of a man who provides haven and succor for a fugitive slave. The details of the stanza convey an abiding sympathy for the runaway slave. Upon hearing him in the woodpile outside his home, Whitman seeks him out and provides for "him a room that entered from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes" (6).⁴⁰ The proximity of the rooms and the enslaved man's seat "next [to] me at table" (10) convey that he sees the slave as a fellow man. Although his remark that his "fire-lock leaned in the corner" (10) is ambiguous—is he stressing that his musket is in reach just in case? Will he protect the slave with it? Or does he trust the slave implicitly enough to keep his musket in the open?—the passage records a prevailing opposition to slavery. In section 213, Whitman adopts the persona of a "hounded slave." The details of the poem are akin to those that appear in white-written abolitionist texts, though in more muted terms: "the bite of the dogs" (1); the "crack . . . [of] the marksmen (2); the enslaved man's "gore drib[bing], thinned with the ooze of [his] skin" (3). While this highlights Whitman's deftness in representing the gamut of positions in the debate over slavery, the level of visceral detail suggests his anti-slavery leaning.⁴¹

Whitman's opposition to slavery did not mean that he believed blacks were equal to whites. In fact, evidence suggests otherwise.⁴² Keenly drawn to the Jacksonian Democrats early in his political consciousness, Whitman took to heart the party's premise of white superiority and black exclusion. His Free-Soil advocacy began in the late 1840s, after he addressed slavery in his editorials.⁴³ After he attended the party's convention in Buffalo in August of 1848, he started the short-lived Brooklyn Freeman, an organ of the party, in which he adopted an anti-slavery stance that was "conventionally racist and segregationist, with little public sympathy or concern for blacks" (Klammer 55).

Whitman's tacit support of white supremacy and his advocacy for white laborers squared with the Free Soil platform, which hinged on the preeminence of racial purity:

Supporters of this broader antislavery consensus often harbored the images of a future America that would be all white, or nearly so. . . . [T]hey were mainly or even exclusively concerned with the national "purification" and homogeneity that allegedly would result from the narrow localization or complete disappearance of an "inferior" and undesirable Negro population. (Black Image in the White Mind, Fredrickson 130)

The colonization movement had become a legitimate and demonstrable force in American politics by mid century, evinced by Lincoln's support. Colonization tracts treated black inferiority as axiomatic.⁴⁴ The Compromise of 1850, however, marked a defeat for the party as it signaled "the irrevocable turn of America away from the principle of freedom and toward a future in which the white laborer would be discouraged by the presence of black slaves in the new territories" (Klammer 62).

The possibility of a homogenous white nation, however, was not the only promise the West held for the federal government and pro-expansionist Americans such as Whitman. Reaching the western shores of the continent would summarily mark victory over the various Indian tribes who had resisted Anglo American occupation for almost two centuries. As I noted in chapter one when discussing Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia, the federal government assumed sovereignty over valuable tribal lands and enacted the reservation system with the express purpose of containing Indians. By the 1850s, intermarriage, poorly planned relocations such as the Trail of Tears, abject poverty, and rampant alcoholism, caused the subjugated "red" men and women to begin

to fade into the yellowed pages of history. The rhetoric of Indian savagery led Whitman to believe that their tribes stood no chance against the juggernaut of Western civilization.

That Whitman's devotion to Manifest Destiny trumped his sympathy for American Indians has been well documented.⁴⁵ He did, however, dissent in telling ways from popular opinion about them, even though his own ideas were shaped by racial stereotypes of the time.⁴⁶ For instance, he admired many facets of tribal life, including the romanticized notion of Indians' primal relationship to the land. Moreover, his representations of them in Leaves suggest that he did not envision them as a threat to the racial purity of the nation. His poetry implies that the new American man taking shape in the West would absorb these savages' noble bravery. This is perhaps why, with one noteworthy exception, Indians appear in the 1860 edition of the book primarily in the East and Midwest of America, the large interstices men traversed *en route* to the West. By far the most revealing and oft-cited Indian sighting in Leaves occurs in section 53 of "Walt Whitman," which would later become section 10 of "Song of Myself." Having started from his native Long Island, the poet finds himself "in the far-west" (53.1) at the marriage of a white trapper to a "red girl" as "[h]er father and his friends sat near, cross-legged and dumbly smoking" (53.2). The characterization of the father as an addict is not a glowing endorsement of Indian culture. What is striking, though, is Whitman's representation of the "red girl" who "had long eyelashes — her head was bare — her coarse straight locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reached to her feet" (53.5). Whereas alterity transforms the black body into a text of violence for Whitman, for the Indian body it permits a kind of racial fetishism that sees redness as erasable.

The interracial union between the trapper and Indian woman, which occurs on the liminal space of the American frontier separating the East from the West, suggests that Whitman envisioned Indian assimilation as part of the white migration west.⁴⁷ Along the lines of nineteenth-century ethnology, he saw intermarriage with the Indians as a means to absorb their nobility. This belief was supported by a theory of racial science, heralded by Thomas Jefferson in Notes on Virginia (1781), which deemed blackness enduring and redness impermanent.⁴⁸ Throughout Leaves, Whitman re-deploys terms normally denoting American Indians to describe Anglo Americans. The third word of the 1860 edition is “savage,” which he uses to describe himself before his journey across the United States. Later in section 78 of the same poem, he identifies with people “[o]f every hue, trade, ran, caste and religion / Not merely of the New World, but of Africa, Europe, Asia — a wandering savage” (18-19). In section 244, among the things he “become[s]” is “the savage at the stump, his eye sockets empty, his mouth spiriting whoops and defiance” (2). By eliding white men and Indians, he intimates a degree of compatibility between the two groups.

Tellingly, however, all three of these examples disappear from subsequent editions of his book. Although other instances of the word “savage” crop up in these editions, the disappearance of these references, as well as others, epitomizes the long-held belief that Western civilization would inevitably cause the Indians to vanish.⁴⁹ As white men migrated to the West, contact with Indians provided them with a chance to learn firsthand the venerable qualities of the different tribes. The absorption of the desirable elements of the various tribes would be constitutive of this “new American character” taking shape in the West. This very tenet Whitman intimates in “Proto-Leaf”:

The red aborigines!

Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds,

calls as of birds and animals in the words,

syllabled to us for names,

Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez,

Chattahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco.

Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-

Walla,

Leaving such to The States, they melt, they depart,

charging the waters and the land with names. (60, entire stanza)

This depiction of the Indians leaving as their legacy names for cities, states, birds, etc., to “The States” suggests a transmission of Native American tradition and history to whites.⁵⁰ The representation of American Indians “melt[ing]” into the American land effectively naturalizes what was in fact a coerced expulsion. As if he were parroting the Improved Order of Red Men, Whitman mourns the passing of Indians while envisioning Anglo Americans as their rightful heirs. As I discussed in chapter one in relation to the Red Men, this rhetoric of white men preserving native culture in fact cloaked the program to transform Anglo Americans into the new native Americans—an idiom that appears in the title of the first cluster of poems in the 1860 edition—so as to sever the lingering cultural ties to Europe and claim that America was a nation sovereign.⁵¹

The imagery of Indians leaving their imprints on the landscape serves another purpose in Leaves related to Whitman’s fantastic vision of the West. By dramatizing the disappearance of tribes as he passes through the Mid- and Southwest, the primary sites of

relocation in the 1830s, he sets the stage for a black- and Indian-free West. The descriptions of California leading up to “Calamus” show the “low expiring aborigines” (“Salute au Monde” 32.6) succumbing to the influx of easterners. “California life” is for “the miner, bearded, dressed in his rude costume—the stanch California friendship—the sweet air—the graves one, in passing, meets, solitary, just aside the horse-path” (“Chants Democratic and Native American” 4.46). Acknowledging the white frontiersmen who have died in the West, Whitman discounts the Mexicans and Mission Indians who considered the state their home.

That he primarily refers to California in passing in the 1860 edition might intimate that it did not interest him to the degree that I have suggested. “Song of the Redwood-Tree,” a three-sectioned poem he published in Harper’s in 1874 and added to the 1876 centennial edition, however, confirms the state’s importance to his democratic fantasy. The poem, which dramatizes the felling of one of the giant trees native to Northern California, opens with Whitman recording “[a] Californian song” (1.1) as it is sung by the “[v]oice of a mighty dying tree” (1.5). The personification of the tree garners sympathy for nature as it is steamrolled by the onslaught of civilization. Importantly, though, Whitman’s induction of this tension between civilization and the frontier marks the demise of the redwood as an allegory for the vanishing indigenes. Amid the “crackling blows of axes . . . driven by strong arms” (1.13) the speaker hears “the mighty tree its death-chant chanting” (1.15) and “wood-spirits [who] came from their haunts of a thousand years to join the refrain” (1.18). That the “teamsters and chain and jack-screw men” (1.17) who hew the tree do not hear this “[v]oice of a mighty dying tree” (1.5) signals their innocence in its destruction. Instead, Whitman expresses the inevitability of

modernity's triumph over tribal societies by explaining that the "unseen dryads, singing" (1.77) end up "[t]o the deities of the modern . . . yielding" (1.80).⁵²

It is not until he uses language evoking nineteenth-century racial science that the parallel between the hewing of the tree and the vanishing of American Indians becomes overt. As he explains, "a superber race" (1.39) will "absorb" and "assimilate" (1.43) the state's topography, including its "precipitous cliffs" and "valleys" (1.42). This race—"our common kind" (3.3), as Whitman refers to it—holds "the promise of thousands of years, till now deferr'd, / Promis'd to be fulfill'd" (3.3-4). Taking up the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, he envisions California as "[t]hese virgin lands, lands of the Western shore, / To the new culminating man, to you, the empire new, / You promis'd long, we pledge, we dedicate" (1.52-4). In this vein he ends the poem, positioning the state more clearly as the place where "the true America" will finally take shape:

Fresh come, to a new word indeed, yet long prepared,
I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal,
Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America,
heir of the past so grand,
To build a grander future. (3.8-11)

The redwood's death commemorates the passing of a native presence. But the dolorous tone lifts upon the arrival of "[a] swarming and busy race settling and organizing everywhere" (2.8). These industrious, free people will clear "the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir of the past so grand" (3.10). While he includes women in this "new society" (3.5), the attention he pays earlier to the "teamsters' calls and the clinking chains, and the music of choppers' axes" (1.74) points to the homogeneity central

to Leaves: the band of white, working-class brothers who left the East for economic opportunity and with the hope of “build[ing] a grander future” (3.11).

III. *Et in Arcadia Ego*: Frontier California as Whitman's Homosexual Pastoral

“The American writer inhabits a country at once the dream of Europe and a fact of history; he lives on the last horizon of an endlessly retreating vision of innocence—on the ‘frontier,’ which is to say, the margin where the theory of original goodness and the fact of original sin come face to face.”

—Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (xxii).

“The frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever a man *fronts* a fact, though that fact be his neighbor.”

—Henry David Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (304).

The infrequent appearance of slavery and blacks in Leaves belies the fact that the two vitally shaped Whitman’s national outlook. There is, however, a topic that he frequently broaches: homosexuality. Of course, the irony is that most of his contemporaries could not stop talking about what he generally avoids, and what he could not stop talking about most Americans refused to utter, much less acknowledge. Critics have approached the treatment of same-sex erotic desire in Leaves as a concerted attempt to countermand its demonization by culture. Under this rubric, the “Calamus” cluster of poems has become lionized as one of the most important—not to mention only—gay-positive works in the American literary canon. This commemoration is more than understandable given the phobic moment in which Whitman wrote the book. Most critics, however, have neglected two salient facets of “Enfans d’Adam” and “Calamus” that complicate this framing: that his panegyric of same-sex sexual desire follows his

criticism and repudiation of heterosexuality; and that his homosexual republic coalesces in California, a state ordered by racial and gender homogeneity.

The absence of fluid imagery in "Enfans" suggests that Whitman figures heterosexuality as a disciplinary force that renders sexual desire torpid. This treatment is at odds with the reception of the cluster as an encomium of heterosexuality. His representation of heterosexuality as disjunctive records a mordant attitude toward it, one that exacerbates the antagonisms between the sexes. The fluidity absent from "Enfans" reemerges in "Calamus" as male homoeroticism blossoms in nature, counterweighing the cultural dictate that deemed this desire unnatural. An even more prominent dimension to this cluster is that within it male same-sex erotic desire functions as a conduit that confederates and equalizes men. Male homosexuality is not understood as an aftereffect of homogeneity in this model, given the extradiscursive aspect of desire, but as a subtle redoubling of the cultural bent toward sameness.

Whitman's Adam looms large throughout "Enfans" and "Calamus." Historians have spelled out that for literary nationalists such as the Young Americans Adam served as a metaphor for the new American.⁵³ Adam also served as a trope symbolizing discontent with the moral compass of the nation. Utopian movements of nineteenth-century America shared a prevailing distrust of mainstream America. These movements, among them the Rappites (1804), the Zoar Separatists (1817), the Mormons (1820), the New Harmony Society (1825), the Oneida Community (1841), the Fruitlands (1843), and Brook Farm (1841), embraced unconventional beliefs (e.g., transcendentalism, polygamy, polyamory/"free love," and gradations of socialism). Within this climate of dissent, Whitman recast the originary myth in the American West. His return to the

garden as Adam signals both his renunciation of the moribund culture of the East and his objective to reclaim sexuality as healthy, God-given, and liberating.

"Enfans" opens with Whitman-as-Adam heading "to the garden, the world, anew ascending" (1.1). Unlike the blank page that was Eden, this garden is "prelud[ed]" by "[p]otent mates, daughters, [and] sons" (2). The newly iterated American Adam and Eve are less *tabula rasae* and more palimpsests carrying with them "present[s]" and "past[s]" (9) as they flee into the bower where "[t]he love, the life of their bodies, [finds] meaning and being" (3).⁵⁴ As Whitman signals, though, his return to the garden—his "resurrection" (4), as he calls it, further freighting himself with Christ-like significance—is part of a "revolving cycle" (5) that reunites him with these "[a]morous, mature" mates (6) who are "all wondrous."⁵⁵ The Eden that he strives to erect is one where self-knowledge is inextricable from sexuality, unlike the *de facto* and artless sexuality of the original Adam and Eve. Sexual desire, in other words, is something that one experiences, lauds, and understands because of innate "reasons" (7). More provocative is Whitman's re-vision of Eve as not derivative or beholden to Adam.⁵⁶ Instead, she walks "[b]y my side, or back of me . . . [o]r in front, and I following her just the same" (10-1). Whitman's use of "the same" undergirds his representation of the American Adam and Eve as equal.

This re-vision pierces the opening poems of "Enfans." As I have mentioned, many critics have asserted that the equalization of the sexes is part and parcel of his celebration of heterosexual desire. He naturalizes sexual desire between men and women—"the song of procreation" (2.4)—by pairing it with the "grossest Nature, or among animals / . . . Of the smell of apples and lemons — of the pairing of birds, / Of the wet woods — of the lapping of waves" (17, 19-20). Respectful of the dualism of nature, Whitman renounces

the Platonic divide between the body and soul by asking, “[I]f the body were not the Soul, what is the Soul?” Within nature “[t]he body of man or woman balks account — the body itself balks account” (3.3.1), inspiring him to declare that the body “of the male is perfect, and that of the female is perfect” (3.3.2). He peppers the first quarter of “Enfans” with observations about each sex expressed in the same syntax. “The man’s body is sacred, and the woman’s body is sacred,” he announces in the sixteenth section of the third poem (1), building up to one of the final stanzas structured around equivalence:

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?

Have you ever loved the body of a man?

Your father — where is your father?

Your mother — is she living? have you been much

with her? and has she been much with you?

Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all,

in all nations and times, all over the earth? (3.30, 1-5)⁵⁷

No longer Adam’s rib, Eve is his equal—“the same to all”—so that she has the same recourse to sexual and bodily pleasure. It is on this liberating note that Whitman opens “Enfans,” shedding sexual inequality and dominance and adopting a democratic sexual ethos in which equal parents produce “superb children” (2.5) for the nation.

This celebration of procreation, however, is what intimates that his democratic ethos might cloak a more troubling politic. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the fourth poem of “Enfans,” later “A Woman Waits for Me.” Ostensibly, the poem is part of his larger project to celebrate human sexuality while placing men and women on equal footing. “A woman waits for me — she contains all, nothing is lacking,” he declares in

the opening sentence. Later in the third stanza, he again duplicates syntax to symmetrize the sexes: "Without shame the man I like knows and avows the delicious of his sex, / Without shame the woman I like knows and avows hers" (1-2). As readers become lulled into the insistence that women "are not one jot less than I am" (5.1), Whitman adopts a more sexually aggressive voice. In the same breath that he proclaims, "I am for you, and you are for me" (6.3), he treats women as if they are vessels of a national maternity:

It is I, you women — I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable — but I love
you.
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for These
States — I press with slow rude muscle,
I brace myself effectually — I listen to no entreaties,
I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long
accumulated within me. (7, in toto)

Heterosexuality serves a coercive purpose, making women into passive beings who masochistically await every "press" of Whitman's "slow rude muscle" despite their "entreaties." Perhaps sensing the passage's malice, he recommends a number of revisions in the Blue Book, including block canceling the last four lines that include the rape imagery.⁵⁸ Yet, he restored most of these lines for the 1865 and subsequent editions.

A wide array of readers has homed in on the disquieting aspect of this poem. Elizabeth Cady Stanton excoriated Whitman for acting "as if the female must be forced to the creative act, apparently ignorant of the natural fact that a healthy woman has as much

passion as a man, and that she needs nothing stronger than the law of attraction to draw her to the male" (Stanton 2:210). Even D. H. Lawrence, whose novels bear the inimitable mark of gender trouble, churlishly discounts Whitman's representations of mothers as "[m]uscles and wombs. They needn't have had faces at all" (167). Recent criticism has been just as unforgiving. Erkkila, for instance, insists that he "participated in the sexual ideology of his age even as he sought to challenge and transform it" (Whitman the Political Poet 137). Whitman's defenders often point to the work of Catharine Beecher, Lydia Sigourney, and other nineteenth-century American women who claimed that motherhood empowered them in the private and public spheres. While this is true, for him motherhood is filtered explicitly through his nationalism. Erkkila avers that Whitman's "aggressively strident and nationalist rhetoric entraps [mothers] once again in the codes of patriarchy and the essentially spermatic economy of the bourgeois social order" (Whitman the Political Poet 137). In a similar vein, Robyn Wiegman has charged that in Leaves mothers function as glorified incubators for Whitman's "acid" and "undissuadable" seed:

Whitman embues his seminal effusions with the metaphoric ability to represent the nation [,] . . . a universalizing gesture that makes explicit the masculine construction of his discourse. If semen carries the very promise of America, the penis . . . is 'elevated' to the status of signifier of the entire democratic tradition. In this way, the male body is written on both the literal and metaphoric levels—as origins of (pro)creation and as the Whitmanian ideology of the nation. ("Writing the Male Body" 19)

Although she discounts that his representations of women challenge Victorian conceptions of femininity, Wiegman's point is still well taken. For him, the nation would always signify a masculine devotion to equality and sexual freedom. Women might appear in his democratic republic, but only to meet his "demand [for] perfect men and women out of my love-spendings" (8.6).

Whitman also expressed cynicism toward heterosexuality in his journalism, including a piece in the Daily Times in which he sided with the free-love movement's view of marriage as "legalized prostitution" (Walt Whitman's America Reynolds 392).⁵⁹ His attitude speaks to an overarching issue concerning his representation of heterosexual desire and sex in Leaves. This figuring of heterosexual sex as rape surfaces again in section five:

The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and
down — that gripes the full-grown lady-flower,
curves upon her with amorous firm legs, takes
his will of her, and holds himself tremulous and
tight upon her till he is satisfied. (17)

That this dynamic is at work in nature suggests that he believes it is an essential difference between the sexes. Heterosexuality, then, is not romantic but, instead, romantic thralldom or a denuded power play in which the male dominates the servile female.⁶⁰ Such a grim attitude becomes even more apparent in section thirteen, later "O Hymen! O Hymenee!" in which Whitman addresses Hymen, the Roman god of the wedding feast represented, and the hymen, whose rupture during intercourse has come to signify the consummation of heterosexual matrimony. An especially remarkable dimension of this

poem is Whitman's configuration of heterosexual sex as antagonistic to the male body.

Speaking to "Hymen," he exclaims,

O Hymen! O hymenee!

Why do you tantalize me thus?

O why sting me for a swift moment only?

Why can you not continue? O why do you now

cease?

Is it because, if you continued beyond the swift

moment, you would soon certainly kill me? (entire poem)

To read this as an invocation of the Greek god and his presumably female representative or follower ("hymenee") would require seeing Whitman as continuing to represent ritualized and institutionalized forms of sexual desire as repressive and threatening to men. If the addressee of this poem is the hymen, a more baleful understanding emerges as he charges that a part of women's anatomies—not women themselves—refuses to "put out." He uses women's bodies to reconfigure the supplementary logic of heterosexuality into an antagonistic one. For those invested in seeing Whitman as a male poet who "prove[s] illustrious" the "sexual organs and acts" ("Proto-Leaf" 21.4) of both sexes, the final line is troubling. Death becomes a metaphor for institutional torpidity manifesting in and finding expression through women's genitals.

An even more overlooked aspect of "Enfans" stems from Whitman's redounding to more impassioned male homosexual desire. Some of his edits early in the cluster reflect this libidinal recalibration. In section three, later "I Sing the Body Electric," he replaces "the bodies . . . of all men and women, [that] engirth me, and I engirth them" to

"[t]he Armies of those I love engirth me, and I engirth them." Such a change might record that he sees the men and women he loves as a kind of army of lovers. However, as I discuss in the next section, the "army" in "Calamus" signifies an expressly male following, one which presages the intimate bonds that Whitman forged with soldiers during his nursing years in Washington. Within section five of "Enfans," he gradually shifts to envisioning sexual desire as an offshoot of friendship. Seeking to steep himself within nature, Whitman sings of "[t]he loving day, the friend I am happy with / The arm of my friend hanging idly over my shoulder" (2-3). The natural landscape surrounding the friends is evocative and lush: the "gorgeous hues of deep yellow, with red, drab, purple, and light and dark green" (5)⁶¹ with "the rich coverlid of the grass . . . the private untrimmed bank . . . [and] beautiful dripping fragments" (6-7). Within this erotically charged location, where men's private parts mirror the public displays of nature, "[t]he real poems" appear: "[t]he poems of the privacy of the night, and of *men like me*, / This poem, drooping shy and unseen, that I always carry, and that all men carry" (8-10, my emphasis). On one level, "men like me" signals Whitman's gay self-awakening and his realization that there are other men who feel what he feels. But on a more discursive level, this expression communicates that anatomic symmetry is at the crux of this amative bond. He bases these men's mutual attraction on the same "drooping," "shy" poem that they carry between their legs. The "juicy" and sexual imagery continues throughout the poem, as Whitman eroticizes these men united by their anatomic and libidinal sameness: the "[l]ove-thoughts, love-juice, love-odor, love-yielding, love-climbers, and the climbing sap / Arms and hands of love – lips of love – phallic thumb of love – breasts of love – bellies pressed and glued together with love" (12-13). The "two sleepers at night

lying close together as they sleep” (18) also epitomize the preeminent desirability of erotic symmetry. Protected within the naturalized setting of the arbor, Whitman renders a scene in which his male lover, who “confides to me what he was dreaming” (19), “souses” his naked body with “limpid liquid” (25). Unlike the antagonistic “hankering” of heterosexual desire, erotic desire between men occurs among “sensitive, orbic, underlapped brothers, that only privileged may be intimate where they are” (23).⁶²

Critics have struggled to puzzle out the tension between heterosexuality and homosexuality in the poem. Jimmie Killingsworth sees the poem as a kind of coming-out narrative in which the circuitry of homoeroticism enables the boy to “love not only himself but others as well” (Whitman’s Poetry of the Body 84-5). Larsen takes issue with this reading since it disregards the “creation of a totalitarian eros together with the lapsing away of connection this idolatry implies” (161). While he is sympathetic to critics who emphasize same-sex eroticism in “Spontaneous Me,” he faults them for not attending to the “voyeuristic excitement” (163) Whitman experiences when describing the shame his daughters must endure. Larsen’s analysis of this poem warrants a reconsideration of the often-overlooked ending. For here Whitman is hardly celebratory:

The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find
myself indecent, while birds and animals never
once skulk or find themselves indecent,
The great chastity of paternity, to match the great
chastity of maternity,
...
The greed that eats me day and night with hungry

gnaw, till I saturate what shall produce boys to
fill my place when I am through[.] (5.38-39, 41)

He ends the poem by repeating his frustration over compulsory heterosexuality. The oppressiveness of institutionalized sexuality becomes evident when juxtaposed with the jubilant sexual encounter between the same-sex lovers whose similar “drooping” poems are keys to the homosexual pastoral. This ending is not just any other representation of compulsory heterosexuality because it is the poet—the Adamic, the man—who is devoured by the greediness of paternal chastity. That women experience a similar chastity could exonerate them from causing men’s debilitation. However, it is Whitman’s virile body that becomes subject to nineteenth-century notions of paternity, maternity, and family that deem sexual reproduction more exigent than pleasure. Unlike the symmetry of male same-sex eroticism, greed wins out: it “has done its work” (5.44). Forced into a prescriptive understanding of paternity, he goes through the self-abusive motions of heterosexual sex. Whereas the sousing of “limpid liquid” earlier constitutes an intimate bond of mutuality between male lovers, sperm within the economy of compulsory reproductive heterosexuality is “toss[ed] . . . carelessly to fall where it may” (5.44). That Whitman equates heterosexual sex with masturbation speaks volumes given his well-documented opposition to onanism.⁶³

Again, most critics have interpreted the bondage imagery within this cluster as Whitman’s response to homosexual oppression. While this holds true, the rush to embrace this reading has eclipsed his criticism of heterosexuality as socially regulated and disciplinary. Following the wasteful spilling of his seed in section five, he exclaims in the opening of section six, “O confine me not!” (1). Images of confinement and desired

liberation frequently crop up in this particular section: “O the puzzle – the thrice-tied knot – the deep and dark pool!” (14); “O to have the gag removed from one’s mouth!” (18); “O to escape utterly from others’ anchors and holds!” (22). He is left in this section desiring to “return to Paradise” (11) with his “bashful and feminine” lover⁶⁴ and “absolved from previous ties and conventions – I from mine, and you for yours” (16). Only by undoing the Gordian knot of institutional heterosexuality can he and his lovers “drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous” (23). As he later explains in section eight, later "Native Moments," he strives to become the poet of those “shunned persons” (11) who “believe in loose delights” (5) and “libidinous joys only!” (2).

Whitman concludes "Enfans" on a palpably frustrated note. Able to see his homosexual republic on the western horizon, he wonders if it will ever come to fruition. In section ten, he prepares his readers for the homoeroticism of "Calamus" by re-evoking the vision for which he "started for, so long ago" (10.8). That he writes the subsequent title of this poem—"Facing West from California's Shores"—in pencil in The Blue Book suggests that he approaches California as an ending and beginning; a place of reflection.⁶⁵ Within this poem, the shores of California symbolize the possibility that his democratic nation could ultimately transcend the territorial borders of America, leading to "Hindustan," the "Kashmere," "Asia," "the spice islands" and other nations (4-6).⁶⁶ But he bridles his excitement as he "face[s] ~~the old~~ home again" (10.7) and wonders "where is what I started for, so long ago?/And why is it yet unfound?" (8-9).

With each poem that follows this sobering realization, the focus becomes more exclusively homosexual and homosocial. That the tensions over racial difference that manifest in the earlier sections of Leaves evanesce suggests that, without the presence of

racial others, homogeneity becomes, akin to whiteness, an unmarked category directing ideology and culture. Section twelve begins with a striking reemphasis of the poet's arrant masculinity:

Undestroyed, wandering immortal
Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins, perfectly
sweet,
I, chanter of Adamic songs,
Through the new garden, the West, the great cities,
calling[.] (2-5)

Fleeing that which "feeds" upon him, he reappears in the West in his immortal and phallic form. His potency marks his subtle transformation from the poet of both Adam and Eve to the chanter of "Adamic songs" only. Being in this homosocial and phallic garden permits him to "bath[e] his songs in sex" (7). Moreover, it obviates the threat that women pose to male autonomy. At this point, women fall from the pages of Leaves. "Enfans" ends with the poet-as-Adam "walking forth from the bower, refreshed with sleep" (15.3). Freed from the ties that bind, including Eve, who remains in the bower of the East, Whitman's aching love begins to "attract all matter" (14.1-2). He beseeches those around him to "touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass, / Be not afraid of my body" (4-5). As Moon has explained, "Enfans" is "designed to impel readers to rediscover and reclaim their own 'real bodies,' first in the text and then in themselves, and thereby to undo to some degree the culture's devaluations of bodiliness" (131). But Whitman's celebration of the homoerotic male body comes at the cost of challenging the

devaluation of women's bodies.⁶⁷ Exiting the codified and heterosexual East, he continues "through the new garden, the West" (12.5) on the open road to "Calamus."⁶⁸

"O none, more than I": "The Like" and Erotic Equality in "Calamus"

"Malcomb, I love thee more than women love
And pure and warm and equal is the feeling
Which binds as one our destinies forever."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, in a private poem to Martin Gay.

"In America, the earthly paradise for men only is associated, for obvious historical reasons, with the 'West.'"

—Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (350).

The common topoi of "Enfans" and "Calamus" explain why critics often discuss them in the same breath. A consequence of this approach, however, is the misconception that these clusters appear in subsequent order in every edition of Leaves. In fact, this is the case only in the 1867, 1881-2, and 1891-2 editions. When Whitman first added these two clusters in 1860, he separated them with three poems. In "Poem of the Road," later "Song of the Open Road," he breaks free from torpid "Enfans" and declares himself "loosed of limits and imaginary lines" (13.2). "[T]he fluid and attaching character" ("Poem of the Road" 28.1) floods this open road, allowing him to "inhale great draughts of air" (14.1) and return to "the efflux of the Soul" (26.1, 2; 27.1). In "To the Sayers of Words," he extols the virtues of his poetic medium as he implores future poets to "echo the tones of Souls" (30.2) by finding "real words" (3.2) that capture the "delicious" and naturalness of "[h]uman bodies" (4.1). As in "Poem of the Open Road," he focuses on mutability, noting the fluid nature of discourse. "Air, soil, water, fire, these are words," he pronounces, adding, "I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with theirs—my name is nothing to them" (5.1-2). Unlike these two highly aesthetic poems,

though, "A Boston Ballad" serves as another reminder of the tension between Whitman's ideal America and the real one. Placed between "Poem of the Open Road" and the "Calamus" cluster, the poem marks a brief return of the dark contention over slavery as it sets the stage for his figurative flight to California's free soil.

"Calamus" opens with Whitman walking on "paths untrodden . . . [e]scaped from the life that exhibits itself" (1.1, 3). Freed from the greed of heterosexual "Enfans," he declares the genesis of "adhesiveness":⁶⁹

Here, by myself, away from the clank of the world,
Tallying and talked to here by tongues aromatic,
No longer abashed—for in this secluded spot I can
 respond as I would not dare elsewhere,
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself,
 yet contains all the rest[.] (1.8-11)

Following Emerson's lead in "Nature," he absconds to the wilderness of the frontier to recover the fluid self jeopardized by institutional rigor.⁷⁰ This separation from society is what compels him to "tell the secret of my nights and days . . . the need of comrades" (1.17). Once he admits this, "Calamus" starts "burning and throbbing" (2.8). His escape from the oppressive "Enfans" moves him so profoundly that he reflects on the very nature of "leaves." Whereas earlier they connoted the phenomenological irreducibility of the self, in "Calamus" they signify the undergrowth of same-sex erotic desire. Whitman urges these "timid leaves" (2.20) not to "remain down there so ashamed" (2.21) as he departs from the world which has left him "long enough stifled and choked" (2.22):

Emblematic and capricious blades, I leave you—now

you serve me not,
Away! I will say what I have to say, by itself,
I will escape from the sham that was proposed to me,
I will sound myself and comrades only—I will never
again utter a call, only their call,
I will raise, with it, immortal reverberations through
The States,
I will give an example to lovers, to take permanent
Shape and will through The States [.] (2.23-28)

Renouncing “the sham” of compulsory heterosexuality, he aligns himself with his beloved comrades. The construction of line 26 in which he elides himself with his comrades conveys their intimate fungibility. Even more crucial to this passage is Whitman’s conflation of the “call” of these comrades with the “immortal reverberations through The States.” Insisting that this call will echo throughout the nation as it dilates, he binds comradely love to the growth of the nation. In so doing, he eschews a minoritizing logic toward male same-sex eroticism by bringing it from margin to center.

This intimation proves more evident in Calamus 5, a poem that Whitman block cancels in the Blue Book only to cannibalize from it later in “Over the Carnage Rose a Prophetic Voice.” Chastising the “States” for not ensuring the nation’s inviolability, he declares that “[a]ffection shall solve every one of the problems of freedom [;] / Those who love each other shall be invincible” (5.5.4-5). That this “friendship,” as he calls it, “shall be called after my name” (5.5.1) amplifies his identification with this form of desire that, up until this point, has remained oblique and nameless. To some extent, this is

one of the passages that marks the birth of the homosexual in Leaves, when the word is made flesh and Whitman once and for all pledges himself to “manly affection” (5.9.1).⁷¹ Earlier in “Calamus” 3, he heralds men who express this erotic devotion to other men as “the new husband[s]” and “the new comrade[s]” (21). The influence of male intimacy affects identity by making this devotion constitutive of the self. To return to “Calamus” 5, an even more salient dimension is the way Whitman views eroticism between men as “a democratic reciprocity of the heart” (Katz, Love Stories 27). As I have discussed, although he opens “Enfans” singing of equality between the sexes, his hopes are dashed at the chapter’s end by the confluence of antagonism between the sexes and the “greedy” confines placed on the men by compulsory heterosexuality. For him, the sexual sameness endemic to homoeroticism bears the inimitable impress of equality. “The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,” he pronounces, adding, “The continuance of Equality shall be comrades” (5.11.2-3). The proximity of these two lines suggests the interrelatedness of love and freedom, male friendship and equality. Loving comrades epitomize American exceptionalism. By positioning sexual sameness as a prerequisite for equality, he consigns women to a *de facto* inequality or, worse, irrelevance.

As some have argued, Whitman might have deployed gay desire as a trope to help allay the contentious feelings between white men in the North and South.⁷² Appealing to their kinship might help bypass any further threats to national unity while shoring up white fraternity. But even more specifically, his representations record the complex erotic charge of sameness. In the ninth poem, which Whitman removed in subsequent editions of Leaves, he pines for someone who shares his feelings. Again, this search for “one other man like me” (9.8) sounds the familiar call of homosexual isolation and the desire

for communion. But his want for a lover he expresses using language of similarity. After admitting to himself, "I am what I am," he asks, "I wonder if other men ever have the like, out of the like feelings?" (9.6-7). Here he resists explaining the origin of his desire for another man by putting forth a tautology based on unmitigated self-awareness. "I am what I am" is a reiteration of God's response to Moses who, after accepting God's instructions emanating from the burning bush, wonders aloud what to tell the Israelites: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). Of course, this parallel demonstrates that Whitman further freighted himself with God-like significance and Leaves with sacred meaning. But it also suggests the existence of an essence that presupposes consciousness. Self-intelligibility, then, is not a phenomenological byproduct since the self seemingly prefigures human awareness.⁷³ Knowing the self, to borrow from Emerson, is not about actively shaping meaning, but tapping into it. The disclosure "I am what I am," especially when read alongside his desire to discover "the like" in other men, rests upon a recursion at the heart of which is a philosophy that values sameness. "I am what I am, and I want to find other men that are what I am, too," Whitman seems to say. Again, in the context of an encoded "homosexual consciousness" (Martin, Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 5), this statement stems from the desire to find other men who share the same feelings for comrades—those who are like him. At the same time, however, Whitman's syntax conveys a fondness to establish affective bonds based on likeness—on shared traits, expressed and experienced in a similar, if not the same, fashion. "Does he see himself reflected in me?" he asks, fusing

yet again the recognition of a shared desire with a wish to see the self in the eyes of the other.

This desire for “the like” echoes a sentiment that appears earlier in the fifth poem of “Enfans” in which Whitman privileges homo- over heterosexuality. When fawning over the two sleepers in their eroticized bower, he announces, “The like of the same I feel—the like of the same in others” (5.30). The self defuses the threat of alterity by discovering likeness or similarity in the other. Upon closer examination, however, the other in this poem in which he claims to find “the like”—a “sensitive, orbic, underlapped brother” (5.25), as I noted in my earlier discussion of symmetry in “Enfans”—is similar in the first place. With this thought in mind, Whitman’s claim to bridge the great divide between the self and other is in fact a redoubling of sameness. Oerlmans makes a similar point when she alludes to his “homoerotic mode of writing” which

allows for a kind of degendering in which the poet thinks of himself as a woman, a self different from himself; at the same time the homoeroticism of such writing might be thought of as inciting repetition simply for the sake of multiplication. It is a way of seeing the self in other selves, of finding similarity in difference. (720)

As I have argued, Whitman never finds “similarity in difference” but, instead, fashions symmetries between already homogeneous elements.⁷⁴ Some of these symmetries seem innocuous enough, signifying shared feelings between lovers. In the tenth poem in “Calamus,” later “Bards of Ages Hence,” a lover walks down a city street with his arm on “the shoulder of his friend—while the arm of his friend rested upon him also” (10.11). He echoes this sentiment in the twenty-ninth poem, singing of “a youth who loves me, and whom I love” (29.3). Other examples, though, are more loaded, ultimately signifying the

equality between men that is part and parcel of same-sex erotic desire. In contrast with the power struggle that marks “Enfans,” same-sex erotic desire carries with it the valence of comity. For him, the ideal form of desire involves “none, more than I . . . O I the same” (“Calamus” 14.5-6) and “we two, content, happy in being together” (29.5). The notion of “being together” carries with it sexual frisson as it acknowledges the impact romantic union has on one’s own “being” or identity. Male same-sex erotic desire is guided by an equivalence in which each partner stands on like ground. This premise is prominent in the twenty-sixth poem of “Calamus,” later “We Two Boys Together Clinging,” in which the lovers’ “clinging” is just one of the many participles that binds them as a single unit, highlighting their shared force (“our foray,” 26.10) while sustaining their individuation so as not to jeopardize their intelligibility as discrete subjects.⁷⁵

He continues to celebrate the similarity in erotic desire between men in “Calamus.” The significant difference, though, is that he elides similarity and equality, treating the two as mutually constitutive elements:

Lover and perfect equal!

I meant that you should discover me so, by my faint
indirections,

And I, when I meet you, mean to discover you by the
like in you. (41.2.1-3)

Whitman’s desire for recognition registers a degree of homosexual angst. As he explains earlier in the poem, he seeks out those who can “pick” him “out by secret and divine signs” (41.1.1). However, his expression of this early form of “gaydar” as recognition of “the like” in the other reveals that sameness ionizes desire. For Whitman, in other words,

it takes one to know *and* desire one (“Lover and perfect equal!”). Recognition of the self and seeking it out in others constitute the circuitry of desire. He tinkers with this idea in “Calamus” 42 in which he seeks out a “young man” to be his “élève” (42.1). This student, as he explains, will have “blood like mine circl[ing] . . . in his veins” (42.2). In poems such as “Trickle Drops” (“Calamus” 15 in this edition), blood connotes the “scarlet heat” of desire (15.7) that spills from the poet’s veins and transforms itself into his verse. More troubling, blood evokes its meaning within racial science, effectively transfiguring “the like” into consanguinity. To return to our earlier discussion regarding the Free Soilism of early California, a transfiguration as this could easily imply the degree of racial purity within his emerging nation. Fearing the threat of disorder “the unlike”/the “other” poses, he makes requisite for citizenship the sameness of the blood that flows through the body and, more figuratively, the body politic.⁷⁶

While such a reading deepens the debate on Whitman’s racial politics, the lines that follow suggest an even more figurative reading of “blood” as desire. The primacy of blood, as well as its equivalence with desire, carries with it a connotative power that effects an essential relationship. In other words, Whitman toys with transforming “homosexual” desire into a quasi-genetic trait to engender a community organized around an organic and elemental connection. The desiring subject identifies and selects “the like” and not the other (i.e., the unlike; the opposite; the woman; the black) for his lover, constructing a bond that is determined by sameness and equivalence.⁷⁷ For Whitman, intimacy among men is the American act *par excellence* ensuring equality and freedom.⁷⁸

But the poet’s America was now in the West. The prominence of the West in nineteenth-century literature stemmed from men’s growing anxieties over autonomy

during an epoch in which women carved out spaces of power in the home.⁷⁹ A number of men interpreted this as a direct threat to male authority, seeing the womanless West as an avenue of renunciation. In the Blue Book Whitman revises the first line of “Calamus” 42 so that the addressee is a “boy of the West,” signaling that western-bred boys will become the “new American husbands” who will enact the country’s vision of equality and freedom through affinity. Affiliation with these men holds larger implications for him, especially in relation to the sexual politics that informed this westward thrust.

The male exodus from the overcivilized (i.e., feminized) East has been a mainstay in American frontier history and westward migration. Barker-Benfield, for instance, conjectures that “[i]deas clustering around frontiersmen and bachelors may be associated with the high sex ratio moving west, and more women, more heterosexuality, left behind” (15). Johnson also explains that “the decision to emigrate . . . depended on how people in various places understood and acted on interrelated cultural constructions of work . . . , gender . . . , and migration” (57). Owing to their “uncivilized” character, frontier states such as California attracted men for whom individualism, autonomy, and industry were paramount.⁸⁰ “The aspiring man,” Bancroft wrote, “could break away from drudgery at home, and here find many an open field with independence” (227). Going west allowed for the “dissolution of old conventionalities and adoption of new forms” (225) and “presented the affinity of opposites, with the heroic possibilities of Damon or Patroclus” (228). Akin to Whitman’s symmetry, Bancroft stresses the oppositional nature of these men to impose a kind of supplementary model of male frontier partnerships.⁸¹ The reasons these men shared for trekking to the frontier—the desire to strike it rich; the yen for a less settled, less bureaucratic space; the flight both from a growing feminine

influence in the East and the reality of black emancipation and enfranchisement—remain implicit.

Despite its fustiness, Bancroft's sketch helps to historicize Whitman's romantic visualization of the West. Bancroft explains that relationships between men were "[s]acred like the marriage bonds," intimating the homoerotic subtext that broods in the background of frontier historiography. Writing when Roosevelt championed the strenuous life and Fredrick Jackson Turner pronounced the closure of the American frontier, Bancroft interprets the West as an untamed frontier on which would emerge a warrior/hero dedicated to nation and fraternity. With the frontier closed, this idyllic place no longer existed for Bancroft. For Whitman it was just reaching its golden age. As Johnson indicates, the "Gold Rush did occur in an era of increased possibilities for same-sex eroticism" (173). Situational or not, male homosexuality in the frontier became more pronounced and less scrutinized than it was back East.

In mid-nineteenth-century diaries and legal records, references to erotic desire between men crop up with surprising frequency. "The absence of ladies was a difficulty which was very easily overcome," J. D. Bothwick, an argonaut, wrote in his diary (qtd. in Johnson 173).⁸² Although some men adopted typically feminine roles in this homosocial culture, cooking, cleaning, or taking a man's lead in a bull-dance, those who consciously enacted gender inversion or cultivated manners deemed feminine were reviled:⁸³

Miners . . . made a resolute stand against any approach to dandyism, as they termed the concomitants of shaven face and white shirt, as antagonistic to their own foppery of rags and undress which attended deified labor. Clean, white, soft hands were an abomination, for such were the gambler's and the preacher's, not to

speak of worshipful femininity. But horn were the honest miner's hands, whose
 one only soft touch was the revolver's trigger. (Bancroft 224-5)

Femininity signified weakness and dependence, masculinity strength and independence. Whitman also derided femininity in men. In addition to spurning the effeminate "mannikins skipping around in collars and tailed coats" in section 284 of "Walt Whitman," he contends in section 58, "No dainty dolce affettuoso I; / Bearded, sunburnt, gray-necked, forbidding, I have arrived" (1).⁸⁴ Importing femininity would reintroduce the diacritics of gender and unravel the fraternal network devoted to sameness.

 In fact, for Whitman, sinewy masculinity was essential to the new Eden on the frontier. The way he approached his poetry as a continuation of the epic tradition of versifying the nation-state reflected this conviction. But even more relevant to my argument is the masculine ethos he eroticizes in "Calamus" that dominates his imaginary Eden. In "Calamus" 34, he sets forth this vision in which he dreams of "a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth" (1). The foundation of this city is the love that each man expresses for his band of brothers. "Nothing was greater there than the quality of ~~robust~~ love — it led the rest," he announces, adding, "It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city, / And in all their looks and words" (3-5). These men who populate Whitman's wholly imaginary western city are bound not by institutional affiliation, but by the aegis of love.⁸⁵ In the poem that follows, he speculates that this western-bred love will eventually reunite the warring brothers of the North and South. Whitman characterizes male intimacy—"the germs [that] are in all men" (4)—as essential to the nation: "I believe the main purport of These States is to found a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown, / Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting,

latent in all men" (35.5-6). By including "superb friendship . . . latent in all men" among equality, liberty, freedom, and other abstracts that signal the "main purport" of the country, he envisions it as essential to American identity and comity.⁸⁶

The idea that "robust love" between men would eventually bind the nation's wounds is central to "Calamus" 30, which Whitman would title after the first line of the poem: "A Promise to California." Opening by directly addressing the state, he promises to "travel to you, to remain, to teach robust American love" (3). The term "robust American love," as I have suggested, signifies the "superb friendship" which he believes is constitutive of the nation itself. As he mentions, the desire for this manly love already exists in other parts of the nation such as "the great Pastoral Plains, and for Oregon" (2).⁸⁷ But it is California that serves as the breeding grounds for this love: "For I know very well that I and robust love belong among you, inland, and along the Western Sea / For These States tend inland, and toward the Western Sea — and I will also" (4-5). "The States" that he refers to is the East, which, because of Manifest Destiny, "tend" inland toward the Plains and onto the Western frontier. To some degree, "Calamus" 30 functions as an ancillary to "Starting from Paumanok" in that he singles out a specific location in the country as crucial to his psychic development. Although he remains devoted to his beloved Paumanok and "The States" that bore him, his vision for the future of the nation follows a decidedly western trajectory, finally realized in the promise of California.

Throughout his life Whitman believed that relations of sameness between white men would reunite the nation. In "Origins of Attempted Secession," published as part of Collect (1882), he looked back upon the growth of Leaves and asserted that "[t]he passions and paradoxes of one and the same identity" are at the book's heart, as they were

when a confederation of states banded together to form a fledgling republic. Resurrecting the imagery of sameness in Leaves, he calls for men to be “fused” men an “identity . . . [that is] homogeneous and lasting” (Poetry and Prose 994). Critics have only recently begun to engage with the problematic ways Whitman trusses homoeroticism and brotherhood in Leaves.⁸⁸ As he would later profess in Democratic Vistas, “Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man . . . seems to promise. . . the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these States” (Poetry and Prose 981). Although he stood “solitary” singing of California as the site from which this nation devoted to "intense and loving comradeship" would coalesce, he was not alone, as I will now discuss, in contending that eroticism between white men would rebind these States disunited.

¹ See, among others, Erkkila's Whitman the Political Poet and "Whitman and the Homosexual Republic," Ed Folsom's "Lucifer and Ethiopia: Whitman, Race, and Poetics before the Civil War and After," Sandra Gilbert's The American Sexual Poetics of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, Michael Moon's Disseminating Whitman, Ken Price's To Walt Whitman, America, David S. Reynolds's Walt Whitman's America, Robyn Wiegman's "Writing the Male Body: Naked Patriarchy and Whitmanian Democracy," Thomas Yingling's "Homosexuality and Utopian Discourse in American Poetry," as well as The Classroom Electric (<http://www.classroomelectric.org>).

² Folsom notes that Whitman "was a poet embedded in his times, and his times—not unlike our own—were a period of intense disagreement about the significance and importance of racial difference" ("Lucifer and Ethiopia" 45).

³ See Erkkila's "Whitman and the Homosexual Republic."

⁴ "The 1860 edition," David Reynolds observes, "showed an anxious Whitman trying to establish meaningful links between private experience and public life" in the hopes of reuniting the "dis-United States" by making the personal—his very own identity, in this case—political (Walt Whitman's America 384; 307).

⁵ See Martha Nell Smith's Rowing In Eden: Rereading Emily Dickinson.

⁶ See Walter H. Eitner's Walt Whitman's Western Jaunt.

⁷ For instance, in a notebook entry dated March 26, 1863, Whitman wrote an early draft of what might have been a poem about mining life in California. His tone is noticeably romantic, capturing the natural beauty of the state. "I hear roulade of the California nightingale, the sweet short notes" he writes, "they are in twos and threes they / then at evening the notes of the dove cooing—the beautiful gentle evening" (Volume V, 1963). In this entry, Whitman acknowledges that the provenance of these details was "F. [illegible] McGrath" who "was three years in California."

⁸ J. Barker-Benfield puts the number at "342,000 men out of a total California population of 380,000 in 1860" (14).

⁹ Bancroft explains that the 1850 census records the percentage of women in cities such as San Francisco as a little below eight percent. In mining communities, the numbers were even lower, averaging less than two percent (221).

¹⁰ See Moon, Mack, Oerlmans, Pease, Allen Grossman, Kaplan, and Fisher, just to name a few.

¹¹ Moon notes that the fluidity of identity becomes displaced onto the nation, above all else in the way that Whitman highlights that "[i]dentity flows in both directions, from the man's body to the land's and water's, and from the land's and water's 'bodies' to the man's" (75).

¹² Whitman makes the following revisions to the third sentence of the fascicle: "After roaming ~~various~~^{through} ~~for many years~~^{lands} [.]". He also strikes through line five, removing a reference to the "central Nebraskan air." Finally, he substitutes "Kanuck woods" with "Dakotah's woods."

¹³ With edits, the second part of this line reads, "Shooting ~~my~~ in pulses of ~~ceaseless~~^{ceaselessly} fire ceaseless to ~~vivify~~ all."

¹⁴ For more on "Starting From Paumanok" as a vehicle to reunite the states, see Reynold's Walt Whitman's America, 388-90.

¹⁵ For accuracy, I have copied the lineation Whitman uses in the Blue Book.

¹⁶ Erkkila evokes *E Pluribus Unum*, as well, asserting that "Whitman attempted to seal the Union imaginatively by placing the paradox of many and one at the thematic and structural center of Leaves of Grass" (Whitman the Political Poet 93).

¹⁷ Erkkila notes that "[f]or all their poetic democracy, Whitman's catalogues could operate paradoxically as a kind of formal tyranny, muting the fact of inequality, race conflict, and radical difference within a rhetorical economy of many and one" (Whitman the Political Poet 102).

¹⁸ Whitman resurrects this theme in the first part of "Chants Democratic" when he warns that "[o]ne does not countervail another, any more than one eyesight countervails another, or one life countervails another" (3.2).

¹⁹ As Erkkila indicates, "Whitman expressed uneasiness with the luxury and wealth spawned by the commercial culture of the East" (Whitman the Political Poet 39). Barker-Benfield also documents a growing sense of unrest among men in the East (13-5). For more on the "self-evident inequalities of power and material expectations at every level of production" (129), see Sean Wilentz's Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850.

²⁰ In 1835, Lyman Beecher, an influential Presbyterian minister and father of the abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher, insisted that America's future was decidedly in the West: "It is equally plain that the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West [which] is assembled from all the States of the Union and from all the nations of Europe, and is rushing in like the waters of the flood" (qtd. in Turner 35). Like Whitman and others, Beecher viewed the West coalescing in the frontier as an amalgam or composite of the preeminent qualities of Americans from the Midwest and East, as well as their European ancestors.

²¹ In his notebooks, Whitman, echoing the sentiment of the Young Americans, wrote that "American literature must become distinct from all others. American writers must become national, idiomatic, free from the genteel laws—America herself appears in the spirit and the form of her poems, and all other literary works" (IV: 1586). Or, as he says later in an addition to the first part of "Chants Democratic," "I say that works, poems (whether born here or imported) in the spirit of other lands, are so much poison to These States" (insert, pp. 108). For more on Whitman's ties to the Democratic Review and Young America, see Kaplan 98-103.

²² This theme continues into "Leaves of Grass" in which Whitman declares, "Great is the greatest Nation — the nation of clusters of equal nations ^{advances!}" (11.1) Whitman rejected this stanza, among others, for the 1867 edition of Leaves.

²³ Whitman includes this line as a replacement for "And I will make a song of the organic bargains of These States — And a shrill song of curses on him who would dissever the Union." As I will later discuss, Whitman inserts the threat of secession later in Leaves so that these opening clusters establish the promise of the nation.

²⁴ Whitman later said that "[t]he book has been built partially in every part of the United States" (qtd. in Asselineau 7).

²⁵ Since there are two parallel pencil lines drawn horizontally down the entire page on which these revisions appear, suggesting a block-cancel, we are left to wonder if Whitman even wanted them included within his "Chants." He removed this entire section in the fourth edition.

²⁶ Most of the following additions either appear as marginalia or are from scraps of paper pasted onto p.108-9 in the Blue Book.

²⁷ Whitman adds this line in the Blue Book, inserting it following the line in which he fears that America will "go down to eternal night."

²⁸ Reynolds explains that en route to New Orleans in 1848, Whitman was "struck by the rugged independence of the frontier people" (Walt Whitman's America 120), particularly vis-à-vis the "ultraism [in the East] that threatened to rip apart the social fabric" (145).

²⁹ As Grossman notes when reflecting on the significance of Lincoln in Whitman's postbellum poetry, "Through the establishment of difference between the living and the dead—a laying of ghosts, including Lincoln and his meanings—the elegist recovers the perceptibility of his world, as Lincoln had established the difference between persons and things by the emancipation of the slaves, and thus restored the rationality of the polity" ("The Poetics of Union in Whitman and Lincoln" 201).

³⁰ As Golden notes in his transcription, this line eventually became "By them, all native and grand—by them only can The States be fused into the compact organism of a nation."

³¹ Since Whitman's handwriting is virtually illegible in this section, I have taken this transcription from Golden's transcription.

³² The back cover of the promotional pamphlet for the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass includes a curious reference to California. Immediately under the book's price of \$1.25, Thayer and Eldridge announce that "[c]opies will be mailed to any address in the United States, including California, postage paid, on receipt of the retail price." Of course, California's mention could simply be due to its distance from Boston. Thayer and Eldridge's promise to cover the costs of mailing the book to readers in California is impressive. One wonders, though, if Whitman had anything to do with ensuring that people in this distant state would have access to his book.

³³ Kaplan explains that Whitman wanted Leaves "to grow in 'Free Soil'" (145).

³⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner also stresses that "[t]he growth of nationalism and the evolution of American political institutions were dependent on the advance of the frontier" (24).

³⁵ Berwanger notes that in the mid-nineteenth century, California, like back East, was ideologically divided along the North/South axis to such an extent that the state senate considered dividing the state in two. The division was so well-known that in 1851 a slaveholder from South Carolina wrote a letter to California state senator Thomas J. Green asking that he introduce a law allowing for the creation of a slave colony in southern California. By 1852, the state legislatures dismissed the idea of dividing the state and the request for the slave colony perished (The Frontier Against Slavery, 65, footnote 11).

³⁶ Reynolds notes that "Whitman absorbed the language of working-class protest" and "[i]n his journals . . . denounced the 'vast ganglions of bankers and merchant princes'" (Walt Whitman's America 141). Throughout Leaves, Whitman mounts the soapbox on behalf of workers. In "Chants Democratic and Native American," for instance, he petitions, "Give me the pay I have served for! / Give me o sing the warlike song of the land!" ("Chants Democratic and Native American" 1.34.1-2). The second line originally stated in the 1860 edition: "Give me to speak beautiful words! Take all the rest[.]" This revision clearly links this demand for fair wages to the "warlike song of the land" that would echo across the nation during the Civil War. Moon argues in his reading of "The Child's Champion" that Whitman became interested in temperance primarily because of its attempts to reform and improve the lives of working and lower class men. See also Sandra Gilbert's thoughtful essay "The American Sexual Poetics of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson" in which she fashions Whitman's poetic form as a working-class reaction to Keats's effete and genteel "ornamental poetry." As I will discuss later, though, this screed against the effete and genteel lays bare a problematic dimension of Whitman's poetry toward male femininity, one which currently circulates in America among homophobic discourse.

³⁷ Berwanger lists the number of blacks in California as 962.

³⁸ Berwanger notes that "San Franciscans also ardently objected to the residence of free Negroes" (The Frontier Against Slavery, 63).

³⁹ Whitman's desire to reflect the heteroglossia of mid-nineteenth-century-American culture is at the crux of The Politics of Distinction in which Beach "seeks not only to trace Whitman's relation to historical and cultural sources but to understand the process by which Whitman negotiated, distinguished, or chose between discourses" (12).

⁴⁰ The only edits that Whitman makes to this stanza all stem from his desire to apostrophize past tenses so that "entered" becomes "enter'd."

⁴¹ For a provocative counterpoint to my reading, see Grossman's discussion of Whitman's eroticization of an enslaved black man (193-7). As Beach notes, this gruesome representation appears in the midst of others that implicate it in "the cycle of violence, suffering, and heroism in which the 'I' of Whitman's poem must participate" (The Politics of Distinction 89). "A Boston Ballad, The 78th Year of These States" records Whitman's vitriol toward the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. As a number of critics have explained, he wrote "A Boston Ballad" after Anthony Burns, an escaped slave from Virginia, was arrested in Boston in 1854. Furious at both President Pierce's enforcement of and the Boston government's compliance with the law, Whitman penned a verse in which he hectored the federal and state governments by having specters from the American Revolution haunt the streets of the city.⁴¹ Addressing a man named Jonathan, "a figure of Yankee virtue in the revolutionary past [. . . who] represents the failure of republican traditions in the present" (Erkkila, Whitman the Political Poet 64), he describes the parade invoking a familiar image:

Why this is a show! It has called the dead out of
the earth!
The old grave-yards of the hills have hurried to
see!
Uncountable phantoms gather by flank and rear
of it!
Cocked hats of mothy mould! Crutches made of

mist!
Arms in slings! Old men leaning on young men's
shoulder! (6.1-5)

Similar to the phantom of democracy who earlier commands our bard to chant something democratic, these ghosts remind Jonathan of the sacrifice his forefathers made to secure the nation's freedom and independence. In the face of the spectacle of the moribund old guard, the Bostonians stand "well-dressed," "orderly," and "conduct[ed]" (9.3), traits that convey their royalist collusion. The poem ends with Whitman declaring that these complacent Bostonians might as well "[d]ig out King George's coffin" (13.3) and reinstall the monarchy in America. As a response to the Burns affair, "A Boston Ballad" parallels the oppression of colonial rule with the plight of the fugitive black. As critics have asked, though, if this is a poem about the Fugitive Slave Law, where exactly is the fugitive slave? Burns's absence is in some ways a perfect allegory for Whitman's opposition to slavery. While he was able to sympathize with enslaved blacks as fellow humans, he was more incensed by the idea of slavery itself as it was incompatible with the nation's promise of freedom and liberty.

⁴² Klammer meticulously details the contradiction between Whitman's "poetic lines [in which he] levels all social distinctions" and his "journalistic writings on slavery [that] emphasize race and class differences" (50). Martin suggests that Whitman believed that "[t]he power of love . . . is ultimately political, since it affirms a deep-rooted democracy and brotherhood across racial and national lines" (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 15).

⁴³ Though, as Thomas L. Brasher has indicated, Whitman wrote very little about slavery in his editorials at the Eagle (163).

⁴⁴ Reynolds explains that Lincoln was a colonizationist and anti-extensionist until the second year of the war (Walt Whitman's America 125).

⁴⁵ See Folsom's chapter "Walt Whitman and the Indians" in his Walt Whitman's Native Representations.

⁴⁶ For more on nineteenth-century stereotypes about American Indians, see Robert F. Berkhofer's The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present, Philip J. Deloria's Playing Indian, and Shari M. Huhndorf's Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination.

⁴⁷ Folsom explains that this marriage "anticipates the birth of Whitman's new American character, emerging from the encounter of Europe and the New World, the refined civilization of the past penetrating the raw topography of the future" (Walt Whitman's Native Representations 71).

⁴⁸ See Anthony F.C. Wallace's Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans.

⁴⁹ See Folsom's Walt Whitman's Native Representations 74-80.

⁵⁰ In the first poem of "Chants Democratic and Native American," Whitman uses the term native solely in relation to whites: "What does it mean to me? to American persons, progresses, cities? Chicago, Kanada, Arkansas? the planter, Yankee, Georgian, native, immigrant, sailors, squatters,

old States, new States?" (29.14). In this instance, Whitman uses "native" to distinguish between people born on American soil and those who have immigrated.

⁵¹ In addition to the sources I cited in chapter one, also see Lucy Maddox's Removals in which she discusses that white America conceived of themselves as "hav[ing] the right to appropriate Indianness and use it in the service of [their] claims to cultural independence and legitimacy" (41).

⁵² Folsom explains that Whitman subscribed to this belief: "Indians were doomed to extinction, doomed to evaporate before the inexorable progress of civilization, to which they could never accommodate themselves. White Americans might be saddened or moved by this inevitable loss, but they could acquiesce to it nonetheless" (Walt Whitman's Native Moments 75).

⁵³ I have found R.W.B. Lewis's The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century especially helpful. As Lewis explains, the physical and symbolic distance from the East, still subject to lingering European influences, ensured that the "American was to be recognized now for what he was—a new Adam . . . untouched by those dismal conditions which prior tragedies and entanglements monotonously prepared for the newborn European" (41).

⁵⁴ Henry Nash Smith avers that "the myth of the garden . . . implied a distrust of the outcome of progress in urbanization and industrialization" (187). For more on this, see Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden.

⁵⁵ Martin explains that Whitman's frequent comparison of himself with Christ "suggest[s] his own role as moral teacher and to remind the reader of the difficulty of following such a gospel" (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 63).

⁵⁶ As Adrienne Rich has posited, there is a marked difference between revision and re-vision, one that helps to illumine Whitman's co-option of the biblical myth of human origin. Whereas revision denotes a rewriting of the original, re-vision conveys "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (Blood, Bread & Poetry 35). Through re-vision, "we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched." Rich's lucid explanation of re-vision helps to crystallize Roland Barthes's argument that "[m]yth is a value, truth is no guarantee for it; nothing prevents it from being a perpetual alibi . . . [;] it transforms history into nature" (Mythologies 123). In this way, Whitman sets out to re-vision the myth—the master narrative—of Adam and Eve in order to reclaim it from postlapsarian overdetermination.

⁵⁷ Whitman makes a few changes to this stanza, none of which are particularly salient to my reading:

Have you ever loved the bBody of a woman?
Have you ever loved the bBody of a man?
~~Your father—where is your father?~~
~~Your mother—is she living? have you been much~~
~~—with her? and has she been much with you?~~
Do you not see that theese are exactly the same to all,
in all nations ~~and times, all over the earth?~~

⁵⁸ The extent of the revisions to this stanza in the Blue Book bears mentioning:

I ~~You~~^{A Robust husband} ~~and~~ I, making my way;
It is I, you women — I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable — but ^{deeply} I love
you.
I ~~do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,~~
I ~~pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for These~~
~~States — I press with slow rude muscle,~~
I ~~brace myself effectually — I listen to no entreaties,~~
I ~~dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long~~
~~accumulated within me.~~

⁵⁹ Katz also mentions that some men in the nineteenth century held a “fantasy of ideal love with a good wife [that] conflicted with the difficult, mundane reality of married life” (Love Stories 22). Katz’s reference to a “fantasy of ideal love with a good wife” applies to Whitman’s vision of motherhood, which some have deemed at best unrealistic and, at worse, misogynist.

⁶⁰ Reynolds notes that some people in the nineteenth century shared this bleak view of marriage which was “often characterized by exploitation and duplicity with the rise of capitalism” (Walt Whitman’s America 392).

⁶¹ Originally “the gorgeous hues of red, yellow, drab, purple, and light and dark green.”

⁶² Fone also notices this active/passive distinction between genders when he declares that the “boy, whose longings introduced the sexual activity of the piece, is also the active agent of the sexual adventure” (60).

⁶³ For more on Whitman and masturbation, see Moon’s discussion of “The Child’s Companion” in chapter one of Disseminating Whitman. Martin uses poems such as this one to attest that Whitman railed against “the ‘capitalism’ of heterosexual intercourse (with its implications of male domination and ownership)” and sided with “the ‘socialism’ of nondirected sex” (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 21). However, as I argue in the next section, within Whitman’s purview “nondirected sex” connotes only homosexual sex.

⁶⁴ This is an addition to this line.

⁶⁵ Kaplan makes a similar assertion when he argues that “‘California’s shores’ were not only the Western boundaries of the Union—they were the boundaries of the found and the ‘yet unfound,’ the measure of his psychic growth” (130). Erkkilla reads this poem as the realization that the “dream of the American republic is bounded by a limited supply of land – by California’s shores. . . . Whitman is poised for the flight into spiritual seas that became his characteristic renunciatory gesture as America’s political failure became increasingly apparent in the post-Civil War period” (Whitman the Political Poet 178).

⁶⁶ From a late-twentieth-century perspective, I’m thinking here especially of Katie King’s Theory in Its Feminist Travels on “global gay formations” within the current political environment of the transnation.

⁶⁷ Thomas Yingling makes a similar claim when he notes that “the chief object named . . . in this text [is the] the homoerotic body” (“Homosexuality and Utopian Discourse in American Poetry” 7).

⁶⁸ At the bottom of the page on which sections fourteen and fifteen appear, Whitman scribbled the following: “Now afoot the world to roam; and breathe the open air.” It is this “openness,” as I have been suggesting, that is important for readers to consider vis-à-vis the stifling element of compulsory reproductive heterosexuality.

⁶⁹ For more on Whitman and adhesiveness, see Michael Lynch’s “Here is Adhesiveness”; From Friendship to Homosexuality” and Gay Wilson Allan’s The Solitary Singer.

⁷⁰ In “Nature,” Emerson contends that “to go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars” (23). As I have discussed earlier, Whitman locates homoeroticism within the natural world to countermand the nascent, yet still powerful belief that it was aberrant. This becomes even clearer in the fourth poem of “Calamus,” later “These I Singing in Spring,” in which Whitman finds himself in a bower whose verdancy signifies the naturalness of male same-sex eroticism. As he sings of “lovers” (2) and declares himself “the poet of comrades” (3), he revels among the “[w]ild-flowers and vines and weeds” and “the earthy smell”(9) that permeates everything and everyone.

⁷¹ Martin posits that in the 1860 edition Whitman shifted from alluding to experience as homosexual, as he did in the first two editions, to “defin[ing]” it as so (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 12).

⁷² In fact, throughout Leaves, Whitman frequently mentions the North and South in the same breath. Reynolds theorizes that this reflects Whitman’s attempt to “link the opposing groups” (Walt Whitman’s America 146).

⁷³ Such arguments serve as pretexts for essentialist explanations of sexual desire in which object choices are inborn and, thus, beyond the self’s control. In one of the most recent biographies written on the Good Gray Poet, Gary Schmidgall speculates about the effect Quakerism had on Whitman’s politics and poetry. Pointing to an 1888 discussion documented by Horace Traubel, Schmidgall connects the primacy of self-knowledge in Quakerism with Whitman’s putative knowledge of his own homosexuality:

I have a deeper reason than all that . . . a reason that always seems conclusive, to say the last word – the conviction that the thing is because it is, being what it is because it must be just that – as a tree is a tree, a river a river, the sky the sky. A curious affinity exists right there between me and the Quakers, who always say, this is so or so because of some inner justifying fact – because it could not be otherwise. (qtd. on xxviii)

Although it smacks to some degree of (post)modern-day essentialism and ontological determinism, Whitman’s apologia of sorts demonstrates that internal emotion and desire spill outside the body to signify the beginnings of a gay subjectivity and a national politic, as well.

⁷⁴ To put this yet another way, Whitman makes the homogeneous appear heterogeneous so that he can bridge the difference. On one hand, I admire Oerlmans’s thoughtfulness in theorizing that Whitman’s own alterity—what would be called homosexuality later in the century—conceivably played a crucial role in reordering his sense of the world, above all else gender difference. On the other hand, though, by attributing this “degendering” solely to Whitman’s homosexuality, Oerlmans overlooks that a number of transcendentalists, above all else women writers such as

Sarah Margaret Fuller, heralded the duality in gender as organic, particularly instances in which the feminine was found in men and vice versa.

⁷⁵ Martin adds that Whitman "depicts [the homosexual impulse] in his poetry and essays . . . based on sharing rather than the drive for power" (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 21). While I agree that Whitman sees homosexual desire as communitarian, Martin, through his characterization of homosexuality as opposed to "the drive for power," runs the risk of foreclosing upon the possibility that homosexuality might serve as a critical dimension of establishing power hierarchies, above all else territorial expansion and the reconstitution of a white fraternity. See Sedgwick's take on this in Between Men.

⁷⁶ In his analysis of American nativist modernist literature of the early twentieth century, Walter Benn Michaels in Our America arrives at a similar conclusion regarding miscegenation and racial purity. While I am turned off by Michaels' ultimate argument against identity politics in contemporary social and cultural politics, as well as his dangerous racial determinism (akin to the model of economic determinism/base-superstructure endlessly chanted by orthodox marxists) that reduces all forms of nineteenth/early twentieth century homosexual desire to structuralist reactions to racist fears, I do find myself seduced by his claims that incest (literal and figurative) was deployed by authors as a viable option to combat the fear of miscegenation pervading (white) political and literary culture.

⁷⁷ One wonders if this discovery of sameness relates to Emerson's desire to rid the world of all mean egotism in "Nature." Whitman admits that "I know perfectly well my own egotism" ("Leaves of Grass" 286.1), but this does not necessarily fall under Emerson's category. For, in fact, within this logic of sameness what occurs is a way for the desiring subject to sympathize with the Other and *his* pleasures. In Emersonian terminology, Whitman here finds that the "I" pervades nature without dominating it through solipsism.

⁷⁸ This adhesive union shows that "a fusion of sexual and political identity defeats the competitive hierarchy that mainstream U.S. culture works especially hard to cast as the only viable mode of personal freedom" ("Democracy and Male Homoeroticism" 30). In "Proto-Leaf," Whitman tells his comrade that he will "share . . . two greatnesses . . . [:] The greatness of Love and Democracy" (34.2-3). Whitman later block-cancels this entire section, though the sentiment linking the democratic with the adhesive or homosexual continues throughout Leaves.

⁷⁹ "Only by assuming an unconscious marginal rejection of the values of that society on the part of all or most of its members," Fiedler maintains, "can we come to terms with its glorification of a long line of heroes in flight from woman and home" (345).

⁸⁰ Barker-Benfield's account of westward migration hinges on this characterization:

The possibilities for men who wanted to experience autonomy, to leave home, and go not only to a new place for them but a new place for anyone, were enormous in nineteenth-century America: no checks on movement horizontally, and formally, none vertically for white men, together with a typing of life style that strenuously encouraged motion, from country to town, job to job, ambition to ambition, and the most striking area for this motion was the West. (13)

⁸¹ The Knights of Pythias, a nineteenth-century American fraternal order, commemorated the relationship between Damon and Pythias by adopting the latter's name.

⁸² Johnson also points to an 1856 divorce proceeding in California in which the wife's grounds for divorce were predicated on her husband's "frequently sleeping with certain men, in the same house then occupied by her as his domicil—for the diabolical purpose of committing the crime of bugery" (174).

⁸³ In "The Child's Companion," Whitman includes a scene in which a group of drunk sailors forces a young boy to dance with them in what he refers to as a "bull-dance." Katz also notes that Whitman also refers to these dances as "he-festivals" (34).

⁸⁴ Although comparing Whitman to present-day gay bashers might seem extreme, the disapprobation he expresses toward male femininity presages a component central to the modern-day defense of homosexual panic. An undercurrent of what some would call effeminaphobia marks Whitman's verse and prose. For instance, in Democratic Vistas, he rails against the lingering European influence in American belles lettres, taking aim at the

parcel of dandies and ennuyees, dapper little gentlemen from abroad, who flood us with their thin sentiment of parlors, parasols, piano-songs, tinkling rhymes, the five-hundredth importation—or whimpering and crying about something, chasing one aborted conceit after another, and forever occupied in dyspeptic amours with dyspeptic women. (Poetry and Prose 975)

This topic is something Jay Grossman and I plan on tackling in a freestanding essay.

⁸⁵ As Reynolds explains, the poems of "Calamus" "were at once intensely private, in the sense of retreating from institutions he thought were ineffective or corrupt, and 'public,' in the sense of replacing them with the kind of passionate friendship other reformers of the day were elucidating" (Walt Whitman's America 401). Included among these reform movements who saw passionate friendship as a transformative force were the Oneida and other free-love communities, as well as the Harmonialists and Fourierists.

⁸⁶ Martin posits that it marks it "as the potential foundation of national . . . unity and the essential condition for harmony among men" (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry, Martin 83).

⁸⁷ Martin explains that "manly friendship" "is both friendship between two men and friendship which remains manly, that is to say, is not effeminate" (Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry 34).

⁸⁸ Identifying a double movement within the book, Erkkila has posited that "the 'Calamus' poems are Janus faced, expressing a separatist impulse toward a private homosexual order at the same time they invoke a national and global community of democratic brotherhood" (Whitman the Political Poet 179).

Chapter Four

“Like manhood in a fellow-man”: The Erotics of Sameness in Herman Melville’s Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War (1866)

"[A]re we to assume, as most critics implicitly have, that what was an abiding, homoerotic sensibility in [Melville's] offshore writing was simply abandoned once [he] attempted to write, as it were, on land?"

—James Creech, Closet Writing/Gay Reading: The Case of Melville's Pierre (82).

“When manhood shall be matched so that fear can take no place,
Then weary works make warriors each other to embrace[.]”

—Richard Edwardes, “Amantium Irae Amoris
Redintegratio Est” (lines 19-20).¹

Miles Coverdale’s fantasy that he will one day inspire an epic poet, as I argued in chapter two, is a symptom of his desire that the Blithedale project will provide him with the tools to become a man. By toughing it out in the natural world, Coverdale hopes that he and his Blithedale brothers will be able to stave off the feminization that once imprisoned them in the domestic sphere. Critics have approached nineteenth-century-American seafaring novels in a similar fashion, explaining that life on the open seas provided for men a reprieve from the overly safe and sentimental confines of the American home. Of course, Herman Melville’s Moby-Dick (1851) has come to typify this genre of novels. Whether through Ahab’s need to thwart nature or Ishmael’s gripping realization of the primacy of the homosocial and homoerotic, the abjuration of

feminization and the domestic sphere suffuses Melville's novel. Aware that this concern was endemic to mid-nineteenth-century America, some critics have pointed to the intimate relationship between Hawthorne and Melville as another possibility for the shared devotion to masculinity in the age of domesticity. In his biography on Herman Melville, Edwin Haviland Miller, comparing The Blithedale Romance (1852) with Melville's Pierre (1852) speculates, "If Melville comments upon his relationship with Hawthorne through the characters of Plinlimmon and Pierre, it seems equally plausible . . . that Hawthorne presents his version through the characters of Hollingsworth and Coverdale" (242). While I do not want to get mired in the debate over the use of biography in literary hermeneutics, Miller's rumination on the Hawthorne/Melville and Coverdale/Hollingsworth dyads provides an ideal transition into my discussion of Herman Melville's Battle-Pieces and Other Aspects of the War (1866). For in this collection of poetry, Melville puts forth a vision of American fraternity that, similar to Hollingsworth's, is erected on the foundation of sameness.

I argue in this chapter that in Battle-Pieces Melville reinforces his call for a swift reintegration of the South into the Union by appealing to men's dedication to fraternity. In section one I trace his sudden transformation from a fiction writer to a lecturer on the Lyceum circuit to, finally, a poet. Melville's lecture "Statues in Rome" signals his emerging interest in epic poetry as a means to record the history of the nation state. Moreover, his engagement with the Ancients also records his fascination with the male heroism that is central to the epic. Melville's elegies of John Brown's and Abraham Lincoln's deaths are the focus of section two. As I argue, he offers these two men—one whose execution sparked the Civil War, the other whose assassination marked its end—

as paradigms for a specifically American form of heroism. Section three revolves around how Melville casts Union soldiers within this heroic light, particularly in this age of sentimental domesticity. As I show, these representations convey that Melville lauds an expression of American manhood at the heart of which is a hard-edged drive and devotion to a collective struggle. His inclusion of Confederate heroes and soldiers alongside of those in the Union registers further his desire to reunite the estranged sides, crucially figured as brothers throughout Battle-Pieces, without resurrecting or reenacting the schism that gave birth to civil unrest. In fact, by heralding the actions of men from both sides of the war, Melville seeks to underscore their similarities while discounting their differences.² In the fourth and final section, I show that a causal effect of championing the heroism of white brothers is an evident eroticism that makes them more desirable to the readers, as well as each other. The way he represents the allure of the male body in action, as well as his rhapsodic meditations on men's devotion to each other, hinges upon a homoeroticism that stresses the desirability of sameness (or what is interpreted as such). Consequently, what emerges from the pages of Battle-Pieces is a model of fraternity that eroticizes racial and gender sameness. Appealing to white men from the North and South through this erotic brotherhood, Melville expresses his hope that white brothers will turn inward and rely on each other in order to combat the differences that threaten to divide them during Reconstruction.

I. "[B]y Roman arms we sing"³: Melville's Epic Makeover

Between the releases of The Confidence Man (1857) and Battle-Pieces, Herman Melville did not publish a book. That he had published a novel or a series of stories

almost every year since the release of Typee in 1846 makes this silence particularly resonant.⁴ Some of the titles used in biographical and critical studies to set the tone for this fruitless period are telling, if not melodramatic: "Perilous Outpost of the Sane" (Arvin); "The Quest for Confidence" (Howard); "Doleful Doldrums" and "All Fatherless Seemed the Human Soul" (Miller); and "A Convulsed and Half-Dissolved Society" (Robertson-Lorant). Biographers uniformly highlight the physical and mental exhaustion brought about by the author's self-imposed rigorous writing schedule and the injurious conditions under which he toiled.⁵ On October 11, 1856, Melville, at the behest of his wife Elizabeth, who was concerned over her husband's "severe nervous affections" (Miller 284), departed on a trip to Palestine, stopping over in a number of countries including England, Scotland, Italy, Greece, and Germany. Although the trip was intended to provide a respite, it was far from a holiday. After stays in Scotland and England, he went to Egypt and toured the ruins and pyramids, even managing to ascend the precipitous stairs of one. Yet the arid Middle East was disheartening for the ailing author who lamented in his journal, "Is the desolation of the land the result of the fatal embrace of the Deity?"⁶

Melville's arrival in Italy on February 18 marked a dramatic shift in the tenor of the vacation. While there, he visited museums that exhibited works by Michelangelo, da Vinci, Raphael, Domenichino, and Titian, and toured Pompeii, the Capitoline, the Vatican, the Duomo, and the villas of Boccaccio and the Medicis. He also visited the gravesites of Keats and Dante, as well as the famed Piazza di Spagna where Byron composed part of his intensely personal "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" forty years before (Robertson-Lorant 393). Having only recently fled the desolate Palestine, Melville found

himself in a country rich with cultural traditions and history. Having completed the manuscript for The Confidence Man just before departing, Melville continued to be dogged by his belief that mankind—and, worse yet, nature—was inherently treacherous. As he soon came to discover, the con man's domain exceeded the transient world of riverboats. Writers—especially fiction writers—then must be understood to some degree as grifters expertly conning their readers. In a metafictional digression in The Confidence Man, for example, the narrator exposes the author's inconsistent development of a character, only then to smooth it over:

But though there is a prejudice against inconsistent characters in books, yet the prejudice bears the other way, when what seemed at first their inconsistency, afterwards, by the skill of the writer, turns out to be their good keeping. The great masters excel in nothing so much as in this very particular. They challenge astonishment at the tangled web of some character, and then raise admiration still greater at their satisfactory unravelling [sic] of it; in this way throwing open, sometimes to the understanding even of school misses, the last complications of that spirit which are affirmed by its Creator to be fearfully and wonderfully made.

(85-6)

Fully expecting readers to perceive the inconsistency of some characters, Melville's slippery narrator readily comes clean, only then to warrant these inconsistencies as tools of verisimilitude deployed only by the slyest authors (and understood by the simplest of readers—even "school misses"). By convincing readers to accept something they normally would not, Melville exposes fiction to be just another con in which truth—or what circulates as "truth"—is skewed or even belied by the author.⁷ In this way he cons

the readers, using the very scam about which he has just warned them. The realization that novels were just as suspect as the shady dealings of a speculator or any other confidence man must have been disappointing, if not paralyzing, for Melville.⁸ His reliance on fiction for income, a practice that creates a strong parallel between literary creativity and the speculations of the confidence man, further demystifies the writing process, making the novel less an ethereal product of creative imagination (i.e., the muse/author nexus) and more a tool an author could use to secure the prosaic means of existence (i.e., the author/publisher/consumer nexus).

Melville continued to distance himself from fiction upon returning from his seven-month journey abroad. Unwilling to revert to the fanatical writing schedule he had maintained for over a decade, he explored other media from which he could earn a living. Although initially his sister and brother-in-law Augusta and Peter Gansevoort attempted to secure for him a government appointment, the family decided that he could attain moderate success on the lyceum circuit. The consensus of those around the ailing author was that “frequent changes of scene would be far more beneficial to his health than hunkering down again to write fiction that was destined to fail in the marketplace” (Robertson-Lorant 406). Much to their collective chagrin, however, he proved to be even less successful as an orator than he was as an author. During his first year on the circuit, he made \$423.70 after expenses (Miller 295), a meager amount when compared to that made by heavy-hitters such as Emerson, who earned \$1,700, and Bayard Taylor, who raked in the tidy sum of \$5,000 (Miller 291).⁹ Some have attributed Melville's poor showing on the circuit to his uninspired delivery. As an orator, he was infamous for staring down at his typed lecture and droning on about metaphysics.¹⁰ Despite giving

other lectures that were better received by his auditors, his second and third years on the circuit proved to be just as unprofitable, averaging \$518 and \$110, respectively (Miller 294-5). The final line from a review published on January 12, 1858, in Cleveland's Daily Herald described the situation in stark, unforgiving terms: "We repeat our axiom—good writers do not make good lecturers" (Leyda 2:589).

A matter of note was the subject of Melville's first lecture, "Statues in Rome,"¹¹ in which he celebrated the Romans' preservation of their heroes through statuary. But this was no mere encomium. He uses the lecture as a means to call attention to the need to resurrect heroism in America to countervail the feminizing indolence engendered by materialism and sentimentality. Moreover, through the heralding of poetry as a means to record a nation's history, "Statues in Rome" anticipates Melville's self-metamorphosis into an American epic poet. As some reviewers of the lecture reported, Melville transported his audience to Rome through evocative descriptions of the busts of Seneca and Socrates and the statues of Julius Caesar, the historian Demosthenes, and Nero, Seneca's pupil. These statues, Melville adduces, remind those in the nineteenth century that the ancients, while remarkable for their nobility and legendary accomplishments, were mere mortals. Statuary records that Julius Caesar had "a countenance of a businesslike cast that the present practical age would regard as a good representation of the President of the New York and Erie Railroad, or any other magnificent corporation" (132). Seneca resembles "a disappointed pawnbroker" (132); Nero, "a fast and pleasant young man such as those we see in our own day . . . with instincts and habits of his class" (133). Rounding out his talk, Melville argues for "the careful preservation of [this] noble

statuary" (154) so that the mythology of these noble heroes, whom he compares to "mere" mortals, would persist in memory.

Though this appears to be the trajectory of the lecture, a more complex polemic concerning hermeneutics and the significance of art in post-Enlightenment, industrial America simmers beneath it. Melville sets the foundation for his argument by admitting to his audience that he is not a legitimate authority on statuary. Nonetheless, he is still able to appreciate its beauty for, despite the exclusionary argot of critics and other "dilettante[s]," art "strikes a chord in the lowest as well as in the highest; . . . [i]t is a spirit that pervades all classes" (128). This understanding of art abjures a critical hierarchy that claims ownership of interpretation, as well as artistic creation. Even more telling is the way that Melville positions art as superior to technical disciplines such as science. Given that art functions as a medium through which humans can express their feelings, visions, etc., it must be understood as a materialization of the human intellect. To follow this logic to its end, science, because of its belief in the existence of practical fact, does not utilize, much less take stock in, creative imagination. Instead, it remains embedded in materialist discourses, among them biology:

May it not possibly be, that as Burns perhaps understood flowers as well as Linnaeus, and the Scotch peasant's poetical description of the daisy, "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower," is rightly set above the technical definition of the Swedish professor, so in Art, just as in nature, it may not be the accredited wise man alone who, in all respects, is qualified to comprehend or describe. (129)

Should an explanation of an event or thing offered by a technical discipline ("science") be more legitimate than one that emerges from a layman's consciousness ("nescience")?

Why should scientific logic outweigh humanistic expression? By making art the medium in which organic intelligence is best expressed, Melville sees science as "beneath art, just as the instinct is beneath reason" (151-2). In this fashion he contested the cultural hegemony that science and other technical disciplines managed to realize in mid-nineteenth-century America.

A number of critics have detected Emerson's manifest presence in "Statues of Rome." Sealts, for instance, identifies the "Emersonian distinction between the beauty of art and that of nature and asserting claims of a sincere lover of the beautiful to speak of both in his own right" (Melville as Lecturer 8). This distinction recurs in many of Emerson's works, but it is most prominent in The Poet, a lecture first delivered on the 1841-2 lyceum circuit and later published in Essays, Second Series in 1844. "Those who are esteemed umpires of tastes," Emerson pronounces in the essay, "are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures or sculptures and have an inclination of whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls . . . , you learn that they are selfish and sensual" (222). The counterpoise of these "esteemed umpires"—the "dilettante[s]" in Melville's own words—is the American poet who sprouts from the democratic soil to apprise "us not of his wealth, but of the common wealth" (223). In the midst of celebrating the democratic possibilities of poetry, Emerson admits that, at the time of his writing, such an American poet does not exist. His regret is telling and provocative:

We have yet not genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in

Homer; then in the Middle Age; then in Calvinism. Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and caucus, Methodism and Unitarianism, are flat and dull to dull people, but rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy and the temple of Delphi, and are as swiftly passing away. (238)

Emerson laments the absence of active human inquiry and the subsequent abrogation of open-ended possibility and other circumstances of "wonder."¹² Instead of maintaining the eternal flame of "Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, [and] Swedenborg" (223), Americans have degenerated into passive beings enslaved to materialism and European traditions. Gone is the agonistic hero whose search for meaning impels The Odyssey and The Aeneid. In his place is the "dull" subject classified by the exacting discourse of science that pins down man like a specimen butterfly.¹³

Likewise, Melville in "Statues of Rome" takes issue with how this "heroic tone peculiar to ancient life" (134) has been supplanted by the ascetic doctrines of Christianity that stigmatize heroism as "earthly vanity" (135).¹⁴ To counteract the self-denial central to Christianity, he pledges devotion to "visionaries and dreamers" who actively grapple with the "realizations of soul, the representations of the ideal" (150). Although statuary remains the focus of his lecture, another medium creeps into his field of vision as a means for recording and, thus, preserving this mode of heroism: poetry. Poets and their works, however, simply do not stand alongside the great sculptors and statues of ancient Rome; rather they function as their nineteenth-century counterparts. As I mentioned earlier, when in Rome Melville honored poets such as Byron by making pilgrimages to places that were significant in their lives. Continuing with his veneration, Melville alludes to poets such as Milton, who, while writing Paradise Lost, "must have gleaned

from these representations of the great men or the gods of ancient Rome high ideas of the grand in form and bearing" (137).¹⁵ Melville remarks in a similar tenor that Wordsworth in his lyric poetry depicts the "quiet, gentle, and peaceful scenes of pastoral life represented in some of the later or Roman statuary" (141). Finally, and most saliently, Melville concludes his lecture with three lines from Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" which position Rome as the center of Western civilization.¹⁶ Such an allusive ending has led Hershel Parker to describe Melville as the "most Byronic of American writers, the most profoundly pondering of American writers" (2:362). While this characterization is debatable, it does record Melville's belief that the poet's role in culture is to transliterate significant historical events into American memory. His conception of poetry parallels Emerson's exposition about poetic conceit, particularly the call to record and preserve interpretive agonism. "The deeds of the ancients were noble," Melville claims, "and so are their arts; and as the one is kept alive in the memory of man by the glowing words of their historians and poets, so should the memory of the other be kept . . . by the careful preservation of their noble statuary" (154).

Dismayed by the financial failures of his novels, as well as the critics who pilloried him for shifting to more puzzling "metaphysical speculations" (Robertson-Lorant 402) of human consciousness and existence, Melville turned to a medium long celebrated for its use of conveying heightened emotions, experiences, and consciousness.¹⁷ Shifting from the demands of paragraph to the even stricter ones of verse, Melville scaled the epic paths forged by Virgil and Homer up the Parnassian heights to memorialize the sacrifices that typical men made in an untypical war.¹⁸ Using his pen as Michelangelo and Titian used their chisels, he set out to compose an

"American Iliad" (Robertson-Lorant 484) in which his Homeric commemoration of the heroism of warrior-heroes bordered upon religious devotion.¹⁹

II. "Like those on Virgil's shore—" ²⁰: Melville, Martyrs, and the Teleology of War

In the inscription that follows the dedication of Battle-Pieces to the 300,000 men who died for the "maintenance of the Union," Melville announces that he will use poetry to chronicle the contrasting positions on slavery and the war.²¹ "Yielding instinctively . . . to feelings not inspired from any one source exclusively," he proclaims, "[A]nd unmindful, without purposing to be, of consistency, I seem, in most of these verses, to have placed a harp in a window, and noted the contrasted airs which wayward winds played upon the strings." In fact, Melville did not compose most of his poetry until the end of the war, which makes this assertion problematic. That he gleaned his descriptions of Civil War battles from mediated accounts published in The Rebellion Record further casts doubt on this characterization of his own poetry. Seducing readers with the dulcet tones of the Aeolian harp, Melville screens his project to overwrite the dynamics of history—the contrasting airs of the wayward winds—with his own teleology.²² As a result, he shrouds his commemoration of the heroism seminal to martial culture within the epic tradition of putting history to verse.²³

Melville opens Battle-Pieces with a spectacular example of a white man's heroism. In "The Portent," the poet chimes in with the chorus of abolitionists who interpreted the execution of John Brown as an omen for the Civil War. Through his use of participial phrases, as well as an alliteration of "s" to recreate the sibilance of the wind,

Melville resurrects the executed Brown so that his body grotesquely sways before the reader's eyes:

Hanging from the beam,

Slowly swaying, (such the law)

Gaunt the shadow on your green

Shenandoah!

The cut is on the crown

(Lo, John Brown),

And the stabs shall heal no more. (1-7)

Contrasting the green verdure of the South with the "brown" body of John Brown which sways above it, Melville laments that the once Edenic lushness of the Shenandoah has undergone postlapsarian decay.²⁴ "[C]ut . . . on the crown," Brown in the poet's eyes becomes Christ-like, a comparison he redoubles in the second stanza when he endows the martyr with a visage bearing "the anguish none can draw" (9). The hood that covers the inscrutable pallor of death on Brown's face parallels the future of the South, figured as the "Shenandoah," whose own face remains mournfully "veil[ed]" (10). The only part of Brown's face within plain sight is his "streaming beard" (12) blowing in the portentous wind. Akin to the comet that arcs across the sky in The Scarlet Letter to remind Dimmesdale of his adultery, Melville transfigures Brown's beard into "[t]he meteor of war" (14) streaking portentously across the heavens for all to see and interpret.²⁵

By opening his collection of poetry with Brown's sacrifice, Melville resoundingly establishes the heroic tone of his war poetry. But why does he begin his commemoration of men's heroism with such an unparalleled and fatal example of what he later calls

"martyr-passion" ("At the Cannon's Mouth" 12)? Must a man die for a cause in order to be deemed heroic in Melville's eyes? Absent from the table of contents and set off by italics, "The Portent" does not establish the form of male heroism Melville commemorates, but, instead, inaugurates the mythos of Battle-Pieces.²⁶ Brown's execution provided Melville with a means with which he could devise a metonymy equating the injuries the hanged man's body bears with those later borne by the body politic of the Union.²⁷ That Melville wrote this elegy near the end of the war, again, demonstrates that, as Hennig Cohen explains, poems such as "The Portent" "were not often the product of white heat generated by immediacy, but rather of the cool calculation which the passage of time makes possible" (15).

Melville's poem about Lincoln's assassination, which appears later in Battle-Pieces, sheds more light on his use of martyrs. Similar to the "Weird John Brown" (13) whose fuliginousness discolors the green canvas of the Shenandoah Valley in "The Portent," the murdered Lincoln in "The Martyr" bleeds onto the page spelling out the urgency for the nation to mend the wounds of its injured body politic. As he did when entitling his poem about Brown's hanging "The Portent," Melville uses a simple, yet provocative title that clearly imparts to readers his feelings about Lincoln: "The Martyr."

The first stanza records Melville's framing of the assassination:

Good Friday was the day
Of the prodigy and crime
When they killed him in his pity,
When they killed him in his prime,
Of clemency and calm—

When with yearning he was filled
To redeem the evil-willed,
And, though conqueror, be kind;
But they killed him in his kindness,
In their madness and their blindness,
And they killed him from behind. (1-11)

The archetypal language of "good" and "evil," in conjunction with classical tropes such as "madness" and "blindness" which indirectly allude to tragedies such as Oedipus Rex and Antigone, record the mythic significance of Lincoln's death in America's and, more saliently, the poet's memory.²⁸ Again, as he does with Brown, Melville parallels Lincoln with Christ, particularly his capacity to "redeem the evil-willed." This comparison he redoubles in the third stanza so that the president becomes Christ himself, reflecting "[t]he father in his face; / They have killed him, the Forgiver— / The Avenger takes his place" (18-21). Yet as Melville steeps Lincoln's assassination in Christian typology, he is just as keen to explain the Union's response to it through an ominous refrain:

There is sobbing of the strong,
And a pall upon the land;
But the People in their weeping
Bare the iron hand:
Beware the People weeping
When they bare the iron hand. (12-17; 29-34)

When rounding out his elegy to Lincoln, Melville locates his interest less in the president, himself, and more in "the People" who will decidedly "the parricides remand" (25). In

this way he echoes a sentiment that prevailed in nineteenth-century America about Lincoln: "In himself, notwithstanding his unwearied patience, perfect fidelity, and remarkable sagacity, he is unimportant; but as the representative of the feeling and purpose of the American people, he is the most important fact in the world" (738).²⁹ As an historical event, Lincoln's assassination on April 15, 1865, six days after Lee officially surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, represented a final attempt to render once more a people who had only just begun to "bind up the nation's wounds."³⁰

III. "But battle can heroes and bards restore": War and the (Re)Production of Men

The way Melville conceives of war in Battle-Pieces reveals the complex discursive processes involved in the interpretation of the war both as a discrete historical event and a cultural phenomenon. Haunted by the rift between the Union and Confederacy, he struggles to find value and meaning in death and destruction. Generally critics have not characterized Battle-Pieces as a pacifist work, but as "a meditation on human impotence in the face of the power of destructiveness and evil" (William Shurr "Melville's Poems" 356).³¹ Timothy Sweet, however, has revisited this characterization, detecting in Melville's poetry a concerted attempt to turn the language of war against itself. The lynchpin of Sweet's argument is his assertion that Melville "reflect[s] critically on the cultural function of the affirmative poetry of the Civil War, which was to aestheticize and thereby legitimate war, patriotism, and the state" (180).³² If this is true, then why does Melville so desperately search for meaning in the war? As I will now discuss, Melville, mindful of the remorselessness of battle, underscores that war affords

American men with a needed avenue to heroism. This pessimistic realization—that war transforms men into heroes only by imperiling their lives—weaves its way through Battle-Pieces, engendering discordant themes that record the ambiguities of war.

"On Sherman's Men," which appears in the "Verses Inscriptive and Memorial" section of Battle-Pieces, is bound by this taut logic of war. Based on the bloody battle on June 27, 1864, at Kenesaw Mountain, Georgia, the poem commemorates the 3,000 men of the Military Division of the Mississippi who died fighting the Army of Tennessee. Melville begins his poem by evoking a prevailing feeling that makes their sacrifice even more magnificent:

THEY said that Fame her clarion dropped
Because great deeds were done no more—
That even Duty knew no shining ends,
And Glory—'twas a fallen star! (1-4)

Apparent in this sentiment is the axiom that men are no longer willing or able to perform "great deeds" in the name of "shining ends," much less "Glory." The thought that follows in the next line, however, holds out hope for those who lament Fame's abandonment of her triumphant clarion: "But battle can heroes and bards restore" (5). Robert Milder takes Melville at his word and points to this line as evidence that "[f]rom the first, the excitement of the war drew Melville from his self-absorption to a renewed interest in and admiration for the life of the nation" (196). But who is the "they" who lament the passing of heroes in this poem? Is the poet included, as Milder suggests? Or is Melville cajoling readers into believing public opinion is that the conditions of heroism no longer exist, thereby making male sacrifice that much more exigent? Given that Melville the poet

adopts a variety of personae/voices throughout Battle-Pieces, it is difficult to say with any certainty when Melville the person speaks. The final four lines of the poem, while not putting this issue to rest, do point in a particular direction:

Nay, look at Kenesaw:

Perils the mailed ones never knew
Are lightly braved by the ragged coats of blue,
And gentler hearts are bared to deadlier war. (6-9)

Closing “On Sherman’s Men” by referring to the perils to which the “gentler hearts” of the Military Division of the Mississippi were subjected places the ultimate emphasis on their sacrifice. The propensity of war to “restore” heroes consequently remains imbedded in the body of the poem and subordinated to, but not bracketed by, this final heart-wrenching sentiment.³³

By showing that death and heroism are coextensive aspects of battle, Melville registers the multiple and competing meanings that the Civil War had for the nation and its citizenry (e.g., Federalism vs. states' rights, abolition vs. slavery, North vs. South, brother vs. brother).³⁴ In the aptly titled poem “The Conflict of Convictions,” he fashions an image that clearly refers to the internal strife between North and South: “I know a wind in purpose strong— / It spins *against* the way it drives” (63-4). Under closer scrutiny, though, this image proves multivalent. The cyclic and organic quality of this metaphor suggests that conflict is intrinsic to human nature.³⁵ Similar to Whitman, who in the decade before Battle-Pieces pronounced, “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large I contain multitudes)” (“Song of Myself” 1324-6), Melville is acutely aware that ideology is not impervious to contradiction but, in fact,

thrives on it.³⁶ This becomes even more apparent in “Apathy and Enthusiasm,” which immediately follows “The Conflict of Convictions.” The poem opens in an archetypal winter of discontent: “the winter white and dead” (2) “resounding” with the “cry that *All was lost*” (5-6). The oppressive hopelessness is made even more acute by references to “paralysis” (11), “anguish” (12), “hollowness” (13), “hatred” (16), “the fissure in the hearth” (17), and more gloomily, “the stoniness that waits / The finality of doom” (22-3). The “horror of the calm” (10) before the war, however, is mitigated by “the rising of the People” (28) in the second section. Melville parallels this welcome crescendo of the *vox populi*, especially how northerners, figured as the Christians, “rebounded from dejection” (30) once “the tomb of Faith was rent” (27). The way he perceives the nation’s response to the firing of the cannon at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, purported to have opened the Civil War on April 12, 1861, is expressed in a similar tenor:

And the young were all elation
 Hearing Sumter’s cannon roar,
 And they thought how tame the Nation
 In the age that went before. (32-5)

No longer disabled by “the paralysis of arm,” the nation experiences a rebirth of biblical proportions and mounts an offense. Yet in the face of this rush to protect the sanctity of the Union, Melville continues to spell out the explicit cost of preserving the nation’s integrity: the death of the young. As the “striplings flung the scoff”, the elders “[m]ourned the days forever o’er” (39-40, 42), invoking the Iroquois lament, “Grief to every graybeard / When young Indians lead the war” (45-6). Lauding supporters of the

Union as he sympathizes with those who know that war means certain death, Melville continues to let this williwaw gust through the pages of Battle-Pieces.³⁷

An even more salient aspect of “Apathy and Enthusiasm” is that the narrator perceives that the young “thought how tame the Nation” in antebellum America. This thought is reminiscent of the complaint Melville levels in “Statues of Rome” against Christianity’s stigmatization of heroism. However, rather than repudiate Christianity *tout court*, he spins it anew to authorize war. The Easter allusion in the poem, for instance, illustrates that Christianity and heroism are not mutually exclusive by casting the Civil War as an archetypal fight between good and evil.³⁸ In this context, though, America's past cultural disapprobation of heroism has given rise to an abject, feminized male citizenry.³⁹ The drive to ordain men's heroism on the battlefield as sacred must be understood as a reaction to the growing expanse of domestic fiction in which women, through their dedication to hearth, home, and family, instilled religious belief in their husbands and children. Writing against the current of the scribbling mob of women, Melville transformed men into heroes no longer “tamed” by a feminine—and feminizing—form of Christian benevolence.⁴⁰

“Lyon” also conveys the depths of this agonistic crisis over masculinity in Battle-Pieces. Nathaniel Lyon, a Union brigadier general who was also Melville's neighbor in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was one of the first examples of heroism in the Civil War. In a battle that occurred at Springfield, Missouri, on August 10, 1861, Lyon led his contingent into battle against a Confederate army quadruple its size. The poet adopts the persona of one of Lyon's men and documents the general's unflagging heroism in the face of this Herculean task. Rather than focus on the actual battle, Melville mulls over the differences

between the masculine heart of the war hero and the feminized heart of sentimental culture:

Some hearts there are of deeper sort,

Prophetic, sad,

Which yet for cause are trebly clad;

Known death they fly on:

This wizard-heart and heart-of-oak had Lyon. (1-4)

Of course, using the heart as a trope for human sympathy was customary to nineteenth-century-American readers. Tugging at readers' heartstrings became a generic convention that authors of sentimental fiction deployed to appeal to readers' sympathies and, in the process, advance progressive social programs such as abolition, suffrage, and temperance.⁴¹ In these opening lines of "Lyon," the durable "heart-of-oak" of Nathaniel Lyon is deemed superior to these sentimental gossamer hearts that "fly on." Melville's narrator continues to reclaim the heart from the cloying, flowery language of sentimentality by positioning the heroic, masculine heart within the codified milieu of martial culture.⁴² For example, when Lyon decides to charge into battle despite the staggering odds against him, the narrator refers to his "unfaltering heart" (20). The heart becomes distanced from the realm of sentiment through such martial expressions as "the heart of the fight" (34). Yet in one of the most moving stanzas of "Lyon," the narrator taps the sympathetic energies of the heart in order to sentimentalize bonds between men. Before the battle, the narrator comes upon Lyon preparing for his heroic death:

By candlelight he wrote the will,

And left his all

To Her for whom 'twas not enough to fall;

Loud neighed Orion

Without the tent; drums beat; we marched with Lyon. (16-20)

Ostensibly Lyon bequeaths his estate to his female beloved before he marches off to die in battle. The "Her" to whom he wills his estate, however, is not his wife who awaits him at home but the "*Her*" for whom self-sacrifice was not enough: the Union army and, more largely, the nation. Melville's use of a feminine pronoun does not necessarily mean that he feminizes Lyon's army battalion, much less the Union forces or the nation. His purpose for using this gendered pronoun, in fact, is more deceptive. Evoking the heteronormative sympathies of the readers, the poet elicits a kind of compassion for Lyon that records his unparalleled dedication to his comrades and the martial culture of the Union. Men's dedication to the nation quietly replaces the wife with the army, the marital union with the martial Union, the heterosexual with the homosocial.⁴³ The understated substitution hints at how the greatest American hero is concerned preeminently with his brothers in arms, not the heterosexual family.⁴⁴ For Melville, Lyon is the epic hero who "foresaw his soldier-doom, / Yet willed the fight" and, after his valiant death, "[w]as up to Zion, / Where prophets now and armies"—not wives, lovers, parents, or children—consecrate him a hero (49-50, 52-3). Men such as Lyon in so doing "prove" how in war "oak, and iron, and man / Are tough in fibre yet" ("The Temeraire" 3-4).

Akin to his lion-hearted comrade, the "honest heart of duty" (1) of Lieutenant John Lorimer Worden arouses Melville's interest in "In the Turret." The poem serves as another instance of Melville struggling to overwrite or downplay the fatality of war by registering the lieutenant's supreme (and overly determined) devotion to duty.⁴⁵ On

March 9, 1862, Worden, in command of the ironclad ship the *Monitor*, attacked the Confederate *Virginia* (earlier called the *Merrimac* before becoming an ironclad) off the coast of Hampton Roads, Virginia. Although the battle was without a decisive winner, Worden earned his stripes as a hero by barricading himself in the turret to fire at the seemingly unsinkable ship. Melville compares Worden's brave course of action with the mythical Hercules "groping into haunted hell / To bring forth King Admetus' bride" (5-6). Such a parallel manages to cast Worden's valor in epic and heroic terms while depicting war as a passage through hell: a proverbial trial by fire. Through his alliterative use of the consonants "c," "g," "s," and "w" and the consonant cluster "cr," the poet reenacts the sounds of the water hissing and gurgling and waves crashing against the iron sides of the ship, reenacting the event for the reader:

Escaped the gale of outer ocean—
Cribbed in a craft which like a log
Was washed by every billow's motion
By night you heard of Og
The huge; nor felt your courage clog[.] (12-16)

Paramount to the action of the battle in the poem is how Melville imagines Worden's response. When Worden and his crew approach the *Virginia*, he declares, "Day brings the trial; / Then be it proved if I have part / With men whose manhood never took denial" (19-21). Despite being under fire, the lieutenant does not surrender and holds firm, attributing his valor and dedication to the men serving under him and their shared investment in "manhood." For Melville, though, the bravery that Worden exhibits during this encounter does not fully reflect the commander's heroism. To heighten the drama, the

poet invokes "a spirit forewarning / And all-deriding" (25-6) to confront Worden. Even under supernatural pressure, the commander valiantly refuses to waver:

"Stand up, my heart; be strong; what matter
If here thou seest thy welded tomb?
And let huge Og with thunders batter—
Duty be still my doom,
Though drowning come in liquid gloom;
First duty, duty next, and duty last;
Ay, Turret, rivet me here to duty fast!" — (34-40)

The poet so zealously records Worden's heroism that "In the Turret" almost reads as a mock heroic or melodrama ("I have thee now," bellows the demonic spirit in line 29). By recounting Worden's bravery using inflated imagery, the poet ensures the great lieutenant's rank in American memory, writ so largely that he "twice live[s] in life and story" (41).

One might wonder if Melville uses hyperbole to satirize the inflated language of heroism.⁴⁶ Such a theory, however, fails to reckon with the poet's goal in Battle-Pieces to commemorate the sacrifices men made during the Civil War in the name of the Union. In fact, Melville reaffirms his reason for writing Battle-Pieces in "In the Turret," but in a way that more evidently spells out the politics of his newly found poetic vocation:

What poet shall uplift his charm,
Bold Sailor, to your height of daring,
And interblend therewith the calm,
And build a goodly style upon your bearing. (8-11)

When read alongside the assertion in "On Sherman's Men" that "battle can heroes and bards restore," these lines uncover the current of Melville's thought regarding poetry: that it functions as an ancillary action to the heroism of soldiers. By recording these valiant actions and actors in his poems, he introduces these men as heroes to the reading public. In "The Poet," Emerson establishes the "credentials of the poet" as primary to the phenomenon or event being described. As he explains, "The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage, but, as they act and think primarily, so he writes primarily what will and must be spoken. . . . The argument is secondary, the finish of the verses is primary" (224-5). Declaring that the poet is primary to the people or processes he treats counteracts the phenomenological sloughing off of "mean egotism" Emerson champions in Nature. While Melville is not as prescriptive when defining the role of the poet, nevertheless his attempt in Battle-Pieces to link his poetic endeavors with the heroism of the soldiers he admires follows a similar trajectory.

To wit, that Melville never fought in battle has been a prevailing criticism leveled against his poetry. Critics have characterized his representation of the Civil War as at best "versified journalism" (Wilson 479), derivative of authors who experienced the destruction of the war first hand (e.g., Stephen Crane and even Walt Whitman, whose service as a nurse in Washington D.C. profoundly shaped his own poetry).⁴⁷ Yet those who level this criticism often fail to take into account the greater impact the war had on American cultural and social politics. Melville's poetry in Battle-Pieces does not document the brutal specifics of war, but records the repercussions the war had on the American public. This is apparent in "Donelson," a poem in which Melville focuses on how information about the war was disseminated to those waiting on the home front.

Using the example of the Union's victory over the Confederates at Fort Donelson, Tennessee, the poet documents the public hunger for information about the war. "Donelson" opens in the dead of winter with a group of townspeople gathering around a bulletin board onto which narratives of battles are affixed for the public to read. To simulate the experience for his readers, Melville parodies the style of the bulletin, italicized in the poem, so as to distinguish the contents of the missive from the responses of the townspeople:

Important.

We learn that General Grant,

Marching from Henry overland,

And joined by a force up the Cumberland sent

(Some thirty thousand the command),

On Wednesday a good position won—

Begun the siege of Donelson. (13-19)

The rhyme scheme suggests that Melville did not use an official text verbatim or even attempt to fabricate one. But the bulletin's inauthenticity or fictiveness does not undermine his attempt to gauge the impact the war has on the public. Although the people in the crowd have dissenting opinions about the war, either cheering the Union or lamenting the death and destruction the war will cause ("Win or lose . . . / Caps fly the same" 161-2), they all crave information. When a man posts a "brief sheet" only consisting of five sentences, the crowd responds, "What! Nothing more?" (192) As "Donelson" unfolds, though, the public interest in the war becomes one of shared dread.

After a particularly grueling account of a battle that occurred on the grisly level of "bone to bone" (305), the crowd reacts mournfully:

Flitting faces took the hue
Of that washed bulletin-board in view,
And seemed to bear the public grief
As private, and uncertain of relief [.] (320-3)

When victory is announced, the "happy triumph" (438) of the assembled crowd is quickly tempered by the list of the dead that "like a river flows / Down the pale sheet" (449-50). But, again, the larger point the poem highlights is that even those who do not fight in the war have a stake in, and identify with, what happens to the soldiers. Moreover, Melville is keen to mark out that the bonds of identification that these civilians form with the warring factions are filtered through government propaganda.

The way that Melville understands poetry, as well as the *modus operandi* of the poet, in Battle-Pieces parallels the purposes that the war bulletins serve in "Donelson." Similar to the narrative accounts of battle that the crowd devours, the poet narrates and thus mediates or shapes the material of the war; he, in Emerson's words, acts as an architect, organizing discursive elements into a structure. Melville, however, eschews this attitude of the poet's work. Instead, he casts his poetic vocation in Battle-Pieces in martial terms so that he stands shoulder-to-shoulder with these men he commemorates.⁴⁸ Akin to "In the Turret" and "On Sherman's Men," "At the Cannon's Mouth" links the daring of these heroes in battle to the nationalist activism of the poet. The hero in this poem, Lieutenant William Barker Cushing, ordered his crew to drive their ship into the Confederate vessel *Albemarle* on October 27, 1864. That Cushing survived while most of

his crew perished seems to have escaped Melville, who, instead, focuses on the "martyr-passion" by which the lieutenant was enraptured:

Pretense of wonderment and doubt unblest;

In Cushing's eager deed was shown

A spirit which brave poets own—

That scorn of life which earns life's crown;

Earns, but not always wins; but *he*—

The star ascended in his nativity. (25-30)

The assertion that "brave poets own" this heroic spirit could reinstate the very link between Melville's conception of the poet and Emerson's that I have rejected. But two factors suggest that this separation or difference is valid. First, "own" serves a formal purpose in the poem to establish a couplet rhyme with "shown" and to highlight that Melville "shows" this to his audience.⁴⁹ Second, and more pointedly, "own," while establishing the poets' possession of this trait, also effects a relation between the poets and the martial hero that is based solely on similarity (i.e., his valor is the same as the poets' own). Again, as I have been discussing, this similarity reveals the homology that Melville relies on to entangle himself as a poet with the men he commemorates in his poems. The verses of the warrior-poet, then, are just as crucial to American memory as the physical actions of the warriors, themselves.

IV. “Mine be the manful soldier-view”⁵⁰: Melville’s Homologies

This homology does more than transpose the words of the poet with the actions of martial heroes. The homologous endowments of the poet and hero give rise to a more disturbing dimension of Battle-Pieces: Melville's recurring appeal for white brothers of the North and South to reunite. I want to continue to tease out the homologies—what I want to call the “homologies”—Melville employs in order to shore up the constitutive bond of sameness under fire during the war. Unlike the term “homology,” which establishes the similarity of structures, proportions, and positions between otherwise discrete entities or materials, “homologic” highlights that there is a cultural logic at work privileging similarity, particularly in the face of alterity?⁵¹ As I have suggested, Melville deploys the poet/soldier homology in order to recast the tame and feminized nation in epic, heroic, and masculine terms. The preeminence of the homosocial world of the army, then, in which men are insulated from both women and feminization, is one of the homologies at work in Battle-Pieces. In this section, I want to contemplate how the appeal of homosociality allows Melville to subject men to a homoerotic gaze. This slippage or movement from the homologic to the homosocial to the homoerotic highlights that the topos of gender sameness seminal to the former carries over to the latter, so that the erotic value or desirability of the subject under the poet's—and, consequently, the readers'—gaze is predicated upon his likeness to other men.⁵² There is nothing like a man in uniformity. Crucially, as I will explain, the trope of sameness that serves the express purpose of reuniting Northern and Southern brothers registers that white men are at the omphalos of Melville’s poetic vision.

Though Melville identifies specific men in Battle-Pieces, men's bodies, for the most part, circulate throughout the text as abstract corpora that never clearly bear the destructive inscription of war. In contrast with how the poet places in the foreground the sacrifices men made for the nation-state when commemorating their heroism and valorous deaths, their injured and dead bodies never fully come into focus in the *mise-en-scène* of battle.⁵³ For a book of poetry documenting men's heroism in war, this absence is puzzling. By blurring heroes' injuries or even aestheticizing violence, does Melville run the risk of creating a conflict between a highly idealized abstract/conceptual realm and a more concrete/physical one? Would readers deem a graphic representation of the wounded male body gratuitous and disrespectful? Did Melville believe that including graphic imagery would remind readers of the physical toll war had on young America, consequently turning them off to his project to herald that "battle can heroes and bards restore"? The one instance in which the male body comes into focus in Battle-Pieces offers clues to why the injured body remains outside the diegesis of the poems. In "On the Photograph of a Corps Commander," the narrator gazes at a photograph of General Winfield Scott Hancock, "the soul that led / In Spottsylvania's [sic] charge to victory" (4-5). Beginning with the tautology "man is manly" (1), the narrator parses the photograph of Hancock, paying close attention to "[t]he warrior-carriage of the head / And brave dilation of the frame" (2-3). At the crux of Hancock's desirability is the narrator's belief that the general's "spirit moulds the form" (9) —that his heroic spirit correlatively shapes his manly physical frame. The warrior's robust body evinces Melville's belief that the heroism found in battle determines the legibility and degree of one's manliness. Man is made manly from the inside-out. Unlike the abject tameness of peacetime, war provides

men with the means to achieve manliness. Furthermore, as the narrator explains in the closing stanza of the poem, "Nothing can lift the heart of man / Like manhood in a fellow-man" (19-20). The manly man that serves as the paradigm for the heroic warrior inspires and attracts other men who, in turn, desire and strive to emulate this same brand or expression of manliness. Men become manly in and through themselves and each other; their identities as manly men are commutable, intersubjective, and surprisingly porous. However, the permeability of men's identities remains completely conceptual, for the general's manliness is contingent upon the integrity and completeness of his physical body. Unlike the soldiers of the war whose bodies were punctured by bullets, as well as those whose arms and legs were amputated to stave off infections such as gangrene, the general's body remains complete, phallic, and inviolate—the measure of all things.⁵⁴

There is more to Melville's rhapsody that "Nothing can lift the heart of man / Like manhood in a fellow-man." According to the OED, manhood in the nineteenth century denoted "[t]he qualities eminently becoming a man; manliness, courage, valour."⁵⁵ This particular entry records that a subject is deemed a "man" by displaying traits such as "courage" and "valor." Undoubtedly the "like" in this sentence signals a simile, making "manhood in a fellow-man" one of the many things that "can lift the heart of a man." At the same time, "like" reemphasizes the preeminence of sameness among men: nothing lifts the heart of a man when he interprets a similar form or expression of manhood in another man. But "manhood" might also signify the anatomic origin or root of the traits that symbolize "manhood."⁵⁶ This meaning uncovers a *double entendre* in the poem that privileges sexual acts between "fellow" men: there is nothing like having or experiencing a man's manhood in a "fellow-man." Sodomy—or perhaps a conceptual or theoretical

form of sodomy such as intersubjective penetration, if "like" indicates a simile—becomes the fraternal act *par excellence* in which a man derives pleasure from experiencing or feeling another man's manhood internal to his physical being or psychic space. Men's anatomic sameness ensures that this heartfelt act can cut both ways—is interpenetrative—thus successfully skirting the threat of sexual difference. This specific expression of homosexual desire, then, is conterminous with, and mutually constitutive of, the homosociality of martial culture. A similar *double entendre* occurs in the final two lines of the poem and also bonds the heroism Melville commemorates with sexual contact between men: "But manly greatness men can span, / And feel the bonds that draw" (23-24). The "bonds that draw" are an outcome of men's abilities to span—to encircle with their hands or even arch over—another fellow's "manly greatness." Spanning each other, in other words, gives rise to the bonds that draw—the seminal ties that bind—fellow men together, generating the "kindle strains that warm" (12).⁵⁷

Critics have only recently begun to probe the erotic ambiguities of "On the Photograph of the Corps Commander." Sweet, for example, aligns Melville's vision of manliness in the poem with Whitman's "adhesiveness," a term the latter borrowed from the then-legitimate science of phrenology as a shibboleth for male homosexual physical and emotional attachments. Whereas Whitman envisioned adhesiveness and, thus homosexuality, as an ideal democratic expression of desire (i.e., love American-style), Melville, according to Sweet, "does not draw . . . any political inference from this possibly homoerotic response" (171). On the contrary, Melville does in fact draw a "political inference" from this homoeroticism, one that is imbedded deeply in a topos that deems gender sameness desirable as it cultivates the bonds of interdependence and

reliance forged by men in martial culture.⁵⁸ The medium of the photograph, mentioned by Melville in the title of his poem, delineates this homologous of identity that allows men to remain individuated even as they become entangled as “fellow-men.” General Hancock might be the focus of the photograph in “On the Photograph of a Corps Commander,” but Melville brings into focus how the photograph lays bare the complex processes of identification between the subject and the specular object of his gaze.

In a similar fashion Sweet detects Melville’s interest in the photograph, particularly how it defines or typifies what is “manly.” He misinterprets this moment of identification, though, when he argues that Melville “hints that narcissism is the real ground of the wartime camaraderie Whitman valorized” (171). As I have discussed, one of the steps in the narrator’s process of reading or analyzing the photograph is to focus on different parts of Hancock’s body and explain that they exemplify manliness. The narrator synthesizes these various body parts to appreciate Hancock as a fellow subject that he can desire, as a fellow manly man. The constitutive difference that distinguishes the viewer of the photograph from the object of his gaze—and, more vertiginously, the reader of the poem from the poet and the general at which the poet gazes—becomes somewhat attenuated through the observation that similar elements exist in both entities; that both the subject and the object of his gaze possess or inhabit a form of manhood that is not identical, but commutable.⁵⁹ Yet despite the commutability and intersubjectivity of male identity, the line of demarcation between subject and object remains intelligible and persistent. The viewer does not become “locked in his own narcissistic gaze” (Sweet 171) as he scrutinizes the photograph, suggesting a complete breakdown of the self/other distinction.⁶⁰ Rather, he transforms the body of the general into the desirous object of his

gaze, only to realize by the end of the poem that the object's traits that lift his heart are also the traits that make him a subject, a "fellow" man. In terms of identifying a fellow man, according to the narrator, it takes one to know—and desire—one.⁶¹

Puzzling out the technology of the photograph is one way to chart the interweaving processes of identification with and desire for a fellow subject. The advent of photography and its tinny predecessor daguerreotypy had a profound impact upon authors' imaginations and literary practices. As Susan Williams has observed, nineteenth-century-American authors, anxious about how these mimetic reproductions of human beings would affect the imagination of the reading public, made fictional portraits central to their works in order to "challeng[e] readers to ask fundamental questions about the value of the word" (14). Although daguerreotypes and photographs offered mirror reflections of the real world, writers described them to show that images, despite their mimetic qualities, become textured only through discourse.⁶² "On the Photograph of the Corps Commander," in which Melville places the general on display as a paradigm for martial manliness, serves this express purpose. Even the process of daguerreotypy yields a product that demands the active mind of the viewer. As Williams explains, the silver plate on which the daguerreotype was developed created an eerie effect that

made it function as a mirror when held one way, and reveal an image when held another way. . . . [T]o look at a daguerreotype was to look at oneself even as one looked at the image. For this reason . . . 'the daguerrian image allows for an engagement between viewer and subject unique in photography; to see the image is to become an active agent in the picture's 'coming to life' as an historical event.' The self one saw was not posed for a portrait but rather engaged in the act of

contemplating the image: the daguerreotype could reveal the truth not only about others but about oneself. (52)

Williams' observation diagrams the narrator's act of gazing at the photograph of the general highlighting the reinstatement of the difference between subject and object as it simultaneously destabilizes it. "On the Photograph of a Corps Commander" develops a form of intersubjective desire that eroticizes commutable forms of manhood while preserving men's individuation. Scrutinizing the photograph of the general requires the gazing subject to puzzle over the terms of his own identity as he cobbles a relationship to the object at which he is looking (and which might be looking back at him). The narrator stares at the image of the general and interprets him as a separate individual, only then to begin to decipher that he, too, is a "fellow" man—that the viewer's reflection of himself coexists alongside the image of the general while remaining discrete from it.

In fact, nineteenth-century conceptions of what would later become homosexuality spun from this paradox of self and other. The logic of sexual difference that incalculably shaped American culture also informed the way that same-sex desire became broadly conceived. As feminist historians and gender theorists have explained, nineteenth-century Americans treated sexual difference as an irreducible difference that made possible the self/other binary. By *de facto*, homosexual desire was understood as a breach of this binary in the way that it eroticized sameness. As I discussed in chapter two in relation to Hollingsworth's literalizing of sameness in same-sex desire, many thinkers in nineteenth-century culture often abjured homosexuality as a symptom or aftereffect of outright narcissism. But while the pervasiveness of this attitude might suggest that it was believed to be axiomatic, this is not entirely the case. Other philosophers insisted that

same-sex desire destabilized this binary upon which subjectivity is predicated in the way that it stressed that self and other were mutually constitutive. Thoreau, for instance, envisioned relationships with other men as “not two united, but rather one divided” (qtd. in Warner “Thoreau’s Bottom” 66).⁶³ The attenuated, yet persistent boundary that divides the narrator of “On the Photograph of the Corps Commander” from the general follows a similar circuit in which one’s identity is seen as mutually constitutive of the other’s. The recognition of sameness central to this poem informs Melville’s overarching project in Battle-Pieces to eliminate the difference that pitted Union men against their Confederate brethren. But this brotherly reunification—what he refers to as the “Re-establishment” (259) in the prose supplement—hardly has an impact upon the other conceptions of difference. In fact, by reconciling and reuniting these men through the matrix of a white fraternity, Melville relies upon the same logic of racial difference from which their initial division spun. The imagined sameness that transforms white men into brothers, in other words, is local or atomized, exposing that this particular elimination of difference is contingent upon the recognition and policing of other more universal forms of alterity.

Melville intersperses moments throughout Battle-Pieces during which the divide between the warring factions is rescinded, albeit sometimes temporarily, harking back to the “by-gone days” (“On the Slain Collegians” 38) when the North/South distinction was not conceived of as an antagonism. As a staunch Unionist, Melville keenly demonizes the cause of the Confederacy. In “The Conflict of Convictions” he links a “disciplined captain, gray in skill” with the fallen angel Raphael, “a white enthusiast still” (9-10). The Union boys in blue fare better, protected by the guardian angel of Israel, “Michael the

warrior one" (48). Recounting the gruesome battle that occurred in April of 1862 at Shiloh, Tennessee, Melville elegizes the "dying foemen mingled there" (13).⁶⁴ Shiloh, which in Hebrew means "place of peace," was the site of a Methodist log church around which Yankee and Rebel soldiers, including the Confederate general Albert Sydney Johnston, lay dead or fatally wounded. This sad irony is not lost on Melville, who acknowledges that even the church cannot intervene. However, he underscores that men's relation to each other as foes quickly dissipates and gives way to the anamnesis of male friendship: "Foemen at morn, but friends at eve— / Fame or country least their care" (14-5). "Amity itself can only be maintained by reciprocal respect," he opines in the prose supplement, tacking on the Platonic afterthought that "true friends are punctilious equals" (270). By dramatizing this dissolution of the North/South divide, Melville exhorts white men to bridge the chasm between them.

The similarities between Rebels and Yankees become so prevalent and moving that Melville fashions a series of equivalencies that conjoin these two sides even as they remain warring. In "On the Slain Collegians" he couches the conflict in simple terms: "Warred one for Right, and one for Wrong? / So be it; but they both were young— / Each grape to his cluster clung" (45-7). This sentiment emphasizes the artificiality of the North/South divide that disappears in the face of the great equalizer, "democratic Death."⁶⁵ In "Donelson," war becomes "diamond-cutting-diamond work" (84), suggesting the perversity of war in which friend becomes foe, diamond cuts diamond, like kills like. As in "Shiloh," Melville problematizes the line that separates Yankee from Reb by indicating moments when it is traversed:

Some of the wounded in the wood

*Were cared for by the foe last night,
Though he could do them little needed good,
Himself being all in shivering plight.
The rebel is wrong, but human yet;
He's got a heart, and thrusts a bayonet.
He gives us battle with wondrous will—
This bluff's a perverted Bunker Hill. (253-60)*

The slippage between foe and comrade suggests the treachery and, even more saliently, "perversion" of the North/South division deepened during the war. In fact, as Melville is keen to reveal, there is even more yoking these two sides than there is dividing them. Melville is clear about this point in the prose supplement when he sympathizes, "For that heroic band—those children of the furnace who, in regions such as Texas and Tennessee, maintained their fidelity through terrible trails—we of the North felt for them, and profoundly we honor them" (272). Melville's veneration of these Confederate sons for remaining constant to their beliefs is not, however, tantamount to his approbation for their cause. Penned at the close of the war, this commemoration serves an important purpose: by casting Confederates in a positive light, he abjures the antagonistic relationship between northern and southern men he fears might persist after the war. On one hand, Melville holds firm to his disapprobation for the South's secession as he tries to persuade his northern readers that Confederate leaders and soldiers—"designing" and "honestly-erring men" (266), as he calls them in the prose supplement—should be commended for remaining true to their cause. On the other hand, he reminds Confederates of their lost cause while not castigating them for defending it, ameliorating

their re-absorption into the Union by honoring their drive and devotion. "May his grave be green," Melville declares in homage to a dead Confederate soldier in "A Grave near Petersburg, Virginia," "though he / Was a rebel of iron mould" (9-10).⁶⁶

As if this were not enough, Melville in "Rebel Color-bearers at Shiloh" exhumes the politically charged figure of the martyr to bolster his contention about Confederate soldiers. Imagining that the color bearers braved death to display their colors, he clearly registers his admiration for them. "Such living robes are only seen," he explains, "Round martyrs burning on the green— / And martyrs for the Wrong have been" (8-10). Bestowing martyrdom upon the nameless color bearers might have not offended too many readers, particularly since their actions—at least in the poem—never directly imperil the lives of Union soldiers. The same cannot be said for Melville's decision to place Stonewall Jackson in this context. In the first of two consecutive poems about the Confederate general, the poet goes out on a limb when he includes Jackson in his pantheon of martial heroes. The way Melville pleads to his audience to revere Jackson raises the curtain on the logic of his veneration of men and martial culture. Remaining steadfast to the cause of the Union, the poet communicates that heroism knows no bounds or sides; that Jackson, while fighting for the "other" side, reached the height of daring that he finds in his blue boys. But even though the Confederacy has fallen to defeat, the martial poet in Melville cannot help but see the resplendence in the heroic actions of its sons. The comparison he draws with another martyr is potentially scandalous and undeniably provocative:

Dead is the Man whose Cause is dead,

Vainly he died and set his seal—

Stonewall!

Earnest in error, as we feel;

True to the thing he deemed was due,

True as John Brown or steel. (7-12)

Undoubtedly Melville is circumspect and walks the fine line between elegizing the dead man and venerating his lost cause. He does not put Jackson on equal footing with Brown, noting that the former was "earnest in error." Yet uttering the two men's name in the same breath is one of the poet's most daring acts in Battle-Pieces. The first poem about Jackson, subtitled "Mortally wounded at Chancellorsville," explains the necessity of the general's death in chronicling the passing of the Confederacy. But in the midst of doing this, Melville wonders, "Even him who stoutly stood for Wrong, / How can we praise?" (4-5) This conflicted tone carries through to the end of the brief poem, which closes with the poet urging the reader to join him in "drop[ping] a tear on the bold Virginian's bier / Because no wreath we owe" (17-8).

Melville's spare criticism of Jackson evanesces completely in the second poem, whose subtitle intimates the perspectival differences between the two poems: "Ascribed to a Virginian." Unlike in the first poem in which Jackson appears only as a general of the Confederacy, the poet commemorates him as a Virginian who heeded the call to arms of his fellow statesmen. When placed in this light, Jackson becomes a "Modern lived who sleeps in death, / Calm as the marble Ancients are" (3-4). Similar to the marmoreal ancients he adulates in "Statues of Rome," Melville esteems Jackson for the heroic acts he did in the name of the Confederacy. This sentiment is redoubled in the second stanza, which opens with a provocative query:

But who shall hymn the Roman heart?

A stoic he, but even more;

The iron will and lion thew

Were strong to inflict as to endure:

Who like him could stand, or pursue?

His fate the fatalist followed through;

In all his great soul found to do

Stonewall followed his star. (8-15)

On one level, Jackson's "Roman heart" signals that Melville regards him as a descendent of his beloved Roman heroes. But this idiom is also an allusion to Shakespeare's Cymbeline, a romance that takes place in pre-Christian Britain amidst a battle between Rome and the Britons. After the Britons fend off a Roman attack, they take the Roman general Caius Lucius as prisoner. Cymbeline, the King of Britain, then decides to execute Lucius and the other prisoners in order to appease the souls of Britons killed during the battle. Lucius's response establishes the fatalistic tone that Melville evokes in the latter part of the stanza:

Lucius. Consider, sir, the chance of war, the day

Was yours by accident. Had it gone with us,

We should not, when the blood was cool, have

Threaten'd

Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods

Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives

May be call'd ransom, let it come. Sufficeth

A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer. (V.v.75-81)

Devoted to Rome, Lucius suffers at the hands of the victorious Britons. But his speech also reminds Cymbeline of the fickleness of war, a fact that takes on added significance in the play with the character Jupiter, who decides the fate of a number of characters, including the vanquished Roman general. Drawing this figure of the Roman heart back into the orbit of Battle-Pieces reveals that Melville aligns the Union with the capricious will of God as he venerates Stonewall Jackson as a martial hero. Northerners, consequently, should respect Jackson for his devotion to his cause despite the fact that “Fortune went with the North elate” (52). The poem’s refrain declaring that “Stonewall followed his star” suggests that Melville viewed him as “one of those rare cynosures who feel that greatness is their fate” (Garner 242).⁶⁷ Anticipating what he refers to in the prose supplement as the Unionists' "unfraternal denunciations" (265) of Jackson and other Confederate leaders,⁶⁸ Melville celebrates them by showing that their drive and dedication differs from the Union heroes only in their hope for the outcome.

Above all else, Melville summons fraternal imagery and the language of brotherhood in Battle-Pieces to reconcile the two sides. On one level, brotherhood tropologically links all men to a national family.⁶⁹ The North and the South become figured as brothers feuding over the patrimonial legacy of the nation. But just as easily as these brothers can divide, so can they reunite. "Ah! Why should good fellows foemen be?" Melville asks in "The Scout Toward Aldie," remembering that these same men were "[l]arking and singing so friendly then— / A family likeness in every face" (545, 547-8). The idea of a "family likeness" shared by the two sides is central to "The Muster," given that he figures the "watery multitudes" of armies as tributaries or "streams" (3) of the

"Abrahamic river / Patriarch of floods" (1, repeated in 25). The various armies share a lineage or common ancestry and, thus, can become confluent without fear of repercussion. The allusion to Abraham and his two sons also conveys Melville's drive to continue to stave off the threat women pose to men, especially feminization.⁷⁰ Patrilineal descent for the nation, in other words, ensures that men will remain central to its purposes and intents. Although there can exist "appealings of the mothers / To brother and to brother / Not in hatred so to part—" (14-6), Melville appeals only to men with the hope of reconciling them. Couching the nation in familial terms allows Melville to characterize the war—"this strife of brothers" (9) as he puts it in "The Armies of the Wilderness"—as fratricide, registering the barbarity of war and urging the feuding sides to "take heed of thy brother" ("The Armies of the Wilderness" 62).

V. "A darker side there is"⁷¹: Melville's Reactionary Politics of Reconstruction

In poems such as "The Muster" Melville uses imagery of fluidity to deconstruct the difference between Union soldiers and their Confederate counterparts. Figuring the two sides as offshoots of the same progenitor renders them not just commutable but fluid and, even more crucially, homogenous. The metaphor of the Abrahamic river uncovers another of Melville's homologies about which he is literal: the affinity of racial sameness.⁷² The almost-complete absence of blacks from the verses of Battle-Pieces is crucial to understanding his hope that white men from the North and South will reunite. When black men do appear, their race is overpowering and aporiatic, something the poet cannot address. Despite Melville's attempts to stake out a common ground between

blacks and whites, racial difference ultimately becomes the great divide, the monstrous mask of alterity through which he cannot strike. Continuing to chip away at the North/South binary, he facilitates the project of reuniting brothers by appealing to the popular belief in nineteenth-century America of polygenesis. The discursive tools of white supremacy conceived of by polygenesists such as Morton armed those championing racial purity, including white supremacists, with the tools needed to parry miscegenation.⁷³ While Melville does not directly refer to polygenesis in "The Muster," his insistent representation of the "watery multitudes" merging together to reconstitute a "union" or confluence of white brothers supposes its cultural logic.

As a number of critics have indicated, with a few noteworthy exceptions black men and women are conspicuously missing from the pages of Battle-Pieces.⁷⁴ Michael Rogin speculates that this absence can be attributed to the fact that "the blacks freed in the Civil War no longer provided [Melville] with an oppositional identity" (Subversive Genealogy 278). But this is not entirely true. In the prose supplement, Melville insists that the federal government must adopt a policy of "paternal guardianship" (267) over freed blacks. Clearly he believes that blacks will gain admittance to the extended national family only as helpless children dependent upon benevolent white patriarchs. However, immediately following this, he fleshes out the dimensions of this inchoate relationship:

Yet such kindness should not be allowed to exclude kindness to communities *who stand nearer to us in nature*. For the future of the freed slaves we may well be concerned; but the future of the whole country, involving the future of the blacks, urges a paramount claim upon our anxiety. . . . In our natural solicitude to conform the benefit of liberty to blacks, let us forbear from measures of dubious

constitutional rightfulness toward our white countrymen—measures of a nature to provoke, among other of the last evils, exterminating hatred of race toward race. . . . Let us be Christians toward *our fellow-whites*, as well as philanthropists toward the blacks, *our fellow-men*. (267-8, my emphasis)

This final sentiment could signal a radical shift in the way Melville conceives of blacks. No longer enslaved, they become in his eyes "fellow-men," the same turn of phrase he uses in "On the Photograph of a Corps Commander" to illustrate that men inspire and arouse feelings in and among each other. In this way readers might believe that Melville's vision for the future of America is racially inclusive. Although some might find it hard to believe that any nineteenth-century American men ascribed to this belief, particularly given the fact that even some abolitionists embraced racist ideologies such as racial purity and black inferiority, some did see the utility of an interracial brotherhood. For example, in "A Man Knows a Man," an illustration published in Harper's Weekly on April 22, 1865 (see **Figure 3**), sacrifice to the nation becomes the shared act that unifies black and white men. The illustration features a black veteran saying to a white one,



Figure 3. "A Man Knows A Man." Harper's Weekly, 22 April 1865

"Give me your hand, Comrade! We have each lost a LEG for the good cause; but, thank GOD, we never lost HEART." The illustrator symmetrizes the two men by having them missing their left legs. The handshake that falls in the center of the cell poignantly conjoins the men and establishes a bond of equivalence between them. That the black vet detects this likeness is a crucial dynamic of the illustration for it reveals an awareness on his part of how the homosocial logics of heroism, masculinity, and, most importantly, equality, are mutually constitutive and entangled. The black man, appealing to his white counterpart as another subject who has risked life and limb for the Union, asserts his right to the title of "man" to which he was denied access while enslaved. Appealing to a shared sense of loss, allegiance, and victory, the illustrator of "A Man Knows a Man" lays out the case for black equality in a comradely, non-militant fashion. Having courageously fought alongside white men in the face of Southern secession, black men earned their stripes as equal citizens. But even more dramatically, as the illustrator suggests, they merited their manhood through their resolve to "never los[e] HEART" in the struggle, a heartfelt expression that undergirds the newly forged bond of equivalence between black and white men with the rhetoric of sentimentality.⁷⁵

Since blacks seldom appear in Battle-Pieces, it is difficult to discern how Melville envisions an America consisting of both black and white citizens. Even in the prose supplement, in which he is more forthright about his beliefs, he remains vague about this critical issue. Melville does suggest that blacks will eventually benefit from the way "[o]ur institutions have a potent digestion . . . [which] in time convert[s] and assimilate[s] to good all elements thrown in, however originally alien" (269). Nevertheless, in the immediate future he insists white Americans need to tend to those "nearer to us in

nature," reaffirming the preeminence and primacy of racial sameness and deferring the issue of racial equality. As a poet, he is more concerned with reconciling the North with the South—white brother with white brother—than he is with addressing the issues of slavery and abolition.⁷⁶ In other words, Melville, vis-à-vis the radical idea espoused by the illustrator of "A Man Knows a Man," forges a reactionary course of action that pinpoints the exact circumference of his concern: that bestowing "the benefit of liberty to blacks" will adversely affect his "white countrymen." Figuring the relationship between white men and blacks as philanthropic does not evoke fraternal sympathy, nor does it engender equality. Instead, it updates the social bond that rendered blacks dependent upon whites during slavery. To put it bluntly, they become white men's burdens.

This shift from owning blacks to becoming their guardians is spelled out in painfully clear terms in "A Meditation," the closing poem of Battle-Pieces. Adopting the narrative voice of a northerner, Melville expresses a concern shared by a number of Americans whose sympathy for enslaved blacks had definite limits: "Can Africa pay back this blood / Spilt on Potomac's shore?" (21-2) Of course, it is apparent to modern-day readers that such a sentiment is less an attempt to deal with the institution of slavery and more an egregious displacement of blame onto blacks, particularly since white men brought them to "Potomac's shore" in the first place. For most nineteenth-century readers, this rhetoric was seductive in the way that it heralded white men from the North as the great liberators who imperiled their lives for the sake of the displaced children of Africa.⁷⁷ In addition to placing whites in a more desirable light, this imagery continued the impulse to link blacks to Africa, a puzzling practice, to be sure, given that blacks began arriving at the Jamestown colony in 1619 as indentured servants (Bennett 441).

The desire to sustain the connection of blacks to Africa helps to illuminate an otherwise bizarre poem haunted by racial alterity. "The Swamp Angel" serves the dubious distinction in Battle-Pieces of being one of the only poems that refers to blacks. However, even this reference is indirect, as it takes shape as a metaphor in order to defuse the volatility of the issue over slavery and blacks:

There is a coal-black Angel
With a thick Afric lip,
And he dwells (like the hunted and the harried)
In a swamp where the green frogs dip.
But his face is against a City
Which is over a bay of the sea,
And he breathes with a breath that is blastment,
And dooms by a far decree. (1-8)

As Melville's note shows, the subject of poem is the Parrot cannon that the Union positioned in the marshes of James Island outside of Charleston to attack the city.⁷⁸ This explains the poet's dramatic alliteration of the consonant clusters "br" and "bl" in lines 7-8, signifying the explosions of the cannon. However, the personification of the cannon as a fugitive slave has flummoxed some critics, most of whom strain to read the poem as evidence of Melville's progressive vision for Reconstruction. Robertson-Lorant, for example, includes "The Swamp Angel" as one of the "two poems in Battle-Pieces that give strong images of black strength" (494). In her defense, the poet's equation of the cannon with a fugitive slave does effect a degree of black retaliation against the Confederacy. Throughout the poem the residents of Charleston suffer from "pale fright"

(13) after hearing the primal "screams" (11) of the cannon. The "Angel" is merciless in his besiegement of the city, attacking "[b]y night with the flame of his ray"(31).

Nevertheless, Robertson-Lorant never reckons with the consequences of Melville's personification of the cannon. Karcher, who initially assays "The Swamp Angel" as an allegory for the blacks who fought for the Union, ultimately wonders why the poet would "resort to such a metaphorical, disembodied representation of African American soldiers, in contrast to the humanized and frequently individualized representation of white soldiers" ("Melville and Child on the War" 209-10). As I have already mentioned, metaphorically encoding the fugitive slave as the Parrot cannon helps to dissipate the threat of black agency. Having a cannon blast Charleston, in other words, is less menacing than having a fugitive slave do the same. Representing the black man as a preternatural monster "brood[ing] in his gloom" (24), however, has a number of unsettling effects. First, as Karcher has highlighted, it divests black men of any agency whatsoever, relegating them, instead, to the supernatural. Second, and concomitantly, blackness signifies the gothic, the monstrous mask of alterity whose wearers creep along the margins of society. Ultimately Melville's transmogrification of the black man in the poem marks off an impasse concerning the realities of racial difference, particularly when faced with the task of reconciling white brothers of the North and South. While the narrator of "The Swamp Angel" is sympathetic to the marginalized black man who comes to embody or justify the reason for the cannon's existence, the overall reaction to his presence is one of abject horror.

In contrast with the grotesque black man of "The Swamp Angel" is the black woman in "Formerly a Slave." As Melville indicates in the subtitle, the poem is a

response to "[a]n idealized Portrait, by E. Vedder, in the Sprint Exhibition of the National Academy, 1865." Consequently, as Karcher emphasizes, the black woman is not a representation of a "flesh-and-blood human being" ("Melville and Child on the Civil War" 211), but instead a representation of a representation. The recursive representation explains why the formerly enslaved woman does not embody a threat similar to the gloomy swamp angel. After all, her presence is deferred twice over; she becomes a signifier for a signifier. The passive voice the narrator adopts when describing that "[t]he sufferance of her race is shown" (1) in the portrait only amplifies her lack of agency. Never able to speak for herself, the former slave is spoken for. But the second stanza reveals the poem's shared orbit with "The Swamp Angel," a point with which I want to close, for it evinces that Melville's dedication to reconciling brothers from the North and South trumps grappling with racial difference and social inequality. After describing vaguely the suffering the woman has endured, the narrator reflects upon the possibility of justice: "Her children's children they shall know / The good withheld from her; / And so her reverie takes prophetic cheer—" (5-7). Similar to the way the black man's monstrousness marks an impasse regarding racial difference, "Formerly a Slave" communicates a politically retrograde vision for Reconstruction America that defers reckoning with black citizenship and equality.⁷⁹ In Battle-Pieces Melville envisions the reconciliation of estranged brothers as primary to the need to puzzle out the cultural logic of racial difference and, consequently, inequality. As white brothers come together to reconstruct the nation, the formerly enslaved woman, unlike her monstrous black brethren haunting the margins of society, remains shackled to the injustices of history, "[h]er dusky face . . . lit with sober light, / Sibylline, yet benign" (11-12). Unlike the

immediacy of a fraternal reconciliation Melville positions at the crux of Reconstruction, “the good” long withheld from this woman remains forever on the dark horizon, relegated to an unwritten futurity.

¹ Thoreau quotes these lines from Edwardes in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. For this epigraph I've adopted the modern English translation of the Middle English version: "When manhode shalbe matchèd so, that feare can take no place, / Then wearie works make warriours eche other to embrace."

² Although Melville commemorates the actions of men from the Confederacy and the Union, his devotion to Unionism is paramount.

³ "The Surrender at Appomattox" (11).

⁴ With the exception of 1848 and 1853, Melville published either a novel or a series of stories: Typee (1846), Omoo (1847), Mardi (1849), White-Jacket (1850), Moby-Dick (1851), Pierre (1852), Israel Potter (serialized in Putnam's from July 1854 until March 1855; published as a novel in March 1855). The fact that Melville did not publish during this time should not be taken to mean that he was not writing. As Hershel Parker notes in "The Lost Poems (1860) and Melville's First Urge to Write an Epic Poem," Melville finished a book of poems in 1860 and had every intention to publish it. Publishers, however, decline the ms.

⁵ See Renker (49-68), Robertson-Lorant (370-1), and Miller (270-1).

⁶ This is taken from a journal entry dated January 18, 1857.

⁷ For more on Melville and the tricky situation of representing the truth, see Elizabeth Renker's "'A--!': Unreadability in The Confidence Man."

⁸ Ann Douglas identifies a suspicion of fiction shared by Melville and Sarah Margaret Fuller. "While he distrusted fiction no less than she," Douglas notes, "Melville could, by complex and brilliant tactics of displacement, use and expand the narrative form itself to express his hostility to it" (290). For more on the similarities between Melville and the Confidence Man, see Robertson-Lorant 370-3.

⁹ Fully aware of the amount earned by others on the lyceum circuit, some biographers have characterized his run as not bad for a beginner. See Sealts 57-8 and Howard 259-60. Parker also blames Melville's picayune returns as a lecturer on bad timing, pointing to the Panic of 1857 as a possible reason why the lecture invitations were so scarce.

¹⁰ As a reviewer lamented in the Bunker Hill Aurora, the classical allusions and the general content of his lecture were "too heavy for the comfort and edification of his auditors. Some nervous people, therefore, left the hall; some read books and newspapers; some sought refuge in sleep, and some . . . seemed determined to use it as an appropriate occasion for self-discipline in the blessed virtue of patience" (Leyda 2:592).

¹¹ To the frustration of many, there are no surviving copies of Melville's three lectures. As a result, I am relying on Merton M. Sealts's reconstruction of the lectures, which he meticulously pieced together using extant contemporaneous reviews that appeared in various newspapers.

¹² As Emerson zealously notes earlier in the essay, "[T]he highest minds of the world have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or shall I say the quadruple or the centuple or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact" (223).

¹³ "Criticism is infested with a cant of materialism, which assumes that manual skill and activity is the first merit of all men, and disparages such as say and do not, overlooking the fact that some men, namely poets, are natural sayers, sent into the world to the end of expression, and confounds them with those who province is action but who quit it to imitate the sayers" (224).

¹⁴ In his journal, John Thomas Gulick, a student from Williams College who visited Melville in 1859, observed:

Though it was apparent that [Melville] possessed a mind of an aspiring, ambitious order, full of elastic energy and illumined with the rich colors of a poetic fancy, he was evidently a disappointed man, soured by criticism and disgusted with the civilized world and with our Christendom in general and in particular. The ancient dignity of Homeric times afforded the only state of humanity, individual or social, to which he could turn with any complacency. (Leyda 2:605).

¹⁵ Robert Milder posits that "Melville typically viewed statuary and painting less with an eye to character than with tacit reference to history and the progress of civilization. What impressed him most about Rome—ancient Rome—was the scale of life it evidenced" "Melville and the Mediterranean" 36). For more on Milton's impress on "Statues of Rome," as well as on Melville's conception of the poet, see Pommer (110-1).

¹⁶ "While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand; / When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall; / And when Rome falls, the world" (IV.cxliv). For more on the implications of closing with Byron, see Milder's "Melville and the Mediterranean" (40).

¹⁷ Hershel Parker explains that in the United States and Great Britain in the 1840s and 1850s "[t]he theory still prevailed that the greatest writers were poets and that for a lover of literature the highest and richest rewards were to be found in poetry" ("The Lost Poems" 261).

¹⁸ Elizabeth Renker approaches Melville's shift to poetry as illustrated by Battle-Pieces in a like-minded manner, especially in relation to the blank page:

Melville's relation to his poems is fundamentally characterized by his interest in controlling the white page, a space that is both inherently more present to the poet than to the novelist and also more fundamentally visible within the nominal product itself. Thus his battle with pieces of writing that are now poems represents a change in the terms of his contest with the page. (103)

For a sustained analysis of Melville's interest in classical epic poetry, see R.W.B. Lewis's "Melville on Homer."

¹⁹R.W.B. Lewis homes in on how Battle-Pieces operates like "a tragic drama expanding in the direction of a tragic epic" (Herman Melville: A Reader 26). For more on Melville's interest with epic poetry during the early 1860s, see Parker's "The Lost Poems (1860)" 267-9.

²⁰ "In the Prison Pen" (10).

²¹ Melville was off by 300,000 as the general consensus is that more than 600,000 men died during the Civil War.

²² In his introduction to the 1963 version of Battle-Pieces, Hennig Cohen briefly considers how in the poem "Donelson" Melville "reworks" a matter-of-fact article from the Record "in such a way that it becomes not merely terse, effective narrative but narrative with moral significance" (17). Likewise, Mustafa Jalal has noted that Melville's "poetry is impregnated with the novelist's protean capacity to create character in a way most lyric poetry does not" (72). See also Andrew Hook's "Melville's Poetry." Timothy Sweet convincingly links Melville's use of the harp to Coleridge's, particularly as a metaphor for memory (167). Interestingly enough, Sweet argues that Melville saw the harp as "a (failed) mode of representation" (169), particularly in the way that it could not document the carnage of war. For more on the Aeolian harp and intersections with other poets like Keats and Browning, see also Jalal (72).

²³ In "The Rhetoric of Melville's Battle-Pieces," Robert Milder makes a similar point when he argues that Melville "patterns his readers' shared experience of war into national myth and leads his audience, without their knowing it, toward an understanding of history and experience prefigured from the start" (175). See also Karcher's Shadow over the Promised Land 263 and John McWilliams, Jr., 183.

²⁴ William H. Shurr discloses how "[i]n the latter half of his writing career, Melville was deeply immersed in the myth of the American Eden and the likelihood that the Civil War was the new Adam's sin and the end of his innocence, as well as the betrayal of the fresh start which the American experience offered to the human race" (The Mystery of Iniquity 28). Also see Milder for another discussion of Melville and "the postlapsarian world of history" ("The Rhetoric of Melville's Battle-Pieces" 181). Finally, John P. McWilliams argues that Melville synthesizes the events of the Civil War so as to stage "a reenactment of the Fortunate Fall" (183).

²⁵ Daniel Aaron notes that "[o]ne year before John Brown swayed beneath the beam [. . .], Donati's comet streaked through the skies amid predictions of disaster" (80).

²⁶ McWilliams avers that "[t]he self-consciously epic voice that Melville tries to sustain presumes a degree of moral absolutism that Melville in earlier writings had always distrusted" (192). Clark Davis in After the Whale: Melville in the Wake of Moby Dick makes a similar point when he argues that "the figure of John Brown not only forecasts or 'portends' the war but also hangs in the center of the minds and hearts of those who will fight it—a violent, bloody 'savior' whose mysteriousness flows ultimately from the inscrutability of death rather than the revelation of divine sacrifice" (109).

²⁷ Davis contends that "the battle scenes of Battle-Pieces, as the title itself suggests, reveal the ways in which the violent embrace destroys and dismembers the individual body, transforming it into a figure for the equally broken nation" (109). Although Davis poses engaging questions regarding how Melville's representation of battle stems from a conflict between the self and the fragmentation of the Union into the North and South, his consideration about the dimension of gender is cursory in his analysis.

²⁸ Additionally, Melville's use of "Good Friday" here could be an opaque reference to the Ides of March. Uncannily, John Wilkes Booth appeared as Marc Anthony in Julius Caesar at the Wintergarden Theatre in New York City. This production, which opened on November 25, 1864, a little under five months before Lincoln's assassination, also starred Booth's brothers, Julius (!), and Edwin, whom Melville refers to as "Shakspeare's [sic] pensive child" (8) in "The Coming Storm" from Battle-Pieces.

²⁹This is taken from an editorial in Harper's Weekly, November 19, 1864. Miller similarly notes how "The Martyr," "although no doubt sincerely felt, is more preoccupied with vengeance upon the 'parricides' than with Lincoln" (308). See also Rogin who discusses how "Lincoln was, in American symbolic history, the lamb of God himself" (Subversive Genealogy 268).

³⁰ This is from Lincoln's second inaugural address. See also "Lee in the Capitol" in which Melville imagines the defeated Confederate general warning Congress not to castigate the South by asking, "Shall the wound of the Nation bleed again? (193)

³¹ Rosanna Warren, in a similar vein, avers that "Melville's poems constitute . . . an art that tolerates the void and accepts death" (101).

³² Shurr also believes Battle-Pieces "has a rightful place in American anti-war literature" ("Melville's Poems" 356).

³³ Michael Rogin provocatively argues how conservatives and transcendentalists alike, when arguing for the necessity of the Civil War "celebrated the redemptive value of filicide" (Subversive Genealogy 267). Although Rogin insists that Melville, too, saw this value in the death of sons, he does not acknowledge the regret over the war that the poet establishes throughout Battle-Pieces

³⁴ This observation has been the focus of many critical readings of Battle-Pieces. See, for instance, Robert Penn Warren 812-7, Bernstein 184-7, Karcher 262, Jalal 71, and Arvin 268.

³⁵ The stanza begins with the following lines: "The Ancient of Days forever is young, / Forever the scheme of Nature thrives" (61-2).

³⁶As the narrator of "The Stone Fleet" proclaims, "Nature is nobody's ally" (33). See William Shurr's The Mystery of Iniquity in which he argues that "[c]learly this voice [of "The Conflict of Convictions"] is carrying on a debate with itself, alternating between hope and despair. It is the speech of the ordinary but highly intelligent man faced with the chaos of issues and alternatives presented by war" (27).

³⁷ "The March into Virginia" follows "Apathy and Enthusiasm" both sequentially and thematically, particularly in the way it figures young men going off to war as lambs to the slaughter: "Youth *must* its ignorant impulse lend— / Age finds place in the rear, / All ways are boyish, and are fought by boys" (4-6, my emphasis). Again, despite the destructive consequences, Melville sees the zeal of war as inherent in young men—something they "must" do because it is compulsory or because they are socialized to act in such a way. In his introduction to Selected Poems of Herman Melville, Robert Penn Warren identifies a grotesque pun Melville makes between "berrying party" and "burying party," inverting the innocence of young men harvesting red berries with the red bodies they would bury during war (14). Similarly, "Ball's Bluff" begins with "[y]oung soldiers marching lustily/Unto the wars" but ends with their "[f]ar footfalls d[ying] away till none were left" (2-3, 20).

³⁸ In addition to "Apathy and Enthusiasm," "The Battle for the Mississippi" demonstrates how Melville continues to figure the Civil War using Christian typology, suggesting, as I have been arguing, how he sees Christianity as a source of strength and support for martial culture. Melville compares Admiral David Farragut—who was reported to take control of the end of the Mississippi in New Orleans away from the Confederacy on April 25, 1862, without firing a single shot—to

Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea to camp "by Migdol hoar" (1; see Exodus 14). Moses', and thus Farragut's, ability to lead their respective "troops" shows, according to the poet, how "God appears in apt events— / The Lord is a man of war!" (5-6). *Pace* those who use Christian principles to argue against war, Melville posits that the god of Christianity can be bellicose when an "apt event" deems it necessary. After Farragut and his crew conquer the Confederate troops in New Orleans, "[t]he captains and the conquering crews / Humble their pride in prayer" (47-8). By ending the poem with the hope that "[t]here must be other nobler worlds for [the slain] / Who nobly yield their lives in this" (55-6), Melville shows how, despite his critique of Christianity in "Statues of Rome," he still sees it as serving an express purpose: to provide significance and eternal meaning for male sacrifice.

³⁹ Detecting a similar topos in the gothic novel Pierre or the Ambiguities, Ann Douglas in The Feminization of American Culture asserts that "Melville was never unaware that the American reading public consisted largely of middle-class women whose domesticated and at times insidious piety was buttressed and catered to by large segments of the clerical and literary establishment" (294).

⁴⁰ Feminist scholars have responded to the public/private paradigm in different ways. Some, particularly those writing in the 1970s and early 80s, have made the case for the utility of such a distinction as a means of understanding the complex gender politics of nineteenth-century America. See Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct, Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood, Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture, Gillian Brown's Domestic Individualism, Lora Romero's Home Fronts, and Jane Tompkins's Sensational Designs, just to name a few. Others have railed against how feminist historiography created a totalizing separation of spheres. Instead, as Nina Baym has done, feminist scholars must reexamine how some women were "far from conforming to any paradigm of sequestered, submissive, passive domesticity that we might patronizingly attempt to impose on them according to some misguided millennial narrative of our own" (239). For more on this critical strain, see Linda K. Kerber's "'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History,'" Glenna Matthews's Rise of Public Woman, Mary P. Ryan's Women in Public, Elbert's Separate Spheres No More and Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher's No More Separate Spheres. Even more cogent have been critiques that the public/private distinction did not function in the same way for black women, whose enslavement rendered this very distinction impossible. For more on this, see Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's All the Women Are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave, Hortense Spiller's Reconstructing Womanhood, Carla Peterson's Doers of the Word, Houston Baker's Workings of the Spirit, and Hazel Carby's Reconstructing Womanhood.

Milder reads a bit more into Melville's attraction to heroism during the Civil War, speculating that it "arose from a more private belief that the imaginative writers might yet guide the nation in a time of crisis and in so doing rescue himself from impotence and obscurity" ("The Rhetoric of Melville's Battle Pieces 196-7). For more on how the way writers guided the American reading public, see George Fredrickson's The Inner Civil War. For more on how men in nineteenth-century America collectively distanced themselves from the feminization of Christianity, see Mark C. Carnes' Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America (chapter three, "Darkness"). See also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct ("The Cross and the Pedastel: Women, Anti-Ritualism, and the Emergence of the American Bourgeoisie"), Douglas' The Feminization of American Culture (chapter three, "Ministers and Mothers: Changing and Exchanging Roles"), and Nancy Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood (chapter four, "Religion").

⁴¹ Melville later directly references this convention in "On the Slain Collegians," a poem that mourns the death of college-aged men in the war: "The anguish of maternal hearts / Must search for balm divine" (49-50).

⁴² See Douglas 294-6, particularly her claim that Melville commits himself to the "crime of masculinity" to counteract "the crimes of sentimentality and effeminacy which he was recording and protesting in his society" (294). Arvin asserts that "Melville's work as a poet has far too marked and masculine a character to be neglected or forgotten," adding that, "Melville's poems have a strongly prosaic quality, this is their distinction, not their defect" (262). Furthermore, Arvin detects an "impulse" in Melville's poetic practices "to put behind him the effete conventions of English romantic diction, its expansiveness, its orotundity, its remoteness from speech, in the interests of a vocabulary that should either be antipoetic or at any rate have a fresh expressiveness if only by virtue of its extreme rarity, oddity, or even ugliness" (264). Likewise, Rogin opines that Battle-Pieces, similar to Melville's second collection of poetry Clarel, is "distant both from the flowery tropes of mid-nineteenth-century American poetic convention and from the personal exuberance and antiformalist stance of Walt Whitman" (Subversive Genealogy 260). Finally, in a review of Battle-Pieces that appeared in the September 8, 1866, edition of Commercial Bulletin, a Boston publication, the writer notes, "Mr. Melville's style is generally heroic. His verses have the martial brevity, spirit and ring, that belong to the record of war-like deeds" (Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews 517).

⁴³ In a review of Battle-Pieces that appeared in the September 26, 1866, edition of the National Quarterly Review, the editors pointed to this passage as evidence of Melville's vivid imagination: "We doubt very much whether Lyon did any such thing; we are rather of the opinion that if he saw another making his will while he ought to be preparing for battle he would have told him that he cast a slur on his own courage" (Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews 511). I am also reminded of "The Squeeze of the Hand" in Moby-Dick when Ishmael, lost in the sublimity of brotherhood, declares, "I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country" (456).

⁴⁴ More exactly, as Douglas has averred about Melville's fiction, "Lyon" demonstrates that he conceives of "masculinity . . . essentially as resistance to sentimentalism, as an effort at a genuinely political and philosophical life" (294).

⁴⁵ Rogin, when reflecting upon the significance of duty in "In the Turret," invokes the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: "faith is true and adorable, which leads a soldier to throw away his life, in obedience to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign of which he has not notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use" (quoted in Subversive Genealogy 274). This "blindly accepted duty" for the nation, as I have been arguing, is at the crux of Melville's commemoration of these heroic soldiers.

⁴⁶ Sweet posits that "the commander's internalization of the rhetoric of the militaristic state he serves is so extensive that he submits his autonomy to the war machine" (175).

⁴⁷ See Edmund Wilson's discussion of Melville in Patriotic Gore. This characterization was also made by some of Melville's contemporaries. For example, William Dean Howells, in a review of Battle-Pieces that appeared in the February 19, 1867, edition of the Atlantic Monthly, argued that "Mr. Melville's skill is so great that we fear he has not often felt the things of which he writes, since with all his skill he fails to move us" (Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews 525).

More contemporarily, this assertion that only those who fought in the battle were authorized to write about it had deadly implications for women authors like Louisa May Alcott who dared to weigh in on the issue in such novels as Little Women and Hospital Sketches. See Elizabeth Young's Dismembering the Nation for a thoughtful discussion of Alcott and the war. For a more general, but nonetheless relevant discussion on who is authorized to write about the Civil War, see Daniel Aaron's The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War, particularly the introduction.

⁴⁸ Stanton Garner mentions that "although [Melville] did not consider joining any of the armed services, he entered his name once more on the militia list. This was more than a gesture, since there was a possibility that the enrollees might be called on to fight" (97).

⁴⁹ "Own" also establishes a slant rhyme with "crown" in line 29 to form a triplet.

⁵⁰ "A Meditation" 56.

⁵¹ "Homologic," like its more regularly used synonym "homologous," is the adjectival form of "homology."

⁵² Robert K. Martin has approached fraternity in Melville's fiction in a similar fashion as I, demonstrating how the author by "making fraternity at once erotic and social . . . recognize[s] its fullest potential" (11).

⁵³ Melville does depict the ravages of war, but never directly, as if he presaged modernism. Some of the most striking and beautiful moments in Battle-Pieces, in fact, occur when Melville uses aesthetic imagery to create impossibly breathless scenes of death. In "Lyon," for example, the narrator mentions how he and his battalion "fought on the grass, [and] bled in the corn" (26). In "Donelson," a cadre of dead soldiers become in the poet's imagination "[r]ed on the ridge in icy wreath" (125). His aestheticization of the scene of battle helps to lessen the impact of death upon his readers, suggesting a strategy that would allow Fame's clarion to blare triumphant once more.

⁵⁴ For a contrasting view of the disabled male hero, see Melville's "The College Colonel," a poem about Colonel William Francis Bartlett. Despite losing a leg in an earlier battle, Bartlett was renowned for valiantly leading his battalion into battle. While Melville claims the colonel as a hero, his desire for him is more ethereal and less physical; more for the "truth to him" (31) and less about his physical self, something which "he has long disclaimed" (25).

⁵⁵ Interestingly enough, as an example of "manhood" the OED includes the following sentence from John Greenleaf Whittier's "Hero": "Peace hath higher tests of manhood / Than battle ever knew" (75).

⁵⁶ The OED provides the following example from the nineteenth century: "To manhood roused, he spurns the amorous flute."

⁵⁷ As Martin has noted, however, Melville figured the cryptic homoeroticism that he buried—sometimes not so deeply—in the subtext of his works. By doing this, as Martin explains, Melville "insured that his ideas would receive a mystified reception from those who are still unable to see how 'sperm-squeezing' may be an act of social revolution as well as the site of pleasure" (11).

⁵⁸ Although martial culture is organized by rank, Herman Melville does not eroticize hierarchy. Consequently, I agree with Robert K. Martin that "[l]ike Whitman, Melville believed in the

radical social potential of male homosexuality as a force in the creation of a more egalitarian society” (Hero, Captain, and Stranger 6). However, as I have been suggesting, citizenship to this “more egalitarian society” is based on one’s gender and race.

⁵⁹ See Michael Moon's Disseminating Whitman, particularly his analysis of specularity and fluidity in Whitman's Leaves of Grass. As is apparent, my own engagement with "On the Photograph of the Corps Commander" has been informed incalculably by Moon's spectacular consideration of how the "Whitman text presents male bodies as being fundamentally interchangeable and masculine identity as being similarly commutable" (66).

⁶⁰ Besides, as Leo Bersani has ruminated, "[t]he narcissistic expansion of a desiring skin is also a renunciation of narcissistic self-containment" (120). Bersani later adds that "[t]he desire in others of what we already are is, on the contrary, a self-effacing narcissism, a narcissism of community in that it tolerates psychological difference because of its very indifference to psychological difference" (150).

⁶¹ Michael Warner makes a similar point in “Thoreau’s Bottom” when he explains how Thoreau thought that his desire for men was not based upon pure sameness, but as “distinct enough from self and sameness to be a ‘third sex’” (54). As I have been insisting, the desirability of sameness that Melville imprints in Battle-Pieces is not a product of narcissism, which suggests a breakdown of the subject/object distinction. Rather, it is a product of a cultural logic that privileges relations between those deemed the same or, more loosely, similar to each other. Other men, in other words, do not become a “third sex” for Melville; they remain the same sex. However, their status as separate subjects—as fellow men, not the same man—abnegates the possibility of narcissism.

⁶² In her chapter on Hawthorne's The Marble Faun, Williams briefly analyzes how Melville discusses statuary in "Statues of Rome" in a way similar to photographs and portraiture (147).

⁶³ Michael Warner has greatly informed my understanding of sameness in the nineteenth century. For more on how Thoreau rendered the self/other distinction problematic, see Warner’s “Thoreau’s Bottom.” Of course, the tenet that identity is never a positive presence in itself has become the bedrock of inquiry into the mutable terrain of identity, particularly among feminists, poststructuralists, and postcolonialists. See especially Chela Sandoval's “U.S. Third World Feminism,” Lisa Lowe's Immigrant Acts, Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak," Judith Butler's Bodies That Matter, Leo Bersani's Homos, Jose Esteban Munoz's Disidentifications, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. In the study of the history of sexuality, scholars have elucidated that the idea of sameness has been pivotal to the formations of identities organized around sexual desires and acts. Leo Bersani, in a recent intervention in the LGB versus queer debates, notes that

[i]n nature, as in social history, identities spill over. We exist, in both time and space, in a vast network of near-sameness, a network characterized by relations of inaccurate replication. Accurate replication—the perfect identity of terms—is an attempted human correction of these correspondences, a fantasy of specularity in the place of correspondence. To recognize universal homo-ness can allay the terror of difference, which generally gives rise to a hopeless dream of eliminating difference entirely. (146)

The elimination of alterity in conceptual frameworks such as Bersani’s allows for the identification of similar elements between subjects deemed antagonistic, oppositional, or, more generically, different (e.g., man/woman, straight/gay, black/white/Asian/Latina, etc.). The

“homo-ness” on which Melville fixates in “On the Photograph of the Corps Commander,” however, is not as radical because the two subjects in the poem are never actually haunted by the specter of difference.

⁶⁴ See Joyce Sparer Adler’s discussion of “Shiloh” in which she observes how Melville “mixes the groans, prayers, and deaths of both sides” (War in Melville’s Imagination 147).

⁶⁵ Taken from a letter by Emily Dickinson to Elizabeth Holland and her husband Dr. Josiah Gilbert Holland written “about November 6, 1858.” See Letters L195.

⁶⁶ The February 3, 1863, edition of Harper’s Weekly includes an illustration by the eminent cartoonist Thomas Nast that refutes Melville’s framing of the Confederates as heroic men. In a sweeping two-page drawing, Nast illustrates what he refers to sarcastically as “Historic Examples of Southern Chivalry.” Included in this list are: “the murder of two of Piatt’s Zouaves from the 34th Ohio”; “throwing sick and wounded soldiers in the road to die”; “Southern women cloating over dead union soldiers”; “shooting U.S. prisoners”; “the massacre of Negroes at Murfreesboro Pike”; “driving Negroes South”; “firing on U.S. hospital”; “hanging Union men”; and “stabbing wounded Union soldiers.”

⁶⁷ Like Garner, Douglas sees Melville as occupying the role of the misunderstood genius when she notes how he “acknowledged his ambition—to write great books which would fully utilize the most demanding and ambiguous material America offered; but he flatly proclaimed that there were few in America to aid or appreciate his attempt” (296).

⁶⁸ Melville speaks less allegorically about this issue in the supplement: “[I]s it probable that the grandchildren of General Grant will pursue with rancor, or slur by sour neglect, the memory of Stonewall Jackson?” (262)

⁶⁹ As he admonishes in the prose supplement, “It is enough . . . if the South have been taught by the terrors of civil war to feel that Secession, like Slavery, is against Destiny; that both now lie buried in one grave; that her fate is linked with ours; and that together we comprise a nation” (260).

⁷⁰ Isaac, borne of Abraham’s wife Sarah, conceivably stands in for the Union, while the illegitimate Ishmael, borne of the slave Hagar, might represent the Confederacy.

⁷¹ “A Meditation” 49.

⁷² Rogin avers that the “Civil War presented in Battle-Pieces reestablished familial bonds, between fathers and children on one hand, Northern and Southern brothers on the other” (Subversive Genealogy 280).

⁷³ Nelson also notes how the theory of polygenesis “provides a cultural logic that locates and refutes the politically and emotionally miscegenational works of female reformers . . . [that took shape in] the space of sentiment, the domestic, female space” (104).

⁷⁴ Karcher documents how “[m]ore than two-thirds of the poems in the book commemorate battles and war heroes, but not one hails the chief political milestone of the war, the Emancipation Proclamation” (“Melville and Child on the Civil War” 205).

⁷⁵ Harper's placed the illustration at the top of the three-page advertisement section in the back of the issue. Included on this page, interestingly enough, is an advertisement for "Monroe & Gardner, Manufacturers of Artificial Raw-hide Limbs." This ad communicates how there was a niche market for prosthetic devices, evincing the extent of amputation as a result of war injuries and, thus, the sizeable audience to whom this illustration was directed.

⁷⁶ Milder mentions that "it is Unionism, not abolition, that Battle-Pieces presents as the Northern cause, as indeed it was for most moderates, Lincoln included" ("The Rhetoric of Battle-Pieces" 178).

⁷⁷ Karcher posits, "Clearly, Melville intended to dissociate himself from this sentiment by putting it into the mouth of a fictional northerner" (Shadow Over the Promised Land 267). But in the next sentence, she admits that "the prose Supplement to Battle-Pieces reveals that Melville himself was not entirely free of such feelings." More recently, Karcher has argued that a poem like "The Portent" "presages the erasure of African Americans from the vision of the war that Melville inscribes in Battle-Pieces" ("Melville and Child on the Civil War" 197). For a contrast to "A Meditation," see Frances Harper's poem "Ethiopia" in which Africa, not America, "stretch[es] / her bleeding hands abroad" (1-2) to reclaim her lost children.

⁷⁸ In his notes for the 1963 edition of Battle-Pieces, Hennig Cohen annotates the source of the title of the poem: a poem written by "T.N.J." and published in volume eight of The Rebellion Record. For more on this, see Cohen 249.

⁷⁹ Again, Karcher offers an acute reading of this poem, particularly her assertion that it "foreshadows the gradualist Reconstruction policy Melville recommends in his prose 'Supplement'" ("Melville and Child on the Civil War" 211). For a provocative comparison of this poem with Whitman's "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors," see Ed Folsom's "Lucifer and Ethiopia: Whitman, Race, and Poetics before the Civil War and After."

Epilogue

“Democracy also binds brothers together[.] . . . Under democratic laws, children are completely equal and consequently independent; nothing forces them to be close nor does anything drive them apart. As they have a shared origin, as they grow up beneath the same roof, as they are treated with the same care and as no peculiar privilege either distinguishes or divides them, the kindly and youthful intimacy of their early years readily springs up between them. The ties thus formed at the start of life are scarcely ever broken, for brotherhood brings them into close daily contact without cause or friction.

Democracy, therefore, cements brothers' closeness not through self-interest but by shared memories and the unhampered harmony of their opinions and tastes. It divides their inheritance but allows their hearts the freedom to unite.”

—Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Book 2 (682).

Taken from Tocqueville's chapter entitled "Influence of Democracy on the Family," the epigraph for my conclusion records the very cultural dynamic that I have attempted to diagram and analyze in key mid-nineteenth-century American literary works. At the crux of his observation is that the "shared origin" of brothers—their shared experiences "beneath the same roof" and under the "same care"—serves as the staging grounds for "the kindly and youthful intimacy" that effects "ties . . . [that] are scarcely ever broken." The aegis of sameness, as he understands it, is responsible for "cement[ing] brothers' closeness . . . [through] shared memories and the unhampered harmony of their opinions and tastes." The sameness that unites these brothers ensures their separation as discrete subjects. Self-interest, in other words, is not what binds men as that would

presume they all share the same self. Instead, men are conceived as being different enough so that they remain autonomous subjects while remaining similar enough that "their hearts [have] the freedom to unite."

Although Tocqueville establishes this primary relationship of sameness between actual brothers, it could easily be broadened to include unrelated, non-consanguineous male same-sex relations—that is, an abstract, imagined national fraternity. "Man Enough" hinges on this very premise. As I have shown, Thoreau's erotic elegy to his brother, Hawthorne's representation of Hollingsworth's "more than brotherly attendance" to Coverdale, Whitman's highly erotic rendering of men who are "like" him, and Melville's depiction of an intimate brotherhood that binds the nation's wounds all evince attempts to unite white men through a primary relation. More generally, throughout this dissertation I have demonstrated that many eminent politicians, philosophers, and authors in the mid-nineteenth century counteracted the heterogeneous reality of the nation by imagining a national identity at the heart of which was a homogeneous and quasi- or metaphoric biogenetic character. "We the People," in other words, came to signify white brothers who shared a point of reference and, more importantly, a sentimental devotion to one another.¹ By casting American citizenship in such terms, democracy became inextricable with and ionized by fraternal intimacy.

Central to my analysis of fraternal intimacy has been the role that male same-sex eroticism played in "cement[ing] brothers' closeness." Of course, as I have argued throughout this study, the undeniable presence of homoeroticism is not tantamount to asserting that nineteenth-century Americans were somehow more accepting of sexual relationships between men. History, of course, proves otherwise. The recurring trope of

male same-sex erotic desire in influential literary works of the period, however, signals that some authors interpreted this type of eroticism as complementary or supportive of the drive to reunite white American men through the matrix of fraternal intimacy. From the sexually codified perspective of the twenty-first century, the idea that male same-sex erotic desire could work in conjunction with dominant culture might appear contradictory. However, as gender historians have explained, male intimacy in mid-nineteenth-century America was constituted very differently than it is in the current political moment. Without mechanisms to police the slippages between fraternalism and eroticism, men could express and establish more polymorphous and intractable forms of intimacy. With the exception of Whitman's Leaves, these nuanced literary representations evince that highly erotic forms of American fraternity could appear on the culture's radar without the threat of abjuration.

“Man Enough” traces the roots of these historically specific representations of male same-sex erotic desire to the underlying cultural directive of homogeneity. In so doing, I have shown that even before the category “homosexual” circulated, many male authors and philosophers began to understand male same-sex eroticism as being laden with, though far from dominated or overdetermined by, political significance. The absence of a sexual taxonomy in nineteenth-century America explains the frequent overlaps of an intimate fraternity and a more trenchant expression of same-sex eroticism. Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends. Although flummoxing, this characterization should not surprise those doing work in gender studies. As theorists such as Eve Sedgwick have demonstrated, a fine line separates the world of “men-loving-men” from that of “men-promoting-the-interests-of-men” (Between Men 3).

Making this splitting even more opaque or indiscernible are expressions of masculinity or manhood that seemingly straddle this fine line.

This project is imbedded in the work of cultural theorists concerned with the role that sameness plays in contouring sexual identities for better or worse, among them Sedgwick, Leo Bersani, Michael Warner, and Christopher Newfield.² As I have demonstrated, such a ruthless critique is important as it refuses to reduce the dynamism of history to a string of unstable binaries (e.g., oppressors v. oppressed, powerful v. powerless, us v. them). Moreover, it spells out the need to speak about difference and sameness in tandem so as to provide gradations to what has been heretofore a stark black and white schematic of identity. Whereas the negative valence of difference signals a kind of aporiatic discontinuity (e.g., me/not me), sameness records a perceived or acknowledged homologic. Consequently, scrutinizing sameness yields valuable insight into how American men conceived of themselves and of each other in establishing this bond of equivalence.

“Man Enough” seeks to provoke further thought about the role multiple subject positions shape and texture identity with the hope of providing a realistic account of the circulation of sameness, as well as same-sex eroticism, in mid-nineteenth-century America. I also hope that this study engenders further discussion about the impetus of homogeneity in contemporary gay politics and history. Of course, the often contentious relationship between gay politics and lesbian politics, especially in the 1970s and 80s, was certainly charged by a prevailing desire for homogeneity. It is only by cracking the intertwined codes of sameness and difference can cultural theorists understand the discursive field—the DNA—of this historical moment.

But there are less obvious or more mundane examples that are just as worthy of our critical attention. The Castro clone, for example, whose uniform style—including skintight Levi's, handlebar mustache, and rough-trade whiteness—was prevalent in American cities, records a subcultural logic of homogeneity that still holds clues to how some gay white men constituted their identities in consumer-culture driven 1970s America. The same could be said for the Abercrombie and Fitch (A&F) fashion fad currently among middle-class gay white men, a trend fueled by overly homoerotic images featuring corn-fed, young white preppy men in varied states of undress. The sway this implicitly white supremacist corporate ethos has in the white gay community suggests the preeminence of whiteness. Consciously or not, these gay white male consumers are implicated in a semiotics of homosexuality impelled by the eroticization of racial homogeneity.³ That A&F models resemble one another only further records how deep-seated this desire for a beautiful or handsome uniformity is among some white gay men. Even more fascinating is the way the image of the A&F Aryan Adonis circulates in straight culture. The homoeroticism that A&F evokes is subtle enough that its brand is not exclusively gay, as evinced by the many straight-identified teenagers and men who also comprise the corporation's customer base. That these consumers identify with the corporate brand, though, suggests a kind of straight homoeroticism that stems from the desire to resemble A&F's male models. Despite the fact that most straight white male consumers are unmoved or unaware by the obvious homoeroticism of the ads, this sexual charge still plays an integral role in fueling their desire to identify with and look like these libidinous and popular images. Does this mean that these straight men are in fact gay? Probably not in most cases. What it does pinpoint, though, is a momentary, yet

significant intersection between the desire to be like the sinewy A&F white Adonises and a desire to be with them.

Up until this point, the role sameness plays in variegating what has been historically treated as a monolithic gay identity remains mostly unexplored. Not reflecting on the constitutive role that homogeneity (or the desire for it) plays in shaping one's sense of self results in an incomplete understanding of identity and its significance in the current political moment. Analyzing the role homogeneity plays in representational practices, as well as in political and cultural discourse, helps to provide hue and shading to existing models of identity. By continuing to discount the cultural force of sameness, we run the risk of casting identity in purely negative terms, foreclosing upon the possibility of ever understanding how white men began to unite around a shared identity at this critical historical juncture.

¹ Nelson puts forth a provocative reading of the symbolic function or role of the president in between the Confederation and the drafting of the Constitution. As she explains, "U.S. democratic possibility became conditioned by presidentialism's powerfully homogenizing masculine ideal, one loaded with unnecessarily rigid longings for self-sameness and self-subordination in the name of 'unity'" (xi). The American president, in other words, came to serve as a kind of father figure who united white American men as brothers devoted to him and one another. In this project I have chosen to refrain from using psychoanalysis to explore this imagined brotherhood as I see it as anachronistic to my aim to historicize this erotic form of fraternal intimacy. Having said that, I believe that psychoanalytic analyses of this period of American history bring important ideas to the table, especially as they relate to what could easily be called the psychosexualization of the nation. For an engaging discussion about Freud's Group Psychology, brotherly competition, and homoeroticism, see chapter four in Newfield's The Emerson Effect (viz. 109-117).

² See Bersani's Homos and Warner's "Homo-Narcissus" and "Thoreau's Bottom."

³ For an in depth analysis of the racial and sexual politics of Abercrombie and Fitch, see Dwight McBride's Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality in America.

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