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American Paratexts: Experimentation and Anxiety in the Early United States

Abstract

“American Paratexts” argues that prefaces, dedications, footnotes, and postscripts were sites of aggressive courtship and manipulation of readers in early nineteenth-century American literature. In the paratexts of novels, poems, and periodicals, readers faced pedantic complaints about the literary marketplace, entreaties for purchases described as patriotic duty, and interpersonal spats couched in the language of selfless literary nationalism. Authors such as Washington Irving, John Neal, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and William Wells Brown turned paratexts into sites of instructional meta-commentary, using imperative and abusive reader-address to unsettle and then reorient American readers, simultaneously insulting them for insufficiently adventuresome reading habits and declaring better reading and readers essential to America’s status in a transatlantic book sphere. That focus on addressivity transformed the tone and content of the early republic’s prose, bringing the viciousness of eighteenth-century coterie publishing into the emerging mass market world of nineteenth-century monthly and weekly periodicals. Incorporating and expanding beyond Gérard Genette’s definition of the paratext, this dissertation combines the detailed bibliographical work of book historians and material text scholars with the insights of those studying the development of American authorship. Paratexts have too often been ignored as marginal or ancillary: this dissertation notes that it is in paratexts that authors in the early United States tackled subjects as varied as poetic meter, historiographical bias, national literary responsibility and the racial prejudice of white publishing norms. In their aggressive engagement of readers, these paratexts demanded a level of reader metacognition that facilitated the transformation of nineteenth-century transatlantic print culture.

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AMERICAN PARATEXTS:
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Joshua Kopperman Ratner

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American Paratexts: Experimentation and Anxiety in the Early United States

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Joshua Kopperman Ratner

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ABSTRACT

AMERICAN PARATEXTS:

EXPERIMENTATION AND ANXIETY IN THE EARLY UNITED STATES

Joshua Kopperman Ratner

Supervisor: Max Cavitch

“American Paratexts” argues that prefaces, dedications, footnotes, and postscripts were sites of aggressive courtship and manipulation of readers in early nineteenth-century American literature. In the paratexts of novels, poems, and periodicals, readers faced pedantic complaints about the literary marketplace, entreaties for purchases described as patriotic duty, and interpersonal spats couched in the language of selfless literary nationalism. Authors such as Washington Irving, John Neal, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and William Wells Brown turned paratexts into sites of instructional meta-commentary, using imperative and abusive reader-address to unsettle and then reorient American readers, simultaneously insulting them for insufficiently adventuresome reading habits and declaring better reading and readers essential to America’s status in a transatlantic book sphere. That focus on addressivity transformed the tone and content of the early republic’s prose, bringing the viciousness of eighteenth-century coterie publishing into the emerging mass market world of nineteenth-century monthly and weekly periodicals—the world that Hawthorne rejected and William Wells Brown embraced. As these writers sought ways to participate in a transatlantic literary market, they used paratexts to announce their goals and ambitions as writers, but also to describe themselves as editors.

Incorporating and expanding beyond Gérard Genette's definition of the paratext, this dissertation combines the detailed bibliographical work of book historians and material text scholars with the insights of those studying the development of American authorship. Paratexts have too often been ignored as marginal or ancillary: this dissertation notes that it is in paratexts that authors in the early United States tackled subjects as varied as poetic meter, historiographical bias, national literary responsibility and the racial prejudice of white publishing norms. In their subject matter and in their aggressive engagement of readers, these paratexts demanded a level of reader metacognition that facilitated the transformation of nineteenth-century transatlantic print culture.

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Introduction

“Postscript that should have been a preface”: Authorial Anxiety and Paratextual Experimentation in the American Early Republic

On the spine of a famous book from 1856 there are thirteen words and two names. Beneath the title *Leaves of Grass* and the name “Walt Whitman” there appears the briefest of reviews, from Ralph Waldo Emerson: “I greet you at the beginning of a great career.” Whitman’s self-promotion receives regular attention by scholars interested in the history of authorship, but he deserves greater recognition for his paratextual innovation. At the same time, while the renewed interest in book history and material text studies returns our attention to the physical details of book-bindings, paper quality, page size, and the economics of publishing, it must also transform our thinking about authorship in antebellum America. Whitman and his peers knew that the materiality of a book gave generic, economic and status clues to its potential readers. Inside *Leaves of Grass* Whitman’s poetry repeatedly dramatizes the contours and paradoxes of an author’s connection to the reader. To “greet you at the beginning” is the function played by prefaces, dedications, and apologies that often appear before the first chapter of novels or the first canto of a long poem.

Footnotes, epigraphs, periodical reviews, and postscripts are also examples of paratexts that, like that 1856 book-spine, function as negotiated and liminal spaces bridging (or sometimes accentuating) the distance between author and reader. The spine

of *Leaves of Grass* proclaims that Emerson and Whitman already share an intimacy available to any readers who dare to pass the boundary of the cover and onto the inside pages. The 1856 edition also reveals a crucial aspect of textual (re)circulation in antebellum America. Emerson's private letter did not appear first on the 1856 edition spine; Whitman printed it, without permission, in *The Tribune* while still promoting the 1855 edition. He also pasted the periodical version of the letter into some copies of the 1855 edition. Emerson's letter then became a periodical subject when Rufus Griswold attacked Whitman in a review of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*. Worried that this "scurvy fellow" [Whitman] seemingly endorsed by Emerson would be allowed to "obtain access to respectable people" because of Emerson's letter, Griswold claims to be policing morality (24). Griswold is also protecting the periodical's editorial function, trying to reassert that periodical editors are more trustworthy intermediaries between books and readers than authors-using-other-authors to promote themselves. Whitman responded by pasting Griswold's review into some copies of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, in effect bringing Griswold into the conversation rather than allowing him to condemn it from outside.¹

This private correspondence between Emerson and Whitman played several roles, then. It was part of Whitman's self-promotion of the 1855 edition in periodicals and pasted additions to existing editions as well as a subject of periodical discourse when Griswold wrote about the role of Emerson's accidental endorsement. The 1856 edition, in

¹ See Sean Francis' essay "Outbidding at the Start for the Old Cautious Hucksters": Promotional Discourse and Whitman's "Free" Verse" for more on Whitman's manipulation of advertising and reviews (400). In the 1856 edition Whitman does not choose Griswold as one of the reviews to reprint, but he does include another nasty review that reprints part of Griswold's *Criterion* piece.

addition to the excerpt on the spine and the complete text in an appendix, includes a twelve-page response from Whitman to Emerson, continuing the private correspondence that began as manuscript, migrated into periodicals, and then emerged in gilt on the 1856 spine and inside the boards as the conversation of two authors writing to one another. Whitman capitalized on a celebrity author's comments, a periodical reviewer's outrage, and reader curiosity about generic experimentation. Whitman is greeted at the "beginning" by Emerson, but his readers purchasing the 1856 edition come late to the chowder-kettle and therefore have to start by overhearing before they can join the conversation.² Hence the title "Leavesdroppings" that Whitman gives the section, punning on the way he drops leaves of private correspondence into the book and on the idea of new readers eavesdropping on his and Emerson's prior correspondence. Using the paratextual prefaces, appendices, and reviews gives Whitman the chance to assert himself as an author, to engage periodical reviewers, and to greet new readers by including them in the personal (Emerson) and periodical (Griswold and others) reception that he presents as important background for understanding *Leaves of Grass* in 1856.

Griswold had attacked Whitman from outside (in his own periodical) for incorporating Emerson in his book; Whitman responded by further incorporation when he tipped-in copies of Griswold's criticism to the 1855 editions. In a dissertation focused on paratexts—elements of literary works that most often appear at the edges of the texts to which they are appended—the word "incorporation" should arouse suspicion. To study

² The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopped for me, / I tucked my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time, / You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle (17). Whitman regularly inserts this kind of postcard-sentiment that announces "Wish You Were Here" even as it implies, "You sure missed something great."

paratexts is to ask the question, what counts as part of the “text” proper, and what is ancillary or appendage? When they appear in bold or large font or in the space where readers expect a section title, the words “Table of Contents” or “Index” or “Notes” indicate that these are parts of a work that are distinct from the main text, but that are useful for engaging those texts. Gérard Genette, who coined the term in *Palimpsests* (1982) and explored it at length in *Paratexts* (1987), classifies paratexts based on many factors, including their location in a book, their function, and the timing of their production. Genette distinguishes the text from the paratext, describing the chapters of novels as “texts,” while prefaces, title pages, and notes are “paratexts.” Such a distinction necessarily brings its own troubles. First, “paratext” becomes a much more useful term for thinking about literary history when applied to a variety of literary forms beyond Genette’s book-centric focus. Second, I think of a text as the total of its paratexts and its body-text. I often need to distinguish between the chapters of a novel or the actual verses of an epic poem (what I generally call “body-texts”) and the paratexts that surround those chapters or verses. It is especially important to make this distinction upfront because the distinction fails so regularly and in such fascinating ways; the failure to keep paratexts and body-texts distinctly separate is what makes them worthy of greater attention than they have received. The particular ways that the distinction fails requires that we read the whole text (that is, total presentation of body-text and paratext) by focusing on what that failure reveals about authorial efforts to control or contain reader experience. Paratexts in the early United States demonstrate that authors thought extensively about the material and physical effects of reading when they chose to break

up a page's flow with footnotes, for instance, that they knew would divert attention from the body-text. The paratext/body-text interaction reveals anxiety about reader comprehension but also reveals authorial confidence that the insertion of meta-commentary enhances rather than detracts from reader experience. Perhaps most important, paratext/body-text interaction demonstrates authorial willingness to test the borders of genre precisely while calling attention to generic transgression.

Genette's book-centric definition and exploration of the paratext over-emphasizes the discrete, stitched-and-bound volume as the unit of study and therefore under-analyzes the generic transgressions of paratext/body-text interaction. As I argue in Chapter Two, the absolute centrality of periodicals to this period's literary culture and the ways that books and periodicals engaged and mimicked each other was possible only because the writers could assume that audiences knew the content and the form of both genres. This necessitates that we consider periodical reviews and advertisements to be paratextual appendages to novels and books of poetry. Genette does expand his definition of paratext beyond the book to consider some periodical contributions as paratexts, but he limits his definition to what he calls the "semi-official allographic epitext" (348). For Genette, paratexts are either "peritexts" or "epitexts." "Peritext" is the "spatial category" Genette uses to designate a paratext that is part of or embedded into the same volume as the body-text, while "epitexts" occur first outside the volume that contains the body-text (*Paratexts* 5). As is Genette's wont, epitexts are further sub-categorized: "public epitexts" are reviews and interviews, while "private epitexts" consist of letters, diaries and other manuscript scraps that scholars seek out in genetic criticism. The semi-official

allographic epitext is as close to an outside review as Genette will allow to be considered paratextual to the author—and that only if the review has been “somewhat ‘remote-controlled’ by authorial instructions that the public is not in a position to know about” (348). This presents another problem that my dissertation explores: a book-centric, author-centric exploration of the paratext like Genette’s over-emphasizes literary production, distribution, and reception as author-controlled. Authors certainly desired that level of control and used their own paratexts to try to pre-empt outside epitextual reception. Authors promoted themselves in the peritexts of their own novels (John Neal), by enlisting friends to help advertise their books (Washington Irving), or by including periodical excerpts right within their books (William Wells Brown). They acknowledged that outside (i.e., unauthorized, non-official) allographic epitexts could alter how readers approached their work, and they turned to their own paratexts to counter the effect.

Classifying the peri- and epi-textual efforts of authors and other actors in the production and reception of texts also offers Genette the means to consider the refusal, deferral or proclamation of authorship as a spectrum of what he calls “onymity.” Like the term “paratext,” which demands that the rest of the text be classified as “body-text” to distinguish it from its liminal, its marginal, and its para- brethren, “onymity” reminds us that named authorship (onymity, or the proclamation of authorship) is no more normal than the refusal of authorship (anonymity) or the deferral/dissembling of pseudonymity. My dissertation contributes to the history of authorship by thinking through the appeal for artists like Neal, Irving and Brown to claim or deny authorship. These authors did not just claim or deny authorship; they made the decision a prominent part of the paratextual

conversation they had with readers. Critics have long turned, for instance, to Nathaniel Hawthorne's prefaces for his thoughts on the profession of authorship, but there is value in emphasizing that these authors wanted readers to engage these proclamations about authorship and editorship as crucial tools for understanding the goals of the body-texts, too. Think of the violence that Nathaniel Hawthorne encourages readers to imagine in "The Custom House" when he describes the author as a "decapitated surveyor." That violence, I am arguing, ought to stick with readers as they move into *The Scarlet Letter's* depiction of Dimmesdale's self-inflicted corporal punishment; exposure, privacy, and self-revelation become as vital to *The Scarlet Letter* as they are to Hawthorne's description of the challenges that American authors, who are expected to share personal details to promote their work, face.

Whether they are generated by the authors or by unrelated newspaper readers or editors, paratexts create body-texts. Genette notes that there are paratexts without texts (where the texts but not their titles or introductions have been lost), but no texts without paratexts (*Paratexts* 3-4). This does not imply that there is no history or development of the paratext, but that no texts can last without some markers that introduce, situate, or explain their existence. Even fragments that we discover and about which we have no historical or authorial data become necessarily titled and classified as "Anonymous" or "Fragment." Genette notes that "our 'media' age has seen the proliferation of a type of discourse around texts that was unknown in the classical world and *a fortiori* in antiquity and the Middle Ages, when texts often circulated in an almost raw condition, in the form of manuscripts devoid of any formula or presentation" (*Paratexts* 3). Genette suggests,

however, that even transcription or oral transmission “induce paratextual effects” (3). Bill Sherman says that the explosion of print in the Renaissance (and the choice to publish beyond a coterie audience) made authors intensely aware of the need to address readers paratextually. By the end of that first century of print, according to Sherman, a book appeared incomplete if it lacked at least some kind of paratextual “epistle to the reader” (69-71). Anthony Grafton declares the eighteenth century the moment of the birth of the modern footnote, and Andrew Piper’s work on ballad collection and translation emphasizes the importance of introductions, prefaces, and notes to the early Romantic period. Authors writing in the Early United States were building on (and sometimes resisting or subverting) each of these traditions, but they were especially interested in the Neoclassic and Romantic paratextual glosses. Washington Irving’s debt to Edward Gibbon’s footnotes, for instance, is clear in *A History of New York*. It is not possible to imagine that John Neal wrote a sixty-page preface to *The Battle of Niagara* without thinking of William Wordsworth’s preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

Nineteenth-century American paratexts, therefore, are not historical anomalies or geographically unique. I focus my attention on them because it is in the paratexts that several important trends in American literature are discussed most explicitly. Whitman’s paratextual use of Emerson and Griswold helped Whitman insert himself into an existing dialogue about the nation’s literary future. The authors in each of the chapters that follow also turn to paratexts to resist emerging historical narrative about the nation (Washington Irving in *A History of New York*); against the preference for British authors and periodicals (John Neal and Charles Jared Ingersoll); or against white publishing norms

(William Wells Brown). Nineteenth-century paratexts also turn authors into editors and emphasize the absolute intermeshing of book and periodical culture in the period. Writing their own introductions or glossing their own fiction with notes, authors become editors and explicators exactly at the moment in literary history where those two literary roles were being redefined and contested. John Neal wanted to be a Romantic man-of-genius who wrote novels and epic poems, but he also wanted to play the increasingly powerful and respected/respectable role of fierce and caustic periodical editor. Paratexts offered him the ideal location to wax grandiloquent about his own literary practice and to eviscerate rivals.

American Paratexts, then, takes paratexts as its subject because the period's paratexts reveal how authors engaged literary nationalism, transatlantic literary culture, the shifting terrain of authorship and editorship, and the role played by literary form in manipulating reader expectation and experience. Most nineteenth-century authors wrote paratexts. Only a few chose them as a locus for literary innovation, formal experimentation, and reader manipulation; I designate these authors and editors by the neologism "paratextualists." Nineteenth-century paratextualists took up the question of authorship and made it their subject, in a variety of ways, in paratexts. They do not solve the question of whether the author has died, disappeared, or entered a glorious new stage of respectability; they do dramatize the stakes and parameters of how different levels of authorial identity and responsibility affect a reader's experience of a text. Literary history has been content to declare the death of the author; we have not paid enough attention to the ways that this death excited and upset writers in the early United States. This is

partially because we have not paid enough attention to what writers said about the subject of authorship in paratexts. As Paul Erickson has written, the “antebellum era marked the critical transitional period for authorship in America from a genteel avocation to a career organized by market mediations” (275).³ That is to say—the crisis of nineteenth-century authorship involved the twin factors of vastly expanding (and splintering) audiences and different kinds of reward-economies for literary production.

In addition, we have failed to read paratextually—to think explicitly about how paratexts engage readers, and what it means that paratexts so regularly ooze across and infiltrate their way into the body-text. Paratext and body-text are more enmeshed than the generic distinctions suggest. The distinction between an epigraph’s centered location on the page versus the first line of a chapter, or between the regular size font script of a poetic stanza and the subscript of a footnote: these are boundaries the texts work immediately to dissolve when the epigraphs get quoted in the body-text or the footnotes ramble on and take over the full space of the page. Paratexts and body-texts, then, are

³ Erickson’s essay, “New Books, New Men: City-Mysteries Fiction, Authorship, and the Literary Market,” is a recent exploration of the continued debate about the respectability or economic opportunities of Early United States authorship. Erickson’s is a carefully sourced analysis of the mid-century genre of the City-Mystery, but his essay builds on (and criticizes) the well-rehearsed critical tradition that sees American literary nationalism as the story of authorial hardship and posthumous recognition. Key to this trajectory are William Charvat, whose “*The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870*” still casts its shadow, Benjamin’s *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign* and Grantland Rice’s *The Transformation of American Authorship*. Meredith McGill attempts to decenter literary study from what she warns has been a too “author-centric literary nationalism” by focusing on the history of reprint culture in her book *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting: 1834-1853*, but even her book relies on long chapters about Edgar Allan Poe’s and Hawthorne’s authorial anxiety and their relation to the market. I am not suggesting that a focus on the paratext can help us escape narratives of authorial hardship or shift attention from individual authors to the culture at large; I do, however, believe that antebellum authors express their anxiousness about authorial responsibility and identity most eloquently in paratexts. They also rely on paratexts as ideal locations to renegotiate what they see as the shifting expectations of an emerging mass-readership culture. Analyzing their paratexts makes it possible to think about the aspects of literary nationalism and the crisis of nineteenth-century authorship that the authors themselves were most ready to explore with their readers.

absolutely enmeshed, and the most interesting paratextualists capitalized on the tendency of paratexts to exceed their boundaries. Paratextual excess became an analogue and a tool for these authors to exceed or resist generic or cultural conventions.

This interplay between paratext and body-text, between authors and editors, and between books and periodicals demands our revision to the chronology that describes nineteenth-century literary culture as having failed to maintain the gloriously active eighteenth-century public sphere. In this narrative, literary culture has become a mass or popular reading culture by mid-century at the expense of active participation. The elite readers of the late eighteenth century, according to this view, could afford to follow and laugh at jokes at their own expense because they were sometimes themselves co-producing literary meaning of their own as unpaid contributors to periodicals or as the writers of letters-to-the-editor. When literature circulated primarily amongst small groups where private authorship, literary games and manuscript circulation was the norm, it was reasonable for authors and readers to think of each other as peers. To get from the late eighteenth-century literary games and manuscript or small print run circulation of the clubs David Shields explores to the mass readership culture Shelly Streeby credits with building acceptance of filibustering in the Mexican War, scholars have suggested that, as the century progressed, reader address became tamer and less interesting as it grew more careful and more serious. Jürgen Habermas lamented the quick demise of an ephemeral late eighteenth-century public sphere consisting of active, exchangeable readers and writers, which then gave way to a passive culture characterized by advertising-driven mass media products that reduced “a public critically reflecting on its culture to one that

merely consumes it” (175). Running parallel to the demise of the active and writing reader is the rise of the self-supporting, celebrated professional author who then has to bear part of the responsibility for convincing the mass readers that their cash and consumption are the best substitute for their intellectual participation.

Recent scholarship in the history of the book has shown that this narrative of decline—of an active reading population in the early republic being gradually replaced by passive consumers at mid-century—does not reflect reality. Meredith McGill demonstrates that authors circulated and readers engaged them—from reading newspaper renditions of anonymous poetry and unattributed or cheap novel reprints to attending the celebrity tours of Charles Dickens. Readers paid for serious literary biography and for Edgar Allan Poe’s periodical experiments that parody both extremes of celebrity and anonymity. Leon Jackson shows that it is also misleading to see literature as utterly transformed by the market revolution’s incursion into literary culture. This is not to say that the effects of capitalism described by David Dowling in *Capital Letters* or by Michael T. Gilmore have misrepresented important shifts in antebellum American literature, but to acknowledge the importance of what Jackson, using Pierre Bourdieu, refers to as “multiple economies” and forms of capital that authors sought and employed to advance careers and reputation (*The Business of Letters* 23). These multiple economies make anonymous, pseudo-anonymous, and pseudonymous contributions prevalent throughout the period despite the success of a few authors writing under their own names. Given the anxieties about named authorship, the proliferation of reprint culture, and a burgeoning audience for a great variety of literary productions, thinking of antebellum

America as drifting comprehensively into passive consumption of literature makes no sense. Indeed, I am arguing that the splintering and expansion of reading in this period necessitated the inventiveness of the period's paratextual experimentation.⁴

Andrew Piper's recent study, *Dreaming in Books*, elegantly details the practice of common-placing throughout the nineteenth century. He charts the proliferation of mid-century gift annuals as additional evidence that book consumers continued to engage printed materials actively and to respond in a variety of written ways, especially through the sharing of books and inscribing gift-annuals as presents. That publishers encouraged this kind of engagement is clear from the blank spaces they included specifically for readers to mark with their own handwriting (121-152). What Piper delivers is a bridging of the diligent critical bibliography and publishing histories by twentieth-century critics such as William Charvat and Frank Mott with the work of Pierre Bourdieu and literary theorists thinking through the development of authorship. Literary critics are returning to book history because the paratextual and publication details preserved by antiquarian booksellers, collectors and critical bibliographers have their own story to tell about book production, promotion, and appreciation. I contribute to this conversation by showing that authors, particularly in paratexts, told their nineteenth-century readers this same story. Romantic writers, according to Piper, "did not write around writing...but crucially wrote

⁴ I do not mean to assert that there was no diminution of the public sphere's active call and response culture; a mass reading culture by definition requires a more passive or asymmetric relationship between the few authors and the many readers, and that certainly occurred. (See Richard Brodhead's *Culture of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*, and Shelley Streeby's *American Sensations: Class Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*.) Genette notes that paratexts often direct themselves at "certain readers," and nineteenth-century American authors engaged the "certain" in the sense of classed (some, not others) readers.

about writing itself” (13). In the paratexts this dissertation studies, writers write not just about writing as an abstract process for recording ideas, but as a passion and a profession.

Clifford Siskin writes on the book’s dust jacket that Piper’s study is “the book that book history itself has been waiting for.” The book does indeed continue the work of Meredith McGill, Leon Jackson, Michael Gamer, Leah Price and others in thinking through the role of books as material and economic objects, and as commodities that could confer cultural capital and status on authors and readers alike. Choosing “the process of how we became bookish at the turn of the nineteenth century” as his focus, he proposes the term “bibliographic subjects” to describe “the immense reorganization of human subjectivity around books” (3, 1, 13). I will discuss Piper’s work throughout the dissertation; here I want only to note that Siskin’s description of book history “waiting” for a book to rescue it is a nice analog to the complaint that popular readers became too passive in the nineteenth century and too dependent on [dust-jacket] reviews to tell them what and how to read. Neither book history nor literary criticism is “waiting for” such books, of course, because every genre, even an academic discipline, continues only to the extent that it participates in its own constant transformation.

Every age has its detractors who lament that some new cultural phenomenon threatens active learning or sophisticated, serious culture; often those same critics believe their particular brand of literature or reader-address will reverse the trend. Walter Benjamin maintained the belief that it was the bourgeois critic’s responsibility to attempt solidarity with the proletariat by guiding them to texts that would increase their political savvy. Benjamin hoped that such a practice would eventually help to turn consumers

“into producers—that is, readers or spectators into collaborators” (“The Author As Producer” 777). Benjamin praised Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater as one successful example, but Brecht was himself reacting to what he saw as insufficiently active viewers when he decried his age’s theatre as culinary entertainment. Worried that theater-goers only wanted “to become as wax in the magicians’ hands” when they went to the theater, Brecht experimented with the alienation technique to unsettle viewers and demand more of their reflective attention (39). Dramatic theater “wears down [the viewer’s] capacity for action” (37). In contrast, the epic theater “arouses his capacity for action” and “forces him to take decisions” (37). Today we wring our hands about NEA reports showing that twenty-first-century visual culture has killed reading. Yet reading is not dead and the iPad, derided when Apple launched the tablet one year ago as a mere “consumption device” that drains energy from creative production, is now the new darling of elementary and secondary education for the ways it encourages interactive student learning.

Focusing on the slide towards a passive consumer public sphere that Jürgen Habermas abhorred also obscures the confidence that American authors held in their ability to shake “mass” or “common” readers out of passivity and to turn them into active citizens, readers, amateur literary critics and ardent supporters of native literature. Critics worried in the early nineteenth century that the proliferation of Gothic novels in circulating libraries and the gossip of daily and weekly papers were replacing philosophical or reflective contemplation of more serious reading matter, but at the same time authors like John Neal wrote Gothic novels and then used paratexts to those novels

to argue that readers can and must become active consumers and promoters of the “best sort” of literature. Over and over, they chose paratexts as the sites best suited for arguing that reforming the status of authorship in America was necessary to advance American literary culture.

Nineteenth-century paratexts display a fascinating set of contradictory claims that are bolder and more fantastic than their authors will risk in the body-text. In paratexts, for instance, authors regularly indulge in the fantasy that they have the power to compel purchases. Paratexts often present the hyperbolic claim that purchases of native texts will promote American letters at home and spur the nation’s reputation abroad. They pronounce nationalist sentiments even as they admit that it only makes sense to think of book-making as an international game. Paratexts abuse the generic-appropriate tone and content, are the site of hoaxes and parodies, and exceed the spaces they are supposed to occupy. These excesses inspire imitation and emulation but also derision and prohibition. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the “footnote poem,” in which an author offers a long historical or georgic poem and edifies readers with extensive historical and philosophical glosses, was popular enough to become a genre of its own. The genre produced serious eighteenth-century Georgic poems, such as James Grainger’s “*The Sugarcane*” and Joel Barlow’s *The Columbiad*, but the parodies of the genre are equally memorable, especially Alexander Pope’s *The Dunciad*, (1728) and William Gifford’s *The Baviad*, (1791). In the early nineteenth century, Walter Scott continued parodying footnoted poems by giving a canto of *Lady of the Lake* an endnote that

incorporates two complete ballads and then notes for that ballad.⁵ In a reference to the footnote poem genre and its parodies, John Neal bet that the public had tired of such poems and titled his epic poem, *Battle of Niagara: A Poem without Notes*. Neal still needed the paratextual help of a title page, however, to register that backlash.

Besideness: Paratextual Marginality and Excision

By nature of their “besideness” paratexts always risk appearing excessive or unnecessary; their absence or exclusion further suggests that paratexts are a remnant or remainder. They are dangerously marginal, additional, extra. Their flappy, tacked-on-ness makes them especially vulnerable to excision: the British *Novel Newspaper* reprinted two-columned cheap editions of John Neal’s novels in the 1840s without his prefaces. James Fenimore Cooper’s 1821 American revolutionary novel *The Spy* was modeled on Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* novels, including clever verse epigraphs for each chapter, but perhaps deciding that that fad had not weathered the decades well, Cooper removed them from mid-century revised editions. Good luck finding an inexpensive paperback copy of the mid-century’s most famous paratext; Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Custom House” is regularly omitted from twentieth-century reprints of *The Scarlet Letter*.

To read Neal’s longest paratext, one needs another kind of fortune (database privileges) to find that gem on the internet—a digital edition of a book’s second rather than its first edition. Even online databases, where bytes are cheap, search is king, and completeness is a general goal, struggle to represent and include full paratextual material.

⁵ I am grateful to Joseph Rezek for directing me to this and many other Walter Scott paratextual marvels.

The *American Poetry* web database includes all of the poems from the second edition of Neal's *Battle of Niagara*, but does not print its preface, perhaps because it is prose, or long, or was simply deemed unimportant. Their exclusion also makes it clear that even scholars involved in the profession of presenting digital versions have not decided what constitutes paratext: the *American Poetry* file for *Battle of Niagara* warns that "Preliminaries and introductory matter [are] omitted," but then includes Neal's two-line Dedication to John Pierpont and offers footnotes for other poems. This inclusion of a brief paratext might suggest that in fact they have included all of the "preliminaries," but the hard copy in the University of Pennsylvania's Rare Book Room reveals that the preliminaries also include a fascinating sixty-page preface. By omitting that preface, readers of the web edition miss Neal's critique of Alexander Pope's "sing song" meter, his frustration with the errors and laziness of American reviewers, and his self-deprecating story about planning (and failing) to take Philadelphia by storm as a performer of verse.

Database editors, like the editors of all editions, make choices about value, merit, and significance. This case demonstrates that even when the cost of paper should not be at issue, all text is not equal, and some paratexts may be summarily removed.⁶ This partial expurgation is regrettable and inexcusable, and makes it easy to praise database and archival projects like Google Books, where the focus has been on scanning text and

⁶ The *American Poetry* database does at least acknowledge in their "About" page that this is intentional editorial practice: "The entire text of each poem has been included. Any accompanying text written by the poet and forming an integral part of the poem, such as dedications, notes, arguments and epigraphs, is also generally included. *Volume-specific front and back matter, such as advertisements, prefaces, introductions, editorial apparatus, dedicatory epistles, biographies, glossaries and indexes has usually been excluded*" [emphasis mine].

uploading it to the internet rather than on careful editorial decisions or meticulous metadata. While it is exciting that Google Books now makes so many Neal novels and texts available, for free, and in one place, it is unfortunate that their selection process regularly excludes second editions even when they contain significant alteration. Anyone with an internet connection can now read the 1818 *Battle of Niagara* on Google Books, but only those with access to the Shaw Shoemaker Early American Imprints Series II database or a rare book room can read the full text of the 1819 second edition, including the preface the *American Poetry* database omits.

Paratexts, then, are at constant risk of expulsion from future editions. Because they appear to be extraneous and outside/beside the organic form of the body-text, it has been tempting to describe the paratext as unnecessary or vestigial, unworthy of being passed on to future generations, like the vermiform appendix—an organ useful to human ancestors for digesting cellulose. For human readers to process textual information (often presented on cellulose-based paper, no less) the printed appendix's job is to offer additional data or context, but to keep it separate from the main or body-text. Too often, however, the appendix is the dumping ground for tedious chronologies, tangential bibliography, or unsorted data. In the human body, the appendix can be ignored until the threat or consequence of its rupture demands its immediate extraction. At least in principle, paratextual material preserves the body-text's health and homogenous form by keeping it clear of unnecessary data and digression. In practice, the rupture and intrusion of paratexts into body-texts give readers a sense of how the author imagined and tried to mold the author-reader relationship. Footnotes explode across the whole page. Prefaces

turn surprisingly personal. Postscripts switch to periodical mode when authors try to engage readers at a level the body-text has failed to or cannot, because of its form, express. It is this interaction between intention and execution that makes paratexts such enticing morsels for scholars interested in the intersection of reception theory, material text, and the history of the book.

My first chapter begins with a hoax—with what amounts to a Missing Person public service announcement for a “small elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of *Knickerbocker*.” Three weeks later, Washington Irving replaced the missing person with a found document, “*a very curious kind of written book*” that Seth Handaside, Knickerbocker’s supposed landlord, planned to publish to offset Knickerbocker’s debts. Not until the *Complete Works of Irving* “deathbed” Putnam edition in 1848 would Irving authorize an edition of *A History of New York* that replaced “Knickerbocker” with “Irving” in the author-position on the title page.⁷

Only rarely will one text’s promotion, reception, and revision history demonstrate the nineteenth-century anxiety around authorship as clearly as *A History of New York*. That anxiety can be traced best by careful attention to the book’s paratexts—to the hoax that constituted its promotion, the additions and subtractions Irving made to successive prefatory material, and the ways that the text’s creator (Knickerbocker/the “Author of the Sketchbook”/Washington Irving) appears in the opening pages of the various editions

⁷ The “Distressing” note about Knickerbocker’s disappearance ran in the *Evening Post* between October 6 and November 26, 1809 and was reprinted in a few others papers. The advertisements did not appear in an edition of *A History of New York* until 1848. Here I quote from the 1848 edition because it is the first edition to add Irving’s name (*A History of New-York xv*). After the volume’s title page there is another -; on the second title page Knickerbocker replaces Irving in the author-position. I discuss the implications for these additions in much greater length in Chapter I.

between 1809 and 1848. This dissertation argues that antebellum American authors relied on paratexts to mediate the author-reader relationship. Sometimes they chose deceit, jokes, parodies, and hoaxes, and sometimes they wrote earnest descriptions about effects of generic constraints, economic motivations, and national politics.

Specifically, these authors recast nationalism in the only terms that made sense for them to think about their literary production—that is, in a transatlantic frame in which Hannah More, *The Quarterly Review*, and Sir Walter Scott were far more widely reprinted, paid for, and read in America than native writers or periodicals. This is not to say that American authors were not succeeding and gaining American market share—indeed this is precisely the moment when that occurs for Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Catherine Maria Sedgwick—but as their contemporaries noted, their American success was contingent first on British periodical approval. Brown’s fiction was mostly ignored stateside until London reviewers feted and reprinted him in Britain; his popularity there increased his appeal at home. Hence it is reasonable to state that however often American authors wrote (and they very often did) dedications and prefaces addressed to “his country women” (Neal) or “the American fair” (Cooper) they knew that it was the judgment of male British critics in London and Edinburgh that led to sales in Philadelphia, Tarrytown, and Albany. To be a nationalist writer in antebellum America was to write for a transatlantic audience. Scholars such as Paul Giles, Meredith McGill, Elisa Tamarkin, and Leonard Tennenhouse have already led the way in thinking about American literature in a transatlantic frame. My particular contribution is to focus on authors who were not just

conscious of and carefully writing for that transatlantic audience, but who devoted considerable paratextual space to describing that transatlantic negotiation. These authors constantly demand that their readers recognize that their prose, their subjects and stylistic decisions are guided by their re-negotiation of authorial and national status with regards to the British metropole and the transatlantic literary marketplace. In the case studies presented here I trace authors who ask that readers consider how that post-colonial negotiation and participation in transatlantic discourse was transforming authorship and readership.

Between the missing author and the reader of *A History of New York*, there is also that handler or middle man, the landlord, Seth Handaside, whose name evokes the motion made by the stage actor who takes a step towards the pit and then, shielding one side of his face from his fellow actors with a hand-aside, stage-whispers to the audience. Theatrical use of the aside creates dramatic irony by emphasizing the knowledge gap between the oblivious non-speaking character and the audience who hears the speaker's aside. Before *A History of New York's* publication, Irving made the gamble that his audience would be willing to be tricked and abused—to be that oblivious non-speaking character who does not initially hear the whispered aside. The hype built around the book after Irving released the second notice to newspapers creates a second non-speaking group—the smug audience who is now in on the joke—and that audience responded with a version of nineteenth-century fan fiction, creating additional characters, Christian Brinkersnuff and Ludwick von Bynkerfeldt, who claimed intimate acquaintance with Knickerbocker and defended him against the (accurate) reviews that acknowledged

Knickerbocker as a fiction and a ruse. Paratextualists gamble: they bet that unsettling readers, playing jokes on them, or abusing their expectations will attract readers who engage texts not just for content but for their divergence from publishing or generic convention.

Paratexts make readers both the victims and the beneficiaries of asymmetric knowledge. Sometimes even in the same paratext, authors strive to unsettle readers using parody or misdirection, only then to explain that they have adopted this strategy to educate the reader about some aspect of literary culture. John Neal opens *Keep Cool* with a review of his own novel that parodies the early nineteenth-century American periodical's resistance towards generic innovation; he then breaks free of the reviewer's voice to tell readers how they should distinguish themselves from reviewers by appreciating and evaluating the novel more honestly than reviewers do. It should be no surprise that this kind of screed against bad reviewers and the appeal to readers to "judge as you feel" occurs concurrently with major shifts in the practice of authorship.⁸ Romantic Britain and the early American republic offered multiple versions of authorship: the author as professional who supports him or herself by the pen; the author as periodical editor and arbiter of taste; the author as guardian of national and/or folk heritage as ballad or folk-tradition collector; or the author as romantic man of genius. To this list of author-functions and identities available to nineteenth-century American authors, I am adding one more: the paratextualist. The paratextualist recognizes the particular utility presented by this region of text for advancing a career or philosophy or

⁸ Neal's phrase "judge as you feel" appears in the preface to *The Battle of Niagara's* second edition (lxvii).

literary stance as a professional novelist, editor, collector, or man of genius. One qualifies for this additional title by the volume or the level of experimentation exhibited: John Neal wrote especially lengthy prefaces; Washington Irving played with the idea of authorship using a periodical hoax in promoting *A History of New York* before and after publication; William Wells Brown blurred the boundary between epigraphs and periodicals by incorporating their form and content into the body-text. These are just the paratextualists who become case studies in this dissertation, but the list of antebellum paratextualists might easily also extend to: Noah Webster's prefaces or Joel Barlow's footnotes for polemics on American orthography; Catherine Maria Sedgwick for her prefaces on religion and the historical novel; or Walt Whitman for his careful attention to typography, page size and illustration. In the twenty-first century, fiction and creative non-fiction are again exploring the ways that footnotes can supplement and compete with the body-text, from the playfulness of *McSweeney's* to the Dominican history in Junot Diaz's footnotes in *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, to the many ways that David Foster Wallace demonstrated that paratexts can transform non-academic writing.

Scholars including Jon Klancher, Robert Altick, and Mark Louis Parker have shown that, for British authors such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the growing popularity and prevalence of periodicals profoundly altered the ways that authors imagined various classes of readers and the poetry and prose required to satisfy them. Ronald and Mary Zboray have continued the intensive archival work of Cathy Davidson necessary to trace actual reader responses (in common-place books, journals, and letters) in Antebellum America. While each of these scholars tends to focus either on authors or readers, I

choose paratexts as particularly rich sites where authors tried to educate their audiences by speaking from both sides of the authorial “aside.”

Authors, Editors, Readers

Contrast Irving’s approach of tricking all readers and then slowly, slyly letting them in on the joke with the author-reader negotiation that concludes this dissertation—Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Custom House.” In this famous preface Hawthorne declares that an author necessarily writes for “the few who will understand him,” but that some authors go too far, divulging details fit only for a single “heart and mind of perfect sympathy” (7). Instead Hawthorne argues that an author ought to write for a “kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend,” in which case the author can “be autobiographical, without violating either the reader’s rights or his own” (8). Hawthorne here suggests that authors must always tread delicately to protect themselves and their readers. Irving’s narrator is aggressive, abusive, and often dismissive of his readers but also gradually warms in *A History of New York* to assume a more confessional and conversational tone. Hawthorne, in contrast, declares upfront his intention to avoid either extreme of abusing the reader’s rights or of pretending to a closer “perfect sympathy” with his public.

The notable difference in their approach to readers, however, does not align exactly with their description of authorship. Hawthorne appears to alter his position in the final pages of “The Custom House” regarding autobiography and authorial identity when he recommends that if readers feel that the sketch is “too autobiographical for a modest person to publish in his lifetime,” that it would be best for them to think of the text as the

“POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF A DECAPITATED SURVEYOR,” and therefore should be acceptable as the production of a “gentleman who writes from beyond the grave” (42). Irving intentionally misplaced his author in the *History of New York*’s 1809 edition and then located him just long enough to kill him and publish his obituary in a preface to the 1812 edition; Hawthorne encouraged readers to imagine (for propriety’s sake) that he was a “decapitated” medium communicating from “beyond the grave.” This obsession about the concept of authorship and the choice to imagine the author’s violent death or disappearance made the liminal position of the paratext the ideal territory for writers to explore the potential of authorial expression and the limits of reader formation.

Between 1809, when Irving published the first edition of *History of New York* and 1850, when “The Custom House” prefaced *The Scarlet Letter*, American authors turned to footnotes, frontispieces, prefaces and postscripts to address readers. Whether they assumed a cavalier attitude towards reader confusion or professed great solicitude about “the reader’s rights,” these authors play with the idea of the disembodied, disowned, and decapitated author-function. They were obsessed with the idea that author and editor-function might be separated, dangerously or conveniently, from individuated persons. Here I am thinking not just of Michel Foucault’s claim that the named author can “reduce the great peril, the great danger with which fiction threatens our world” but also of *Blackwood’s* conglomerate fictional editor “Christopher North” and of the duels men fought to deny their authorship or editorship of particular works (209). This dissertation demonstrates that the period’s authors were themselves theorists of the author-function, and that they made their claims in paratexts. “American Paratexts” strives to advance the

work of scholars of American literary history and the history of authorship and editorship by arguing that authors who called specific attention to material and generic conventions in paratexts were central to transforming book and periodical culture as well as redefining the standards by which authors gauged their fame, distribution, and international status.

The theorist who combines aspects of book history, structuralism, and authorship studies in ways that are central to my own concerns in this dissertation, Gérard Genette, connects the “nomme d’auteur” to its announcement or absence on title pages. He evaluates the motivations and effects of authors choosing to promote themselves along the spectrum of anonymous or named authorship (what he calls “onymity.”) He describes the range of prefatory strategies that mark texts as “fictive” or biographical and theorizes the paratext as a liminal zone with spatial and temporal value. Genette’s *Seuils*, translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, is therefore a definitional text to which I will return throughout the following chapters. His classification of, for instance, the “fictive authorial preface” makes possible fine categorization and sub-categorization between authorial strategies in a variety of paratexts. Here I want only to interrogate the ways that Genette’s structuralist claims about the paratext (a term he invented) guide this dissertation. On the first page of *Paratexts* Genette quotes extensively from J. Hillis Miller on the root, “-para-” arguing it signifies something “simultaneously on both sides of the boundary line between inside and out. It is also the boundary itself, the screen which is a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside” (1). Jonathan Gray’s *Show Sold Separately*, a book about film and television marketing, similarly builds on the ‘para’ aspect of the paratext: “paratexts are not simply add-ons, spinoffs, and also-rans:

they create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them. Just as we ask *paramedics* to save lives rather than leave the job to others, and just as a *parasite* feeds off, lives in, and can affect the running of its host's body, a paratext constructs, lives in, and can affect the running of the text.” (6) These competing descriptions frame the question: does it makes more sense to think of paratexts as parasites that are incapable of existence without a relation to their body-text or as that membrane that is as essential to osmotic exchange in single-celled protozoa as it is to mature literary cultures?

Genette argues that a paratext functions as “a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood or achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (*Paratexts* 2). That transaction between author and reader of a text is always imaginary to the extent that authors have no actual control over the purchasing habits, attention spans, or emotional lives of their readers. What is most striking about so many of the paratexts in this study is the determination of authors to expose the relationship as imaginary—to reveal to readers how and why authors and publishers adhere to or diverge from generic, gendered, or national norms.⁹ These liminal, threshold paratexts are the perfect

⁹ Catherina Maria Sedgwick acknowledges that she cannot compel purchase, but the decision to mention that she cannot compel appears to a psychological bid to encourage exactly that which she cannot compel. She writes in the preface to *A New England Tale*: “The writer of this tale has made a humble effort to add something to the scanty stock of native American literature. Any attempt to conciliate favour by apologies would be unavailing and absurd. In this free country, no person is under any obligation to write; and the public (unfortunately) is under no obligation to read. It is certainly desirable to possess some sketches of the character and manners of our own country, and if this has been done with any degree of success, it would be wrong to doubt that it will find a reception sufficiently favourable” (Preface,

opportunity for authors to address a group of transatlantic readers who are also marginal and disparate but connected by sea-lanes and language. In negotiating the reader/author relation, these texts confirm that the membrane is as permeable as Miller suggests and explain why paratextual moments are often so much more daring and informal than the body-texts.

In the book that preceded *Paratexts*, translated as *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, Genette categorizes the relationships of texts within a literary field. Genette argues that every piece of literature functions within “five types of transtextuality” (*Palimpsests* 1). Those types are inter-, meta-, para-, hyper-, and architextuality (1-4). Intertexts display “a relation of copresence between two or more texts,” with simple quotation as an example and parodic or plagiarism as examples he explores at greater length (1-2). Metatexts are critical; hypertexts imitate, parody or pastiche originals. The hypertext retroactively creates “hypotexts”—i.e. Joyce’s *Ulysses*, a hypertext, transforms Homer’s *Odyssey* into a hypotext (5). Finally, architexts encompass “the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text” (1). Crucially this classification, arranged from the least to the greatest level of “abstraction, implicitation, and comprehensiveness,” places the paratext exactly in the middle—paratexts are at once marginal to the books they cling to and central to textual discourse (1).

unnumbered). The phrase “it would be wrong to doubt” regarding the odds of a patriotic book’s reception simultaneously suggests the impoliteness of implying that Americans might fail their duty to support native productions and reminds them simply by using the word “doubt” that it remains a distinct possibility.

Genette expands on *Palimpsests* by extending the categorization of the paratext in *Paratexts*, making the definition broader and expanding the theoretical implications. He gives countless examples of paratexts as physical mediations that provoke or interrupt a reader's engagement with the body-text (i.e. dust-jackets, spines, and the "please-insert" advertisement). He is interested in how authors and publishers employ them and in how readers recognize them. The "beach book" for example, is "large enough for the cover in the store window to seem like a poster, and heavy enough for the book itself to prevent a beach towel from being gone with the wind" (*Paratexts* 19). The book's physicality has utility for the bookseller (large cover read-able in a bookshop window) and for the customer, who needs to be entertained while at the ocean's sandy edge and while swimming in it.

Paratextual experimentation functions like that beach-book—sometimes anchoring a text (or towel), sometimes there primarily to attract readers at the outset and then safely ignored while the reader explores the body-text. Many paratexts, however, are explicitly designed for consultation while swimming in the body-text, too—appendices, footnotes, indexes. Some paratexts escape their marginalization by intruding into the body-text. Laurence Sterne places a preface in Book III of *Tristram Shandy*. Walter Scott relocates his preface to the end, calling it a "Postscript, which should have been a preface" to *Waverley*. He gave as his rationale the habit of readers who skip prefaces and even major parts of the novel to read final chapters first, so "these remarks, being introduced last in order, have still the best chance to be read in their proper place" (492). James Fenimore Cooper's preface to *The Spy* goes further, asserting that "nobody looks

at a preface until they are at a loss to discover from the book itself, what it is the author means” (vii).¹⁰ Not just there to guide the reader into books, prefaces are a last resort for the gasping, drowning readers seeking help at the book’s margin when the body-text fails them. Beach-book covers also illustrate the role that books play beyond edification or entertainment: book covers in shop-windows can be pleasing-enough pictures that they attract customers who were not even seeking books. Elegant bindings can confer social capital even when (or sometimes precisely because) the pages of the books remain uncut and their prose unread.¹¹

Genette writes that “the original assumptive authorial preface, which we will thus shorten to original preface, has as its chief function to ensure that the text is read properly” (*Paratexts* 197). In the chapters that follow, I take issue with the suggestion that paratexts are always there to “ensure” proper reading. In a literary culture so profoundly dominated by periodicals, the centrality of journal reviews and essays that promised to help readers choose what and how to read meant that authorial prefaces resisted the periodical epitexts with their own peritexts. Paratexts, that is to say, will often pre-emptively attack periodicals—what politicians and publicists now call “getting out in front of the story.” Genette’s version of transtextuality focuses on “all that sets the text in a relationship...with other texts” (*Palimpsests* 1). Where architextuality divides one text from another by placing it in a generic or discourse category, transtextuality focuses on connection between a variety of textual expressions. At heart, then, my project is also

¹⁰ In acknowledgement of their better success abroad, too, Cooper wrote in the same preface that “our literature is much like our wine---vastly benefited by travelling” (v).

¹¹ Books with uncut pages are in “mint” condition, sometimes increasing their value.

about transtextuality, because every text and every author in this dissertation contended with an antebellum transtextuality that dictated the transformation of American literary culture from coterie to the mass public. Genette's book-centric classification and even his transtextual frames fail to account for the extent of antebellum American periodical and book cross-pollination. One explanation for Genette's simplification can be found in his description of *Ulysses*. By thinking of James Joyce's *Ulysses* as a hypertext that redefines Homer's *Odyssey* as hypotext, Genette conceives of textual interaction in asymmetric power terms. As my chapters will demonstrate, paratexts do not function without such asymmetric knowledge economies, but, at the same time, there is no constant dynamic that privileges books over periodicals. Walter Scott knew that his postscript might be read before his preface, but as one of the founders of *The Quarterly Review*, he also knew that the first paratext of *Waverley* that most readers would encounter would be excerpted passages of the novel in literary journals. Irving's introductions and revisions rely on shared readership of books and periodicals, as does the rippling of *Inchiquin* across British quarterlies and American regional and partisan book publishers. John Neal's fascination with editing and book reviewing explains the paratextual supplements to his novels, while the manipulation of autobiography, periodical anecdote, and poetic epigraphs in William Wells Brown's novel *Clotel* allowed him to expose generic prejudice in each medium.

The most transtextual context for nineteenth-century American authors and readers was what they themselves called the "transatlantick." Part of what makes literary nationalism in the early republic particularly fascinating is its combination of strident

jingoism, tory loyalism, and the hand-wringing of those who were staunch partisans for neither John Bull nor Brother Jonathan but instead were negotiating that space of intercultural and international territory Cooper described in *The Spy*, with his subtitle, “A tale of the neutral ground.” The Atlantic was contested space—a national, legal, and natural boundary—but also the medium that suspended (by which I mean the chemical definition of dissolved/diffused rather than a temporary stoppage) political and aesthetic discourse. Authors such as John Neal, Washington Irving and William Wells Brown, each of whom published for a transatlantic audience and spent time living in London, decided that citizens would be better judges (and voters) regarding regional, national and foreign policy, and America’s authors would be properly supported if American readers would become more conscious of the ways that the periodicals in transatlantic discourse and popular opinion affected their reading choices. They called attention to reviewing practices, to the effects of copyright, unauthorized reprints of foreign books, and the costs of paper. They debated the value of cheap editions widely distributed versus handsome editions, cherished and revered. They confronted what they saw as dangerous preconceptions and prejudices about female reading, the progress narrative and Native Americans, and the representation of African Americans in the periodical press. They engaged contemporary shifts in political culture, reading habits and printing technology—and they made their stands in their paratexts.

David Foster Wallace Paratexts: “Data-Triage” and Reader Experience

If editors have too often considered paratexts to be extraneous, historians of the book are sometimes too confident that material manipulation of the page was a

typesetter's or publisher's decision rather than an author's. I do not mean to assert that authors ever had more than partial control over these material decisions, but it is worth noting that authors often take extreme interest and care with this aspect of their production. Most recently David Foster Wallace has made clear just how important the material presentation of paratexts could be. His *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* features footnotes within footnotes three levels deep; *Infinite Jest* has more than one hundred pages of endnotes; his 2005 *Atlantic Monthly* piece used boxes within boxes instead of footnotes.¹² That article, titled "Host," describes talk radio that in terms of content focuses on the sensationalism of American talk radio, but also on listener media literacy. Marie Mundaca, who designed the book version of "Host," recounts the hours that she and Wallace spent on the phone over several weeks, revising the typesetting and

¹² Nested footnotes and asides, even when they recall Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* digressions within digressions, remain a temptation as literary jeux d'esprit; the Wikipedia entry for "Bracket," for instance offers a quick witty example about nested parentheticals: "This is not commonly used in formal writing (though sometimes other brackets [especially parentheses] will be used for one or more inner set of parentheses [in other words, *secondary* {or even tertiary} phrases can be found within the main sentence])(Wikipedia contributors). Incidentally, it was Randall Monroe's blog that directed me to the "Bracket" entry (Monroe, "Parentheses XKCD"). Monroe's web-comics, include a brilliant form of web paratext. His comics generally include handwritten text in the frames and occasionally as captions as well, but when one moves the mouse over the image, additional sans-serif font text appears in a pop-up dialogue box. Because the paratext stays hidden until the mouse accidentally passes over the image or one knows to move it there, this creates the least intrusive (and the most surprising) form of a paratext—and gives the reader that delight of discovery and the sense that we are quite literally in on the joke (since the scroll-over text is often another punch-line). (See "Mathematically Annoying Advertising" for a pertinent example in which the content is also about reader/ text/ economies.) This is also the most innocuous form likely for this kind of image/ mouse interaction. Moving out of the realm of the fantastic that I have discussed, in which authors can only hope that their paratexts will compel purchase or any other kind of additional attention from the reader, twenty-first century web-developers have created so-called "mouse-over" or XSS attacks, in which a computer virus embedded on a website can infect the viewer's computer without any more action on the part of the viewer beyond moving the mouse-pointer over the image; successful implementation of such a virus affected thousands of Twitter users in September, 2010 (Perna). Computer users can block this kind of "passive" infection with a Firefox extension (No-Script) that detects potential XSS attacks and requires users to click to confirm they want to proceed with loading the page, although the program makes some websites unreadable and adds a layer of frustration and delay most users want to avoid. All of this is to say: passive reading *is* as dangerous as nineteenth-century authors worried it was, and careful, active reading remains the [computer] healthy option in 2011.

format (Mundaca). Wallace's determination to make sure that the color-coded box magazine format (and web-version with pop-outs) would be adequately transformed for inclusion in his hardcover essay collection *Consider the Lobster* demonstrates that authors take very seriously the ways that books and periodical formats have different audience expectations and that simple transfer from one format to another risks considerable damage to the presentation of the content.

Detractors of David Foster Wallace feel that he relies on elaborate notes as the dumping ground for any material that would not fit in the body-text. Arguing with his editor about the page count of the thousand-page novel *Infinite Jest*, Wallace does acknowledge that endnotes will help meet the demand for page reduction. But he makes a passionate case for how paratexts such as endnotes can fundamentally alter the reader's experience of his novel. Endnotes, Wallace wrote Michael Pietsch, were ideal because they would:

make the primary text an easier read while at once 1) allowing a discursive, authorial intrusive style w/o Finneganzing the story, 2) mimic the information-flood and data-triage I expect'd be an even bigger part of US life 15 years hence. 3) have a lot more technical/medical verisimilitude 4) allow/make the reader go literally physically 'back and forth' in a way that perhaps cutely mimics some of the story's thematic concerns... 5) feel emotionally like I'm satisfying your request for compression of text without sacrificing enormous amounts of stuff.

(Wallace, qtd. in D.T. Max "The Unfinished" 56)

Wallace first announces a motive regularly cited in defense of paratexts—that of improving a reader’s experience—by guiding their entry into the text, explaining methodological assumptions, or promising that appendices and notes will provide details for those interested and preserve the body-text as an “easier read.” Here Wallace immediately follows the claim that notes will increase reader comfort, however, with his plan for a “discursive, authorial intrusive style,” that works against easy reading. If paratexts can make a reader’s experience easier, they almost always also complicate interaction with the text, especially when the author (as Wallace certainly does) offers crucial details in the paratexts. In trying to “allow/make the reader go literally physically ‘back and forth’” Wallace also exemplifies the quintessential dilemma of the paratextualist.¹³ No author—not even an author as uniquely famous for digression and difficulty as Wallace was—can compel a reader to “make” the swap from body to paratext or to force the conversion of an ambivalent bookshop browser into a purchasing consumer. The trick, always, is to “allow” while at the same time suggesting to readers

¹³ An index makes claims on a reader’s attention. Craig Dworkin, in “Textual Prostheses” notes that “the acts of reading provoked by the paratextual index, not only are the spatial coordinates of the page and the volume of the volume evoked, but the reader’s body is put into motion: the eye moves, the head tilts, the hands and fingers work the pages, the arms and torso shift as the book is handled and manipulated” (16). “The volume of the volume,” the manipulation of the book manipulating the torso; these phrases illustrate the ways that the body of the reader connect to the body-text via the paratext. Paratextualists do not write prefaces simply because they want their texts better understood; they write them because paratexts bring the epi-textual periodical world into the book and present ideal peritextual passages to be excerpted back out to the periodical world. Paratexts disorient and reorient readers; they allow disembodied authors to theorize the relationship between their own corporeal and authorial selves to their textual corpses; and they let authors act as their own editors, viewing and commenting on their work as if their role as editor is distinct from their role as author (when, of course, it is not: it is united by their roles as paratextualists). For all these reasons, paratexts were an ideal site for writers to parody and to ruminate about threats to the profession of authorship or to alert readers to how shifts in print culture were manipulating their intellectual and their purchasing habits.

that they will be very much missing out if they do not make the “back and forth” choice between body and paratext.

Finally, paratexts are often the result of compromise between stubborn authors and wary editors or publishers. Pietsch demanded fewer pages; Wallace countered with the offer of subscript notes. Pietsch wanted footnotes rather than endnotes; Wallace declared that he was “intensely attached to this strategy and will fight w/all 20 claws to preserve it,” because disrupting reader experience by forcing a reader “back and forth” was part of his conception for how he wanted readers to experience, uncomfortably, the “data-triage” of late twentieth-century America. This last aspect—that Wallace intended the aesthetic experience of shifting between text and paratext to mimic the “information-overload” aspect of our daily lives, also has its parallels in the nineteenth-century paratexts at the heart of this dissertation. Each of these authors, I am arguing, felt that shifts in the book and periodicals market made it difficult for non-professional readers to choose what and how to read. Using hoaxes, parody, hyperbole, and sometimes abrasive and sometimes plaintive reader address, these paratexts seek not just to mimic the shifting literary landscape, but to raise reader awareness about how that culture affects their reading habits and choices.

This dissertation explores the opportunities presented by paratexts in four main chapters. I begin chronologically in Chapter One, “Self-satisfied Citizens and Republican Reading in *A History of New York*.” Part of the argument of this dissertation is that paratexts are sites where authors acknowledge *and* resist shifts in the literary, political, and emerging national culture of the early republic. Washington Irving’s *A History of*

New York alternates between tricking the reader (with an advertising hoax, mock erudition, playful allusion to contemporary politics) and with mixing serious critique into the humor and parody. This balance, I argue, becomes clearest by reference to edition variation. First published in 1809, Irving regularly revised *History of New York*. British accolades and reprints made it possible for him to launch himself as an author with broad transatlantic appeal—so enviously broad, in fact, that American authors quickly decided his prose was too British. Irving's *Sketchbook* and *Bracebridge Hall* call explicit attention to his status as an American publishing in a transatlantic field, but his revisions to *History of New York* do not call attention to the transatlantic aspect. Instead, I argue the revisions (and, equally important, the aspects of the text that he chose not to expurgate or revise) continue Irving's project of alerting readers to his fears that American historiography and the late fad for historical societies was contributing to an insufficiently self-reflective celebration of national formation. That fad, Irving suggests through the cantankerousness and self-importance of his Knickerbocker narrator, was distorting rather than recording the darker side of American development. Drawing reader attention to the abuse of Native Americans and the rapaciousness of the American economic engine, each edition of *History of New York* maintains some of Irving's strongest language about how Americans should view their nation's history and progress. Wary of the early nineteenth-century fascination with histories of the revolution and early America, Irving used his advertising hoax and a satiric, over-the-top introductory book for *History of New York* to make the meta-critical argument that American consumers of history needed better historiographical consciousness, rather than more histories singing

the praises of war heroes and the march towards progress that denuded forests and decimated Native American populations. What he adds and removes in later editions are components that streamline the 1809 text but also make its initial hoax more readily accessible (by converting the epitext into peritext) and by updating some of its period-specific targets.

Irving's decision to rely on epitextual advertising hoax shows that periodicals were the lifeblood of literary culture in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Irving could assume that readers of the first edition would at least have heard about the hoax, and there surely was no better way to drum up excitement than by turning to American newspapers and hoping the reports would be (as they were) picked up by other papers. Chapter Two, "Tennis on the Transatlantic Lawn" argues that periodicals exemplify the reader-relations experimentation and opportunities explored by nineteenth-century authors and editors in all kinds of paratexts. This tight interconnection between periodicals and book culture often allows periodicals to function like paratexts for the texts they excerpt, summarize and critique.

A book in the early nineteenth century's transatlantic market is mediated to the reader not only in its own paratextual material such as the peri- and epi-texts already mentioned, but also in the meta-textual reviews and comments it creates in the periodicals and the way that periodical culture permeates the rest of literary culture. Charles Jared Ingersoll's *Inchiquin: The Jesuit's Letters*, for instance, sparks a British *Quarterly Review* article which in turn inspires two American book-length responses. Genette limits "the elements in the public and private history of the book," to texts directly linked to the

author or publisher, but such a narrow definition does not account for the tight interlocking (and generative) interaction of books and periodicals in the early nineteenth century. This paper war, I argue, serves as a paratext to the period's literature because that literature so frequently responds to the periodicals. While prefaces, footnotes, and frontispieces are clearly paratexts because they offer something outside but still intimately, physically linked to the texts they appear beside, the era's periodicals serve as paratext to the books and ideas they discuss because the texts are so aware of and responsive to the periodicals—even when an ocean rather than merely a few pages separates the text from a paratext. That awareness is especially evident in the primary case study in the second chapter—*Inchiquin: The Jesuit's Letters*. Ingersoll's text consists of four letters that parody European travel writers and four letters that supply a corrective to European naivety and error. Yet in a footnote that is fully ten pages long, Ingersoll reveals his primary target: wealthy Americans who go abroad and display “tamelessness and subserviency they themselves are not aware of,” thereby making Europeans think these Americans are “types of the nation,” and that all of America lacks “original national genius and character” (fn 143).

“Tamelessness and subserviency” are clearly strong denigrations, but Ingersoll seems less concerned about a temporary fashion for European letters, textiles or habits. What Americans need to alter is their consciousness. Ingersoll is more upset that Americans “are not aware of” their Euro-fetishes than of the fetishes; *Inchiquin's Letters* regularly praises much about Europe, recognizing important European productions rather than celebrating its cultural hegemony. He wants Americans to replace the unthinking

admiration they have for all things European with a more self-critical appreciation for British and American cultural contributions. Ingersoll's determination to show Americans that they can best enjoy European culture by evaluating and selecting from it is part of what Elisa Tamarkin's excellent *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion and Antebellum America* explores. She emphasizes that Americans were not ready to embrace or to renounce Britain, but that the continued incorporation of British elements in emerging American culture demonstrated that "nationalism, as a form of feeling, an ideology, and a set of practices, works every bit as seriously at bringing some aspects of the outside in, as it does at keeping others out" (xxvi). This is the sort of complex emotional and political balance that authors display when their paratexts tackle the question of American literary participation in a transatlantic frame—and it is essential for understanding how Ingersoll can rail against the danger of Anglophiliac Americans in the very same footnote from which he quotes Walter Scott on national pride.¹⁴

Chapter Three, "John Neal, Novelist as Journal Editor OR: How to Write a Blackwood Article in Five ~~Easy Steps~~ Novels," focuses on a writer who became a periodical contributor just as the "*Inchiquin* Episode" subsided. No author better exemplifies the connections between the periodical and the book world than John Neal. His moment's most prolific paratextualist, he was also ribbed by his club friends as "Jehu

¹⁴ The obverse of Ingersoll's wariness about the metropole is the almost religious devotion to British heritage that Tamarkin chronicles. Even this kind of loyalism, she argues, is not anti-American but rather manifests as a "devotion that provided not so much a place where antebellum Americans found release from the burdens of their own nationality, but where their "Americanness" was lived in other languages of national expression" (xxiv). Like Irving, who celebrated contiguity over revolutionary rupture (see Warner's "Irving's Posterity,") many Americans were uncomfortable imagining national identity unless it could mesh with "other languages of national expression."

O’Cataract, Professor of Jocology.” A man whose prose tumbled out like a waterfall, Neal also could never resist the temptation to explain a joke, and he used the prefaces of his novels and his poetry to condemn American journals’ emulation of British corrupt reviewing practices, where the level of puffing for each new author was calculated not by artistic merit but by his distance from the Tweed. American journals, “with the characteristick genius of our countrymen, for improvement, rather than invention,” have quickly surpassed the British on their sprint to the summit of the “Parnassus of Puffers” (*Keep Cool, a Novel* vii).

The explicator of jokes generates few laughs because he elaborates something that his listeners already know (in which case he is tedious and long-winded) or because he succeeds in the explanation but not in producing the surprise necessary for humor. Over and over, Neal risked losing reader attention and sympathy by playing the joke on them and then explaining what he had done. This chapter argues that Neal used his paratextual pulpit in the prefaces of his novels as if he were a periodical editor. In the paratexts of his own books but then also as contributor to *Blackwood’s* and as editor of *The Yankee*, Neal took every chance to explain. Neal’s paratexts regularly parody and then condemn reviewers—but each condemnation is generally followed by a call to readers to attend more to their own sense of literary value than the opinions they too readily adopt from reviewers. Neal wants to distinguish between the reviewing reader and the consumer reader. Yet Neal wants them both to judge: he tells journal reviewers in his *Battle of Niagara* second edition preface that the reprinting of foreign reviews about foreign books in American journals is unnecessary and detrimental:

Are we so abject? So contemptible? Must we import our opinions? ...Of what consequence to us, comparatively speaking, is the reputation of cotemporary *British* writers. Our fame must depend not upon *reading* but upon *writing*. It is your duty, gentlemen editors, your duty to your subscribers; you are pledged to it, as American journalists, to take some notice of every American publication that appears. If it deserve condemnation, condemn it—tear it piecemeal. (xxxv)

The American reviewer, according to Neal, must play the role of alerting readers to the existence of native literature—but because it can only improve if better literature prevails, he does not want mere puff-pieces for American productions, so reviewers need to “tear” into inferior productions. Yet Neal clearly wants to address not only reviewers but the purchasers and circulating library patrons of his books, too. Thus his claim that American literary fame depends “not upon *reading* but upon *writing*” seems initially to suggest that the non-reviewer reader hardly matters. “*Reading*” in this quote is the practice of American editors reading British quarterlies in order to extract and excerpt (“import”) instead of offering their own views of British or American texts. What a non-professional does when perusing a book still involves taste, judgment, and analysis, but it is an emotional analytic. It is here that Neal makes the plea to non-professional readers to “judge as you *feel*.... Hearken to no criticism but that of your heart” (lxvii). I make this distinction in the introduction because it demonstrates the complex job authors undertake in paratexts: addressing multiple audiences; distinguishing between professional and amateur readers; balancing a nationalist defense of all things American with the

recognition that amateur and professional readers judge American works alongside British competition.

William Wells Brown's *Clotel* adapts the abusive reader address of earlier white authors to demonstrate the agency of black author-editors and to expose the racist consumption habits of British and American white readers. As such, it is an ideal case study to conclude my dissertation's investigation into the role paratexts and addressivity played in the professionalization and status of fiction and periodical writers in antebellum America. Chapter Four, "Done Brown but Not Used Up: Authoring and Editing in William Wells Brown's Autobiographical Narratives and *Clotel*" demonstrates the aesthetic and political stakes of subverting paratextual generic expectations. A hybrid text that combines and subverts genres, *Clotel* opens with a brief autobiography that reads like a slave narrative, but where many black, female, or Native American authors relied on "authorizing prefaces" composed by white male editors to guarantee the veracity of the text, Brown authorizes his own novel by prefacing it with his autobiography. Inside that autobiography, he includes letters from white men that verify his experience and praise his abolitionist credentials, but those letters are contained within Brown's narrative, not buttressing or mediating between it and a white editor or white audience. Nor does Hillis Miller's etymological connection of the root para- to a parasitic relation as a way of thinking about paratexts hold for *Clotel*. Instead, Brown subverts the generic expectation that an epigraph that quotes an outside source at the beginning of a chapter serves only as entry or attachment to the chapter. By concluding a chapter with the next verse of the poem that serves as the chapter's epigraph, Brown demonstrates a more fluid and more

symbiotic relationship than the asymmetry of more traditional paratext/text interactions. Brown embraced shifts in periodical culture and the aspects of reprint culture that made it possible for him to promote abolition through autobiography, novelization and serialization. As such, William Wells Brown managed to exploit the authorial anxieties explored by white authors and to frame those anxieties (via paratextual experimentation) as commentary on the racism of mid-century American literary culture.

In a short Coda, “‘Seized by the Button’ or the ‘Paradise of Gentle Readers’: Hawthorne’s Prefaces and the American Romance” I turn to the most famous of nineteenth-century American paratextualists—Nathaniel Hawthorne. I have already mentioned that Hawthorne’s “The Custom House” attempts to establish a propriety that will simultaneously endear him to and separate him from his readers. Hawthorne’s fear of mass reading culture, of the nation’s being “given over to a d***d mob of scribbling women,” and of readers who expected more autobiographical revelation than he felt that “propriety” could afford, positions him as a nostalgic, but as Meredith McGill has argued regarding *The House of Seven Gables*, Hawthorne carefully built a persona that allowed him to dismiss and to court the shifting market for authors and readers. This dissertation begins with Washington Irving’s anonymous and pseudonymous early advertisements that declared the author of *A History of New York* lost, and then replaced him with a paratextualist joker. It ends with an author whose paratextual eloquence in “The Custom House” about the authorial desire to retreat and withhold personal details had the effect of making Hawthorne a literary celebrity. Whether they were mischievous (Irving), exuberant and belligerent (Neal), politically strategic (Brown) or ambivalent

(Hawthorne), these nineteenth-century paratextualists remade the profession of authorship; in their paratexts they made sure that their audiences understood why that remaking mattered.

Chapter One: Irving

Self-satisfied Citizens and Republican Reading in *A History of New York*

After the preface to *A History of New York* but before its first chapter, Washington Irving tells readers that they should skip the introductory book since so much of its work has been done already. The first edition, published in 1809, makes this recommendation in a single sentence, on its own page, emphasizing an additional gap between the preliminary material (frontispiece, title page, dedication, preface) and the history.¹⁵ All of the white space around the single sentence proclaims its importance to readers, so they may be surprised by Irving's decision to downplay seriousness in its content and affect: "BOOK I. Being, like all introductions to American histories, very learned, sagacious, and nothing at all to the purpose; containing divers profound theories and philosophic speculations, which the idle reader may totally overlook, and begin at the next book" (383). My first claim is that we should tarry with rather than skip this first book for what it reveals about Irving, authorship, and imagined audiences in the early republic.

That first book is to "all introductions to American histories" what *The Onion* is to *USA Today*. It parodies, comically, what Irving and his brother felt were problematic trends in popular historical writing. Hence the book announces an absurdly broad scope, claiming that it must first tackle the creation of the world, "floating in the vast ethereal

¹⁵ See Appendix 1 for a list of variations in opening paratexts in major editions between 1809 and 1848.

ocean of infinite space” before it can turn to the question of how America came to be populated or Nieuw Nederlandts took shape. The narrator candidly acknowledges that his summation breaks no new ground: a “cloud of authors” has already demonstrated that America was “peopled in five hundred different ways” and that “the people of this country had a *variety of fathers*, which as it may not be thought much to their credit to the common run of readers, the less we say on the subject the better” (411). This line encapsulates aspects of *A History of New York* that make it an essential text for thinking through the transformation of American authorship and readership in the early republic.

Irving implicitly tackles the question of what literary genealogy the nation should construct for itself. Against the literary nationalists who acknowledged no literary fathers, Irving comes down solidly on the side of acknowledging a “variety” of contributors across generations, oceans, and ideologies rather than believing that the current generation of American writers could sustain the nation’s literary hopes. This matches Irving’s reputation as the “American Goldsmith” who was too Anglophile to carry the nation’s literature in the revolutionary new direction the republic required. Yet he was also one of the first successful American authors and along with Charles Brockden Brown, one of its very earliest transatlantic literary sensations. America’s most popular author, Sir Walter Scott, admired *A History of New York* and helped Irving launch his British career. Both were transatlantic successes because they won audiences in London and Edinburgh as well as Philadelphia and New York, but also because Scott and Irving were part of a literary culture that honored collections of folk traditions and historical data as much as the romantic individual inspiration of the “man of genius.” That is to

say—editors were prized for their ability to collect and synthesize from a “variety of fathers.” Scott’s practice of ballad collection that celebrated the roots of Scottish culture earned him the embrace of Scots at home and of Americans, who saw Scottish nationalism and Scott in particular as ideal models for an emerging American national culture.¹⁶ Scott’s collection practice affirms a folk unity that far precedes state sanctioned nationalism, but Irving’s project works very differently. He wants Americans to recognize that their nation exists only in the context of its international relations. Americans will have to recognize British and American fathers, republicans and federalists, and that the progress narrative is only one way of describing the past and future of the nation. This recognition entails building on British heritage (and British fathers) and recognizing ongoing contiguities between Britain’s and America’s literary culture. Irving chides readers eager for a simpler national narrative without competing “fathers” explaining it, and *A History of New York* does not provide a definitive recounting of Dutch New York. Significantly Irving does not just collect these competing narratives—he calls attention to the impossibility of their coexistence and to the discomfort Americans register around their contested genealogy. Far from acquiescing to the “common run of readers” by turning away from the subject, Irving returns to it extensively.

¹⁶ Joseph Rezek’s work on this is excellent; his recent presentation at OHIEAC explains how Scott’s poem was adapted for “Hail to the Chief.” Chapter Two considers this in greater detail, but just consider it here: the song Americans sing to inaugurate our presidents relies on Scottish poetry. Transatlantic roots run deep in unacknowledged ways that make it impossible to think of American nationalism except with regard to the United Kingdom.

A History of New York turns to aggressive reader-engagement to emphasize self-reflection over the accumulation of knowledge. In the jargon of educational reform, Irving wants to create a student-centered, student-driven learning environment. In the twenty-first century, student-centered pedagogy quickly transforms rudderless teenagers into responsible adults guiding their own futures. In the early nineteenth-century version of this exercise in magical thinking, self-reflection makes citizens and autodidacts out of yeomen farmers and urban clerks. Then as now, the newspapers and periodicals wrote anxiously about the opportunities and perils of new media and growing literacy rates. Some writers embraced the print explosion as the means by which an entire population would enter civic life as virtuous, engaged republican readers; others were convinced the proliferation of novels and belles lettres would have exactly the opposite effect, sending those who might have debated politics in the town square or coffee-shop to their own homes to read frivolous fiction alone.

Michael Warner's *Letters of the Republic* describes the early republic at the turn of the century as a nation shifting from a civic-minded republican print sphere to one where the novel embraces the "liberal-national imaginary," but it is his later essay "Uncritical Reading" that is most pertinent here for thinking about *A History of New York's* reception (*Letters of the Republic* 170). Warner refers to undergraduate students' approach to literature as "uncritical reading" because they "read in all the ways they aren't supposed to....They stock themselves with material for showing off, or for performing class membership. They shop around among taste-publics, venturing into social worlds of fanhood and geekdom. They warm with pride over the national

heritage....They cultivate reverence and piety” (“Uncritical Reading” 13). Warner’s description of problematic reading habits corresponds neatly to ideas that Irving explores in his satirical history. In four sections, this chapter explores *A History of New York’s*: initial advertising hoax and its reception; the effect on author-reader relations created by the hoax and edition revisions, its parody of contemporary historical writing; and its historiographical polemic. The advertising hoax engendered its own fan fiction responses as readers “ventur[ed] into social worlds of fanhood.” Irving parodied contemporary historical writing precisely because he feared the “reverence and piety” historical societies encouraged. A significant project of Irving’s *A History of New York* is his complaint that the writing of history inspires “pride over the national heritage” instead of an honest accounting of the dirty business of land appropriation and the extermination of native populations. Knickerbocker alternately lures readers into following him deep into metaphysical digression and antiquarian minutiae and then mercurially insists that in the next chapter he cannot under any circumstance be interrupted.¹⁷ The text demands from readers a willingness to entertain Knickerbocker’s suggestion that America faces no greater threat than an unthinking acceptance of its founding myths or over-confidence in the inevitability of a still brighter future. For these reasons Irving, like Warner, feels a responsibility to make readers and students more conscious of their approach to texts, and

¹⁷ Robert Mayer views Walter Scott’s footnotes as parodying “the pedantry of antiquarians rather in the manner of the [sic] Pope and Jonathan Swift, but his notes and prefatory pieces also reveal his debt to what Joseph Levine calls ‘the antiquarian enterprise,’ which unfolded in England in the work of historians from William Camden in the sixteenth century down to Gibbon in the eighteenth” (913). The same thing occurs in *A History of New York*—a kind of guilty pleasure in the antiquarian details coupled with a self-aware scoffing at the irrelevance of those details.

that to do so is to make them better readers and thinkers. Notably, Irving chooses textual margins—paratexts and periodical promotion—to do this work. Reading Irving by focusing on his paratextual stance, what becomes clear is that it is this reader consciousness more than historical accuracy or literary parody that matters to Irving. To read Irving paratextually is to see anew the extent to which the *History's* history, its jokes and hoax and digressions serve to make the reader self-aware.

Warner's phrase for this is "the coming-into-reflexivity of reading," and he argues that as critics and literary historians we ought to be more self-reflexive about why we value certain approaches to texts as rational, intellectually valid, or socially useful (16). In particular, Warner suggests that recent work in the history of the book, in which "reading is understood as a highly variable practice, intimately related to the material organization of texts," can guide scholars in thinking through the history of reading (20). If my own project has a polemic, it is this: we cannot think about the history of reading without thinking about authorial manipulation of those material contexts of the kind Irving effects in his paratexts. If we accept that material organization of a text profoundly affects its reception, we must also accept that authors exploit that reality, and that over and over they choose paratexts and reader-address as the site of intervention. The dispersion of authorial identity via the advertising hoax, the paratextual gambits that unsettle the reader and the revisions to the paratexts that Irving made for successive editions were crucial for him to enact his historiographical critique in *A History of New York*.

Paying greater attention to historiography than to history and offering more political criticism than celebration of the nation, *A History of New York* confronts rather than caters to its audience. Combining content about the nation and borrowing from a range of literary genres, the text implies that a national literary culture will be strongest when it functions not merely as the partisan promoter of American steam power and representative governance but also as an auditor committed to honest (if allegorical and satirical) national self-critique. To unsettle the readers of *A History of New York* that he refers to as the “self-satisfied citizens of this most enlightened republic,” Irving experimented with an author-reader relation that veered wildly from vituperative disdain for that “idle” or “common” reader who would skip the first book to the saccharine final paragraph in which Knickerbocker offers his aging, dying heart that “throbs—worthy reader—throbs kindly towards thyself” (728). Calibrating that relationship to the reader was a decades-long project that began when Irving promoted the text with a newspaper hoax that fooled New York policemen and concerned citizens. It continued with *A History of New York’s* caustic interjections dismissing the “common run of readers” and praising “philosophic” ones. Then, as Irving revised the novel for successive editions, he carefully modulated the address to readers over a forty-year period. Analysis of the work of reader engagement of the 1809 text and of *A History of New York’s* revision history reveals how authors like Washington Irving adjusted to and (attempted to control) shifting reading habits in the early republic. *A History of New York* is not just more interested in and focused on historiography than history, it is more determined to examine the conditions of reader experience than to have readers experience the text.

Critics have given the opening book scant attention: perhaps because Irving *told* them to skip it, perhaps because of the suggestion that William or Peter Irving, Washington Irving's brothers, composed parts of the parody of other historians, perhaps because so much of it *had* been done, in the sense that it borrows heavily not just from historians but from the eighteenth century's high comic tradition.¹⁸ I argue that the evidence that *A History of New York* was itself the product of "a variety of fathers" is part of what makes it a fascinating text for thinking about early nineteenth-century American authorship, and that its use of Laurence Sterne-esque digression and humor is precisely what makes *A History of New York* "good to think with" for historians of the book. This book put itself and American literature on the map exactly in proportion to its liminal status. It incorporates eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary traditions as well as American content and British style. It presents itself as a satiric history, employs novelistic narration, and got its promotion through periodical humor. In addition to thinking about the text's multiple genres, styles and contributors, we need to think about the text's multiple editors and edit-scenes. If scholars desire evidence that anxiety about a "cloud of authors" mattered to Irving, the proof is in the proofs—that over the course of forty years and eight editions, at least four of which Irving used to make significant alterations, Irving did not eliminate or alter this "cloud of authors" passage at all. This chapter, then, makes the argument that Irving's obsession with authorship, national expression and reader experience guided his decisions in composing, marketing and revising *A History of New York*.

¹⁸ Stanley Williams and Tremaine McDowell say Peter in their 1927 introduction (xx); Michael L. Black, who has written extensively on Irving's composition and revision, says William.

Advertising Hoax and Aftermath, 1809-1848

In 1848 Irving made two notable additions that alter the author-reader relationship in *A History of New York*: a new “Author’s Apology” and replication of the original pre-publication newspaper advertisements. To understand this, we need to dive into the details of the original hoax. The full chronology can be found in Appendix 2, but a close reading of the hoax reveals the careful attention Irving and his fans devoted to making *A History of New York* a publishing event rather than just a two volume satiric history. On October 26, 1809, Irving’s friends convinced the *Evening Post* to run an advertisement alerting the public that Diedrich Knickerbocker, an “elderly gentleman,” has disappeared, and about whom “great anxiety is entertained” since it is possible he is “not entirely in his right mind.”¹⁹ Writing in the name of the hotelier where Knickerbocker had left his possessions and his bills unpaid, Seth Handaside encouraged other newspapers to reprint the missing person advertisement. He titled it “*Distressing*,” and suggested that “printers of newspapers would be aiding the cause of humanity in giving an insertion to the above.” On November 6 in the same paper, “A Traveller” responded, claiming to have seen Knickerbocker, “very much fatigued and exhausted” on the side of the road. Most scholars assume that the first two pieces were the work of James Kirke Paulding or Henry Brevoort. Then on November 16 Handaside announced in the same newspaper that the book would be published “in order to discharge certain debts [Knickerbocker] has left behind.” On December 6, 1809, the same papers published the typical advertisements for

¹⁹ The advertisements are all published in the 1848 edition. (*A History of New-York* “Notices”) Andrew Burstein says that James Kirke Paulding and Henry Brevoort wrote the notices and approached the *Evening Post* at Irving’s request (Burstein 71).

a new book, and *A History of New York* went from a curious hoax to a purchasable commodity.

While Irving's peers were writing enthusiastically and plaintively about the need for the press to record the nation's history and to promote civic virtue of every kind, Irving was instead abusing the newspapers that would generously reprint his missing person alert by using them to promote his own personal literary endeavor. As a Federalist, he even chose republican papers as his marks.²⁰ This playfulness regarding the role and the haughtiness of historians, the utility of newspapers, and the gullibility of readers make *A History of New York* a remarkable record not just of Irving's early satire and historical writing, but of his belief that sloppy historiography could promote dangerous forms of nationalist fervor that did not serve the best interest of the nation's political or literary future. The reception of the hoax, however, illustrates the complexity of reader-relations in early nineteenth-century America. Until its publication, Irving and his friends controlled the hoax, supplying the initial missing-person advertisement, "A Traveller's" reply, and Handaside's announcement of publication plans. On December 14, however, a Baltimore paper, the *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette*, published a short letter to the editor from Ludwick von Bynkerfeldt [almost certainly a fictitious name], who declared himself one of the "most tried and faithful of Diedrich's friends," and claimed that he had seen the "original M.S. in the hands of Knickerbocker

²⁰ Michael Black suggests they sent these to the paper edited by James Cheetham, a Jeffersonian, to dupe a republican paper: "Irving and his friends may have honored [Cheetham] for his apostasy" ("Political Satire in Knickerbocker's History" 86).

himself, a short time previous to that gentleman's mysterious and melancholy disappearance."

What began as a hoax that exposed the gullibility of readers and which granted asymmetric power to Irving and his friends over uninformed readers suddenly transformed into a dialogue, with a Baltimore reader one-upping Irving by extending the hoax and creating additional fictional characters. Irving's original intent appears to have been promotion that would also serve as a reminder to the reading public that they could be easily duped. Bynkerfeldt's act of fan fiction effectively continues the dispersal of authority but also challenges Irving—readers do not mind being duped if they can join the fun as well. Instead of being duped and then led into a satire that prides itself on mocking its own invention and fictionality, Bynkerfeldt contests the fiction—even if the effect is a further exaggeration of the history's disregard for fact.

The next contributor was Christian Brinkersnuff, writing again in the *American Citizen*, on December 30. Either a regular dupe or, more likely, a co-conspirator, Brinkersnuff states that he tried to visit Handaside but failed to find his Mulberry street house and so is sending this note. He also claims that Knickerbocker was a friend of his father's and well known as a "youth of clever parts" who was "much given to thinking aloud." Brinkersnuff is writing to answer the "conjecture, whether such a character as Diedrick Knickerbocker in reality existed," and asserting that his father also "vouches for the authenticity and correctness of Diedrick's history." Its praise for Handaside matches that of the "Letter to the Public" presented by Handaside, leading Michael Black to declare Brinkersnuff's note to be the work of Irving or a close friend. It could easily,

however, come from another careful reader like Bynkerfeldt, who enjoyed and mimicked Irving's style. Either way, it continues the hoax by praising Handaside's editorial service: "Society is greatly indebted to you for gathering those fragments of history, and preserving them from oblivion." Participating in the language of historical preservation and the work of patching fragments into coherent wholes, Brinkersnuff praises Handaside for the kind of historiography Irving abhors. On January 23, Knickerbocker himself replied to Handaside, also in the *American Citizen*. This letter is almost certainly Irving's creation, since he mentions it in his 1812 revision. Among its playful jibes about the absence of newspapers upstate, where Knickerbocker has been doing further research, Knickerbocker also winks at Irving's publishers, whom he hopes "will account with me for my lawful share of the profits."²¹ Yet even this note has an additional handler—it is preceded by a note from a man who says that Knickerbocker handed the letter to his wife. Knickerbocker never presents himself. He is always a found object that makes its way into books and periodicals.

Like the mourners who sought the gravestone of Charlotte Temple, the notices apparently attracted the attention of at least one New Yorker in 1809, who suggested to Jack Irving that a reward be offered to help locate the senile Knickerbocker (Burstein 72). That readers of periodicals and fiction were unsure of what was fact and what was fiction appears to have caused some confusion but little outrage. Like many eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century texts, *A History of New York* pretends to be a "found

²¹ Michael L. Black's "Political Satire in Knickerbocker's History" reprints the January 23 letter; it is otherwise difficult to find. Black's information on the hoax is useful, though he misses the fact that Bynkerfeldt appeared first for the *Federal Republican* in Baltimore (M. Black 85).

document.” Irving’s newspaper hoax, however, sets up his history as a more elaborate version of the paratexts that often precede a fiction purporting to be a found document. Instead of beginning the book more conventionally with an editor describing the circumstances under which he discovered a bundle of letters that form the bulk of an epistolary novel, Irving’s 1809 edition begins with an “Account of the Author” which is not actually written by the author but by the landlord Seth Handaside, who further distances himself from the text by declaring that he entrusted editing responsibilities to “a very learned school-master... to prepare it for the press” (376). In the 1809 edition, brief mention is made of the initial “Missing Person” classified advertisement and the few “humane printers” who published it, but the complete text of the advertisements is not included. Despite the free speech limitations raised by the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts regarding the circulation of false or even treasonous information in print, Irving’s use of the same medium for personal gain (marketing his own text) and even noting that he had duped “humane” printers into publishing it apparently granted him only good publicity and the fan fiction already mentioned. Because part of the project of *A History of New York* is to encourage what today we might call “media literacy,” I think Irving saw value beyond mere publicity in his advertising hoax. Americans were so eager for ebullient histories of states and the nation that they were not being skeptical enough about their literary public sphere. Duping them at the outset prepared readers for *A History of New York*’s historiographical critique and the skepticism it requires.

In the early reviews Irving caught no negative publicity for his stunt, but he did build anticipation and excitement for the publication. Irving was evidently proud enough

of how the marketing had gone that he added the text printed in the newspapers to the 1848 edition. Against all the other removals of notes to or about the reader, this addition is noteworthy. Unlike nearly all the other texts he revised for an 1848 set of his works, Irving cut *A History of New York* extensively. These excisions frequently remove the playful interactions with the reader, but at first glance, the addition of the newspaper advertisements and the preface in which he discusses Mitchill's "Picture of New York" seem to focus again on that reader interaction. Yet he concludes the new "Author's Apology" with the hope that if other more serious and accurate histories of New York have replaced his in "dignified and appropriate rank in the family library," that at least "Knickerbocker's history will still be received with good-humored indulgence, and be thumbed and chuckled over by the family fireside" (4). Emphasizing his marketing tricks in the Apology, but removing similar reader/author negotiations in the body-text, Irving's 1848 text is indeed more readable, but less challenging for the reader. By converting an epitext (the advertisement) into a peritext, Irving reminds readers forty years later that the book began with a hoax that had required readers to be familiar with both New York periodicals and regional book publishing. In 1848, instead of relying on the uncertain (and probably unlikely) event that reviewers in 1848 would have access to the hoax or the inclination to reprint it, Irving chose to communicate that publication history by sandwiching it between the 1848 "Author's Apology" and the original 1809 "Account of the Author." Bridging the first-person 1848 account, signed "W.I." and the original Seth Handaside "Account of the Author," the addition of the specious notices has the effect of making the text appear more conventional than it was—more like a found document that

includes all the information one needs in a single introductory editor's note, and less like the sport of following the newspapers closely enough to know how this "Knickerbocker's History" related to the recent newspaper notices about that "elderly gentleman."

Centralizing the experience within the covers of the book and bracketing them with the authoritative retrospective voice of an author being published in a "deathbed" or "fireside" edition is exactly the kind of tameness and easy access the first edition avoids.

Because the 1848 edition omits the Bynkerfeldt, Brinkersnuff and Knickerbocker periodical pieces that followed publication, it also has the effect of establishing Irving as the author fully in control over promotion of his text. The 1809 edition explicitly avoided this kind of authorial representation for reasons worth closer consideration in the following section, where we will see that competing fathers/authors are part of Irving's project to demonstrate that literary culture requires the kinds of disputes and arguments that make the health of the nation a contested ideal rather than an assumed starting point.

A Cloud of Authors

The pre- and post-publication hoax demonstrates that a "variety of [fictional] fathers," took care of *A History of New York's* promotion. Of its flesh and blood creators, we know that Washington Irving and his brother Peter began writing in 1807, but Peter left the project after writing some of the initial draft of the first book, particularly the parts parodying British world history. Washington Irving then consulted regularly with James Kirke Paulding, contributor to *Salmagundi* but not yet famous as the parodist of Walter Scott, who made substantive early editing recommendations. Those are the authors who contributed prose that made its way, in one form or another, into the 1809

edition, though Washington Irving did the great majority of the work and was the only writer to receive compensation or copyright for it. The friends who helped him promote the book in the newspaper hoax in New York and Philadelphia, the newspaper and magazine editors who helped *A History of New York* by reprinting the initial hoax documents, and the fans who wrote to papers to continue the hoax all assisted in the creation of Knickerbocker as a found object.

Knickerbocker as object, narrator, and business icon continues into a third century. More than many authors, Irving was a shrewd businessman, obtaining British and American copyright for his works; if he could have syndicated or trademarked “Knickerbocker” he probably would have. Instead Irving took great pride in the proliferation of Knickerbockiana, as evidenced by his “Apology” in the 1848 edition, in which he finds “reason to flatter [him]self” that the name Knickerbocker was being so widely “used to give the home stamp to everything recommended for popular acceptance, such as ... Knickerbocker omnibuses; Knickerbocker bread, and Knickerbocker ice” (*A History of New York* 1848 xiii). Breweries, yacht clubs and a sport franchise capitalized on it.²² Readers, passengers, and the Business Council of New York State all embraced the fictional figure. Nineteenth-century periodicals and twenty-first-century blogs borrowed the name. If the gravestone of the fictional character Charlotte Temple became an early literary tourism destination, Diedrich Knickerbocker became

²² Jeffrey Scraba mentions the Knicks, the business council blog, and yacht club. He offers a great image of the “Knickerbocker Quadrilles,” which alas was not a Jazz Age dance craze (Scraba 389-90, 393). Elizabeth Bradley reports that even in his lifetime there were Knickerbocker spice companies, stagecoach companies and the “Knickerbocker School” of writers and editors (Bradley, “Introduction” 16-17). A very few minutes with a Google search confirm that the phenomenon of Knickerbockiana remains widespread even if I have had to create the term.

one of the first characters to spark a variety of spinoff merchandise and services.²³

Elizabeth Bradley notes that Irving's own resting place was "vandalized beyond repair by inconsolable readers, making Irving's grave the nineteenth-century equivalent of the tomb of Jim Morrison at Père-Lachaise," but Irving-as-mourned-rock-star still had nothing on Knickerbocker's posthumous star power (17).

That Irving was embraced in the last years of his life and after his death as a central figure in American literature should not distract us from what he and the businessmen who capitalized on Knickerbocker's name knew: Diedrich Knickerbocker mattered more to readers than Washington Irving, Geoffrey Crayon, or the "Author of the Sketchbook." Knickerbocker's first achievement was to play the role of the cantankerous but much-loved narrator whose name appears in the byline on the 1809 edition and who is described in the "account of the author" as responsible for its content. Knickerbocker's popularity is noteworthy because Irving worked so hard to dilute it with other fictional contributors. Because the book is supposed to have been discovered in Knickerbocker's room by Seth Handaside, the landlord of the Independent Columbian Hotel, the novel is published in the "found object" tradition that Andrew Piper describes as a Romantic fetish—one with a history that includes the fictional editor who transforms Lemuel Gulliver's notebooks posthumously into *Gulliver's Travels* or by which *Don Quixote* is a

²³ *The Cambridge History of the American Novel* brings together the visitors to the fictional grave of Charlotte Temple with those who read Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* and then visited the grave of Elizabeth Wharton, whose story inspired Foster. That readers were interested both in a churchyard representation of the fictional gravestone of Charlotte Temple and the real gravestone of Foster's Elizabeth Wharton is more evidence that readers were fascinated by the intersection of real and fictive identity. I agree with Julia Stern that we should consider this interaction proof not of uncritical or unreflective reading, but of a textual engagement that inspires affective and active response (Cassuto and Reiss 46-48; Stern 68-69).

mere translation of Cide Benengali's original. Piper calls this literary technique "substitutions of the author by the editor." Here the "editor's function was to affirm the ownership of the text by a particular individual (Gulliver, Werther, Cleveland) and to disaffirm the ownership by another individual" (109).²⁴ It is therefore reasonable to declare Handaside as the agent responsible for publication, not Knickerbocker. And indeed it was Handaside whom Brinkersnuff tried to visit, looking for the hotel but failing to find it in what the advertisements had promised would be a New York City Mulberry Street address.

This authorial dilution had ideological value to Irving because it was another way of registering dissent against the tendency of the nation to cohere around a single political narrative about its past. It held literary value for Irving because in a transatlantic literary culture that was registering anxiety and excitement (what nineteenth-century periodical writers would call "nervousness") about group authorship, the diluted authority of Knickerbocker exemplifies Irving's sense of how knowledge is actually generated and disseminated. Finally, Irving's dilution of authority aligns *A History of New York* with a culture that valued editing, collecting and re-presenting as highly as it did new productions of "original genius." As Max Cavitch has shown, however, elegies of the first president that mourned "Father Washington" became part of the political debate

²⁴ Found objects abound: Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*, Ingersoll's *Jesuit's Letters* and Piper's particular interest, Walter Scott's *Tales of My Landlord* series, though the books in Scott's series were all published after the first edition of Irving's *A History of New York*.²⁴ Scott himself complained of sides "sore from laughing" after reading *A History of New York* and helped Irving publish with Murray (Scott, qtd. in Bradley's Introduction 13). That connection means *Tales of My Landlord* almost certainly influenced Irving when he agreed to write retrospective authorial prefaces for Putnam in his "Author's Revised Edition" series.

about how to remember and carry forward republican ideals alongside or as part of national patriotism (86). Philip Freneau, according to Cavitch, had to balance the republican admiration for anonymity with “the tension between his impulse as a republican to resist particularized heroization and his commitment as an elegist to his subject’s individuation” (87). Irving would later write a *Life of Washington*, but *A History of New York* dramatizes the problem that Cavitch discusses throughout *American Elegy*: mourning offers a chance to define the “past from which the future could depart,” and the degree to which authors were ready to detach from or wistfully recall that the past had ideological motivations and consequences (88). Irving’s peers wrote biographies that lionized their earliest leaders, but they also wrote state histories that described the young nation as an entity that had been “authored” not just by every signer of the Declaration of Independence but by the anonymous revolutionary soldiers and the yeomen farmers tilling the nation ever further west. Hence I believe that Irving’s choice to use multiple contributors to *A History of New York* to distribute authority and the celebrity status of just one—Knickerbocker—should be understood as part of a political and ideological conversation about national memory and as a literary strategy that responds to transatlantic trends. Irving played on the literary fetish for a “variety of fathers” even as he ironized Knickerbocker’s own vanity about being “progenitor, prototype and precursor” of the future of American letters. The popularity of the pseudonym Knickerbocker—not quite a republican letter-to-the-editor pseudonym like Publius but not an actual celebrity author like Byron either—is one more example of how *A History*

of New York straddles a transatlantic literary culture that was transitioning from late eighteenth-century republican values and into nineteenth-century romantic ones.

That there were many hands in the production, promotion, and dissemination of *A History of New York* makes it no different from any other book in any other century. That the book discusses the idea of the role of print culture in recording the nation's past and how those narratives of the past come to shape present action, however, warrants our attention. This is a moment in which individual literary achievement is worrying Fisher Ames and other republicans about the nation's intellectuals straying from civic duty into individual glory. Andrew Piper sees the multiple narrators of Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of My Landlord* as an "accumulation of narrative personae responsible for the tales he oversees" (110). In Irving's *A History of New York*, the anonymous and unattributed contributor of footnotes offer all of the footnote references to historical and classical authorities like Aristotle, Erasmus Darwin, Grotius and Vattel. Book II produces another contributor who signs a footnote explaining the origin of the name of Gibbet Island as "—EDITOR." (435). In the next chapter, someone signs a footnote as the "—Printer's Devil" and gives a very similar explanation for the derivation of Hell Gate. One might expect that the anonymous editor, the EDITOR and the Printer's Devil would speak in distinctly different voices or play distinctly different roles—that Irving would assign them unique responsibilities for verifying, satirizing, or glossing the content. That the EDITOR and Printer's Devil seem to play the same role has two implications. First, Irving uses it to suggest that the text has gotten out of the control of its authors or editors, since printer's devils were generally apprentices who mixed ink and prepped type but were not

supposed to exercise editorial control.²⁵ Second, since the EDITOR and the Printer's Devil make such similar comments (both focus on geography in their first contributions) it seems that Irving was primarily seeking ways to suggest additional participants in the book's creation rather than to assign them specific roles, further emphasizing the idea of expanding the "accumulation of narrative personae responsible," the innovation Piper awards to Walter Scott, but which Irving practices here in the book that Walter Scott so enjoyed well before he wrote the Waverley novels and gave them a variety of fictional authors.

Elizabeth Bradley writes in her own notes to the recent Penguin edition of *A History of New York* that "the distribution of labor between Knickerbocker, his "Editor," and his "Printer's Devil" is left purposefully vague; the layering of these sporadic, sometimes nonsensical notes one upon the next ends by subverting (if not positively derailing) the confident, forward propulsion of Knickerbocker's tale" ("Notes" 302). Bradley credits Irving with influencing Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe with the "destabilizing technique." I think it is more accurate to say that this fracturing of authorial responsibility should be understood as a bridge between eighteenth-century novelists like Laurence Sterne and nineteenth-century periodical editors. In *Tristram Shandy*, destabilizing digression is entirely the fault of a reader's interaction with the author—who, in a project about the idea of autobiography, is also the subject. *A History of New York*, contrarily, concerns itself primarily with historiography. Constantly noting

²⁵ See "Memoirs of a Printer's Devil," 1793. Samuel Johnson said comic things about them too, but it is not until *Blackwood's* in the 1820s that this same transference of responsibility to the printer's devil recurs.

in the body-text the contradictions of multiple sources *and* with the incomplete and biased narrative a single author necessarily produces, Irving's text discusses its subject in the content, and then enacts it with its multiple contributors. Therefore the text presents itself as being simultaneously improved by its multiple authors and roiled by its internecine conflicts. That the wildest group editorship experiment of the 1820s, *Blackwood's Magazine*, described their own printer's devil as exerting considerable editorial control over the magazine's placement and selection of contributions is additional evidence that Irving's *A History of New York* both reached back to eighteenth-century novelists like Sterne and prepared the way for experimentation of the periodical miscellany that *Blackwood's* explored. That he put the innovation into paratexts (the introductory book's footnotes) is further evidence that paratexts are ideal for raising these questions of authorial responsibility.

Neither Knickerbocker's regretful demise, announced first in the 1812 edition, nor his general presentation in *A History of New York* as an uncovered artifact, harvested and edited by Handaside, prevented the doddering elderly gentleman from authorizing a "New Edition" in 1819, 1820, 1824 or 1829. During that time he also contributed to *The Sketchbook* as the author of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Indeed, Knickerbocker was so popular that he displaced Geoffrey Crayon as the author of the *Sketchbook* in John Murray's 1820 edition of *A History of New York*. That choice is telling; Irving had already killed off Knickerbocker when he wrote *The Sketchbook*, so that collection definitely needed a living fictive author-editor-miscellanist, but because Knickerbocker rather than Crayon or Irving sold books, Murray or Irving decided to

make Knickerbocker the author of not just *A History of New York* but also *The Sketchbook*. Most likely this was a marketing decision: *Knickerbocker*, not Irving, was famous as the author of *A History of New York*, so the accretive authoring relied on his fame, not on Irving's. Knickerbocker gets edited and collected in *The Sketchbook* by Crayon in the same way that he was edited by Handaside. Yet it is also worth noting that in *The Sketchbook*, Irving plays with the agency of the editor-function, since "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" gets a "POSTSCRIPT, FOUND IN THE HANDWRITING OF MR. KNICKERBOCKER." That postscript would usually come from the editor—a last last word of a book, but since it is a "found" object, it simply makes up an additional part of Crayon's Miscellany. In its content, however, it is an editor's gloss in which Knickerbocker explains that he is himself a trustworthy collector of tales, having heard this story and now presenting it "almost in the precise words in which I heard it related at a Corporation meeting of the ancient city of the Manhattoes." Knickerbocker continues, describing his looks: "The narrator was a pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly old fellow in pepper-and-salt clothes" (300). In short, he sounds like the "old fellow" Handaside collected and presented as Knickerbocker. Here, however, Knickerbocker is no longer the author-managed-by-editor; he is the editor who, like Handaside, offers a postscript describing the narrator.

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is the final story in *The Sketchbook* but Knickerbocker's postscript is not the last word. In the multiple frames of *The Sketchbook*, that honor returns to Crayon, who offers the final "L'Envoy" in which Crayon acknowledges that the first volume of *The Sketchbook* has already received much praise

and much criticism and that therefore he will end by “simply requesting the reader, if he should find here and there something to please him, to rest assured that it was written expressly for intelligent readers like himself, but entreating him, should he find anything to dislike, to tolerate it, as one of those articles which the Author has been obliged to write for readers of a less refined taste” (302). Collecting and editing, that is to say, are ultimately not the actions of Knickerbockers, Crayons, or Irvings: readers will pick from the miscellany’s “varied table” to fill their plates with the morsels they prefer. A variety of readers demand a variety of address. Sterne chose digressions as a means of talking to different audiences in the eighteenth-century novel; in nineteenth-century periodicals, *Blackwood’s* chose conglomerate editorship that figured different kinds of readers and even staged them writing to each other. I discuss their efforts in Chapter Two. In the “Jocology” section of Chapter Three, I discuss John Neal’s literary club, the Delphians, one of whom presented a piece of what he called “crambography,” or the practice of excerpting newspapers by cutting and pasting the actual paper fragments into the new document. That club member used similar language to Irving and Brinkersnuff, and explicitly connects the idea of fragments to group or multiple-authorship in ways that complement Irving’s own thinking about a “cloud of authors.” Irving’s digressive, temperamental narrator and multiple mediators bridge the styles of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century reader address and authorial identity. His use of paratexts to push that innovation and to adapt prior paratextual practices echoed out across the literary culture of the transatlantic nineteenth-century.

If Romantic editors were young men recuperating a folk past and claiming celebrity fame as editors and discoverers of that past, Irving gives the old eighteenth-century Knickerbocker narrators a more active role as late as 1820. Perhaps what so upset nationalists such as Philip Freneau and John Neal about Irving was not just his Britishness and his success, but his insistence on temporal and cultural contiguity with the old (in both senses) country. Michael Warner's description of "Irving's Posterity," in the essay of that name, describes Rip Van Winkle occupying "nostalgic time" or "pirate time" that "resolv[es] national history and personal memory into folk temporality" (791). Against a celebration of "revolutionary rupture" (Warner's term), Irving instead focuses on "the continuities of reproduction in immemorial time, he is led to cast the historical ruptures of modernity only as disruptions" (790). Because he cares more about the dispersal of authority than the collection of identity, Irving calls attention to the highly selective practice of collection. Hence while British folk temporalities reinforce national ideology, Irving's has the reverse effect of describing "historical ruptures" as mere "disruptions."

Only after Knickerbocker's bones had been interred for almost forty years did *A History of New York* get the name "Washington Irving" on the byline. That the Putnam New York edition of 1848 and its very cursorily revised version in 1849 have subsequently been called Irving's "deathbed" and "collected" editions could not make this point any clearer: the death of this author could occur because he replaced his body with the found object that was the corpus of his work—and that he took the occasion to edit heavily and re-present as the author-editor in complete control. Knickerbocker was a

collector of German and Dutch and early American anecdotes and history. Crayon selected and edited him. The “Author’s Revised Edition,” as the Putnam edition announced itself in 1848, should be better understood as the Author-as-Editor collecting himself for a far different purpose in 1848 than his dispersal of authority in 1809.

The study of authors owes a great deal to the eulogy Roland Barthes gave them in his landmark essay, “Death of the Author” and to Michel Foucault’s use of the term “author-function” in “What is an Author?” Both Barthes and Foucault describe the attribution of authorship as a strategy that contains rather than enables a text’s identity and the flexibility of its circulation or interpretation. Barthes says that “to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (171). Barthes and Foucault argue that authors limit the range of possibilities for interpretation by enforcing ideas about textual temporality—the text exists, says Barthes, because “the Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*” (170). Barthes describes this relationship in terms of reproduction: the author is “in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child.” Barthes contrasts this temporally located Author with the “modern sriptor,” who is “born simultaneously with the text” (170). Foucault builds on this description of the modern sriptor as evidence of why the attempt to constrain or contain signification by naming an author will necessarily fail. The “author does not precede the works,” says Foucault, since he or she can only play the “author-function” in a pre-existing and multiform discourse (209). The author and the need for the “author-function” is a creation of our anxiety about

dissemination of knowledge—the “ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning” (209).

The emergence in early nineteenth-century America of historical societies and state histories came at least partly from a desire to demonstrate that America had a locatable “usable past”—that it had a history that preceded and made possible the moment of revolution. This requires confidence that historical consciousness does not spring into being “simultaneously with the text” and that its writers have their own traceable past. Irving’s *A History of New York* shows his exasperation that a single inevitable progress narrative about America’s future required (and was being offered by its nascent historical societies and historians) a single and tidy recollection of its past. To combat that narrative, Irving needed to emphasize rather than contain the “proliferation of meaning.” Irving’s multiple narration and its invocation of the discomfort readers feel about creation that involves “many fathers” must be understood as part of his project to demonstrate that the fear about containing authorship cannot be separated from anxiety about competing narratives of national formation.

Barthes declares that even if authors or the idea of authorship fails to contain signification, “there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader” (171). Wolfgang Iser’s famous “ideal reader” is capable of perfect communication with a text, but even writers designing texts for very limited, niche audiences know that those audiences will not have the uniformity of experience necessary for Iser’s reader. Irving’s response, rather than attempting to create or serve that ideal reader, is to address a variety of readers. Irving’s insistence on a multiplicity of authors, I

believe, is a direct response to anxiety about a multitude of readers. Politicians making the transition from local to state or state to national politics expand their public relations teams to target new constituencies. Faced with a fracturing reading public composed of elite readers as well as the “common run of readers,” Irving needed multiple authorial registers, voices, and personas. The preliminary hoax, stretched over several weeks over several genres and mediums, offered Irving the chance to parcel authorial responsibility and to extend the reader experience temporally, generically and geographically. Irving used that hoax, the prefatory pages and introductory book to further fracture his own authorial identity enough to match the fracturing reading public.

Historical Parody and “Pedantic Lore”

Washington Irving’s playfulness regarding his era’s anxiety over author-function is nicely summarized right in the first part of the advertising hoax. There, “great anxiety is entertained” about the narrator since he had disappeared and it was possible that he was “not entirely in his right mind.”²⁶ Even before its publication, then, Irving was undercutting the authority, veracity, and sanity of his narrator. It was already popular to speak of the debt future generations would owe the authors of the early republic, and within the text Knickerbocker likes to imagine himself that way, as illustrated in the “To the Public” note where he sighs contentedly and imagines himself the progenitor of New York historians to come. He begs his readers to

²⁶ The advertisements are all published in the 1848 edition (*A History of New-York* “Notices”). Andrew Burstein says that James Kirke Paulding and Henry Brevoort wrote the notices and approached the *Evening Post* at Irving’s request (Burstein 71).

indulge me for a moment, while I lay down my pen, skip to some little eminence at the distance of two or three hundred years ahead; and casting back a birds eye glance, over the waste of years that is to roll between; discover myself—little I—at this moment the progenitor, prototype and precursor of them all, posted at the head of this host of literary worthies. (381)²⁷

Irving's newspaper advertisements play with the idea that what Knickerbocker ought to have seen when he looked over his shoulder was the series of "debts he has left behind" that Handaside describes, not those future generations will owe him.

A History of New York catapulted the praised but relatively obscure author of a few theater reviews and contributor of the already defunct *Salmagundi* to transatlantic fame. First republished in Philadelphia in 1812, and then again more widely in London in 1820 by Sir Walter Scott's publisher, John Murray, the book enjoyed frequent reprinting throughout the nineteenth century. Irving regularly revised for each official edition, though he changed the 1812 and 1848 editions most significantly.²⁸ Irving, then, regularly took the opportunity to cast a bird's eye glance at the unexpectedly popular book and to make alterations he felt would improve a reader's experience. Scholars have generally dismissed or lamented these revisions, since in most of them Irving tames aspects of the text that appeal to literary historians. Irving removed tauntingly suggestive

²⁷ "birds eye glance" is amended in later editions to "bird's eye glance." I use "bird's eye glance" from here on. Unless noted, all citations refer to the 1809 edition.

²⁸ Michael L. and Nancy Black's variorum edition of *A History of New York* gives a brief overview of edition variations and revisions in the introduction (xxxiii-xlix). They also offer careful textual commentary and notes tracing each textual change between 1809-1848. Michael Black writes in a short article about edition variations that "In the case of the 1812 and 1848 editions of the History, we have to say that Irving rewrote the book" ("Bibliographical Problems in Washington Irving's Early Works" 152).

caricatures of contemporary political figures; he gradually eradicated elements he felt were topical or relevant only to the moment of initial production; he streamlined or eliminated whimsical digressions and stripped some of the text's comic bawdry; and, most notably, he gradually replaced the first edition's near constant and aggressive address to readers with gentler and less frequent admonitions. These reader engagements do not entirely disappear—there would be little of Knickerbocker's personality to convey without the digressions and interjections and then the apologies and defenses for their inclusion. The elements that do survive through five revisions into the final 1848 edition deserve extra attention because these were passages Irving felt either central for the text's operation or benign enough for politer mid-century audiences. I focus in particular on the first book's parody of bad history-writing and its reader-expectations.

Irving's full title: *A History of New York: from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty* announces its comic pretensions to completeness. In the first of seven books, Irving begins with the earth's creation, moves quickly through cosmogony, the story of Noah, the "peopling" of America, and concludes with a "mighty Question [put] to the rout, by the assistance of the Man in the Moon" (Table of Contents, 367). The lunar assistance merits special attention because of what it requires from readers—that they empathize with Native Americans by imagining themselves conquered by pea-green aliens. This thought experiment demands a great deal of reader patience, but it is just an extreme example of the kind of patient readerly acquiescence the text requires even as it criticizes the consequence of passive reading. More than its description of Dutch habits and withering attacks on Jeffersonianism, Irving makes the writing of history, and the

problematic expectations readers bring to histories, the focus of his argument in *A History of New York*. Irving may have preferred classical and medieval to contemporary historians, but his parody and ridicule of contemporary historians shows that he knew their work well. Irving's footnotes for these sources of those "philosophic speculations" include classical authors such as Aristotle, Diogenes Laertes, and Plato; Knickerbocker assures the reader in a single paragraph that he has adopted the best historical practices of Xenophon, Sallust, Thucydides, Tacitus and Livy (378). Knickerbocker also credits Arab scholars, "Mohawk" and "negro philosophers of the Congo," Comte de Buffon, and Erasmus Darwin as sources for his discourse on cosmogony (393). Critics have further identified Charlevoix's *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, and Hazard's *Historical Collections* as important historical texts for Irving.

In his article devoted to "Knickerbocker, Bolingbroke and the Fiction of History," William Hedges makes the compelling argument that we ought to give particular attention to Irving's notes on Lord Henry Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History*.²⁹ Hedges states that of all the sources Irving consulted, Bolingbroke's is "the only book dealing explicitly with the nature and functions of history—as opposed to books which were themselves simply histories" ("Knickerbocker, Bolingbroke, and the Fiction of History" 319). Hedges argues that while *A History of New York* "parodies some of the ideas found in *Letters on History*, it promotes others" (322). Since so much of the text focuses on discussions of the role of the historian and the reader regarding entirely fictionalized events, historiography rather than history is central to Irving's

²⁹ Irving's notebooks are part of the New York Public Library archive. Here I rely on Hedges' argument and selections.

project. And just as Irving maintains attention by alternately chiding and obsequiously praising the reader, he balances light and dark reflections on history and the writing of history. Irving copied into his notebook Bolingbroke's declaration that "the school of example is the world and the masters of this school are history and experience," yet *A History of New York* goes to great lengths to isolate or remove the reader from real world experience—going so far in the "Mighty Question" passage to import aliens. Though Hedges shows how Irving criticizes Bolingbroke, it is reasonable to suggest that Irving is experimenting with how to present a fictional, imaginative "example" that diverges from real experience because he has chosen a topic where experience is impossible—since the Anglo-American reader cannot otherwise adequately empathize with the experience of Native Americans at the moment of Dutch contact. If the empathy of historical fiction which he employs for various characters in the Dutch history will not work, Irving turns to the lunar example as a way of alienating the reader—of forcing a different kind of engagement with historical ideas.

Regardless of Bolingbroke's, Livy's or Thucydides' impact on *A History of New York*, Irving wrote in a moment when there was a great debate about the goals and the writing of history. The age of the antiquarian historians was waning and the grand narrative historians were ascendant. Both come in for critique by Irving. Irving was bored with the way historical societies focused so minutely on recording arcane, antiquarian details about the region. As Jeffrey Insko notes, "Knickerbocker's mock history provides a useful index to the transitional state of early national historiography. The book appeared between two important eras of historical writing in America, coming after the great New

England colonial historians, yet preceding the Romantic historians” (610). He was also suspicious of what Insko calls the “nationalist histories” that lionized local revolutionary heroes while pursuing politically partisan agendas (613). At the same time, Irving was wary of the ways that Americans were eager to view the nation’s recent past as part of progress narratives that guaranteed a brilliant national future. Against cyclical models of history, in which empires rise and fall, American historians increasingly pitched the nation’s march from colonial outpost to continental power as the inevitable conclusion to the progress narrative they spun.

In the “Author’s Apology” to the 1848 edition Irving adds one hint about his sources—that he wrote at least in part to “parody a small hand-book which had recently appeared, entitled, “A Picture of New York” (7). As Irving himself notes, Samuel Mitchill’s “A Picture of New York” could only take him so far. It too begins as a history of the region, but quickly becomes a tourist guidebook, so Irving explains that he chose to expand beyond Mitchill in order “to burlesque the pedantic lore displayed in certain American works” (7). Before discarding Mitchill’s text, however, the opening pages merit study. Like Irving, Mitchill explains that he would not have bothered writing “Picture of New York” if not for the “scantiness and incorrectness of the information” regarding the city. The “strangers and travelers” who have written about New York have introduced errors that are “difficult to correct. They are but too often continued from one edition to another without alteration. And thus they diffuse and perpetuate error from generation to generation” (iii-iv). Mitchill here participates in a literary nationalist discourse that challenges the republican notion that diffuse dissemination of print

necessarily increases knowledge and understanding. Mitchill emphasizes that circulation of foreign texts in American schools, such as the London-printed “Guthrie’s New System of Modern Geography,” perpetuates inaccurate ideas (iv). Mitchill’s solution to this problem is more text, more diffusion and circulation, with the hope that those produced locally and accurately will win out over the inaccurate ones: “The only effectual method of preventing the misrepresentation of those who visit our city, is to write a full and true account of it ourselves” (iv). For Mitchill, foreign printing endangers not only the republic’s international reputation but its next generation’s education, since they are being schooled with the inaccurate foreign texts.

A History of New York is neither a full nor a true account of New York’s history, so clearly Irving felt no compulsion to meet Mitchill’s civic challenge. Instead Irving comments on the early republic’s obsession with print as the solution for narrating and justifying its past, defending and celebrating its present, and promoting its inevitably glorious progression into the future. Irving dedicated his satiric, fictional history of the Dutch empire’s collapse to the newly formed New York Historical Society. Irving’s derogatory comments about the society in his notebooks show his personal frustrations with the group; his subsequent retraction of the dedication suggests that the Society was offended by the dedication and the text.³⁰

Alongside Mitchill’s 1807 text were many guides to American history and cities, and Irving borrows the techniques and tenor of satirical, allegorical, and empirical

³⁰ Mary Bowden argues that while the book ranges widely and incorporates national topics, the satire was particularly directed at “the men and politics of New York City” (164). In its roman a clef elements, this seems reasonable, but I think the success of the book over the years makes clear that the satire is evident far beyond its immediate targets.

histories. Jeremy Belknap, for instance, wrote both the empirical 1792 *History of New Hampshire* and the allegorical history of the American Revolution, *The Foresters* in the same year. While his New Hampshire history was a dry collection of statistics, geography, and Indian battles, *The Foresters* presents a cantankerous cadre of chickens who attend the constitutional congress, and it includes several roman-a-clef moments akin to Irving's (216). Walter Eitner glosses these, noting that the character "Teneg" is clearly an inversion of Citizen Genet, and that the discussion regarding "setting molasses" for the "wild beasts on the western border," refers to negotiations with the American Indians there (157).³¹ Hence Irving might well have seen nothing problematic with being a historian and an allegorist simultaneously, and contemporaries enjoyed speculating about whether Knickerbocker's Poffenburgh, for example, was a caricature of General James Wilkinson or Jefferson.³²

Another respected historian of the time, David Ramsay, published *History of South Carolina* in March of 1809 as Irving was himself drafting *A History of New York*. Ramsay solemnly and seriously laments that time is running out to write such a history: "every day that minute local histories of these states are deferred is an injury to posterity, for by means thereof more of that knowledge which ought to be transmitted to them will be irrecoverably lost" (Dedication, unnumbered). Irving relies on the fictional Seth Handaside, the landlord who publishes Knickerbocker's papers, to mock the urgency of sentiment such as Ramsay's, "with great solicitude had I long beheld the early history of

³¹ Eitner notes that the 1796 text, from which I am quoting, actually tames its discussion regarding American Indians, since Belknap believed that treaties enacted between 1792 and 1796 had improved relations (161).

³² Michael L. Black (74) and Andrew Burstein say Wilkerson was the more likely target (72).

this venerable and ancient city, gradually slipping from our grasp, trembling on the lips of narrative old age, and day by day dropping piece meal into the tomb” (377). Were it not already clear even in the preface that Irving is writing a satiric history, the sentiments between the texts would be difficult to distinguish. Additionally, Ramsay and Irving both discuss the question of Native American rights, and just as solemnly where Irving is satiric, Ramsay concludes in a footnote that if land is “capable of supporting five hundred under proper cultivation,” then it is the property not of the “few savages who hunted over them, but belonged to the common stock of mankind” (150). Further, “This doctrine is agreeable to the judicial determination of the courts of South-Carolina with respect to rights in lands derived solely from possession” (150). While such arguments had justified colonial expansion for centuries (and therefore Irving certainly needn’t have quoted contemporaries for his own satiric reference) it seems worth noting that Ramsay felt comfortable asserting this so baldly in 1809 at the same time that he admits that on at least one occasion white soldiers “butchered [captured Indians] in a manner too shocking to relate” (175).

What does the euphemism, “too shocking to relate” conceal? Ramsay does not elaborate, and the *North American Review* in January, 1818 complained that Ramsay’s texts were too sanguine about white atrocities: “the burning of an Indian town and village is mentioned without stricture. . . . The American eagle is exhibited, as ready to unclench her arrows, rather than as holding forth her olive branch” (340). Four years later, however, the same journal, in an article about Buchanan’s *Sketches of the History, Manners, and Customs of the North American Indians* decides that Buchanan offers his

critique of white atrocities with an “air of false sympathy in his lamentations over the fate of the Indians” (October 1822, 463). While the journal critiques Buchanan for his “false sympathy,” and acknowledges that his honest account “should make us blush for the deeds of civilized man, and mourn over the melancholy reality, that in some of the worst traits of his nature, he holds a guilty preeminence above the savage himself,” the journal concludes that despite white guilt, if the two races cannot live together, there are “no grounds of complaint or regret, that their place is occupied by civilized man” (492). Non-satiric historical texts about Native Americans and critical reviews of those histories therefore were entirely capable of professing lament about Native American removal. They could analyze the quality of that lamentation or sympathy, but they were also comfortable stating adamantly that white displacement of the Native American was acceptable.

What distinguishes the “false sympathy” of a non-satiric history of Native Americans from Irving’s false, fictional, satiric and fantastic approach—imagining sympathy through the figure of a pea-green alien? Robert Ferguson argues that Irving’s 1809 *A History of New York* use of comedy “works through a special relaxation of concern by annihilating the concern itself, it temporarily frees the mind from the desires and emotions that require action” (39). Ferguson argues that *A History of New York* frees Irving’s “tense fellow republicans to laugh away their anger and anxieties,” as Irving’s parallels and the mind-experiments he puts his readers through “comically inflate or deflate serious issues away from a level of meaningful concern” (39). Since none of the early reviews saw anything offensive, startling or disconcerting about the “mighty

question” chapter or the alien section in particular, Ferguson is correct to note that the primary effect of Irving’s satire is deflection away from rather than concentration on social issues, but the passage still distracts from an easy, passive experience of the text and demands contemplation about what history or imaginative exercises like this require of readers. Hence the text functions more as historiographical critique; it is an abstract thought experiment with the specific targets of the satire serving as the means of discussing historiography.

Almost exactly two hundred years after Knickerbocker crested that “little eminence” for his backwards glance, *A History of New York* is receiving renewed attention not as “progenitor” of New York historical writing but as Irving’s underappreciated satirical masterpiece. Most recently Edward Watts has recognized *A History of New York* as a text that is as concerned with messy and brutal intercultural exchange as it is with recording local history or establishing models for remembering and mythologizing national founding (449). Jeffrey Scraba notes that the book’s narrator has enjoyed more constant fame than Irving or *A History of New York* and describes how Irving’s narration modifies Miguel Cervantes’ quixotic irony and draws readers and the narrator Knickerbocker into colluding—and then rejecting—the history they create together (391). Chris Looby’s compelling argument in *Voicing America* that Irving wrote *A History of New York* to show that history is written and composed, not lived or recorded, gets additional refinement in a recent *American Literature* article, in which Jeffrey Insko makes the case for Irving as a writer of “metahistorical discourse” for whom a primary goal was to derail and “deflate the high moral import of nationalist

historiography” (609, 610). Looby, Insko and Scraba often call attention to passages in which Irving berates or pleads with the reader, but few scholars have considered one of the most aggressive demands Irving makes in the “Mighty Question” chapter: asking his readers to imagine themselves invaded, conquered, and subjugated by pea-green aliens. This particular passage offers the crucial evidence that Irving’s primary goal with his satiric history was to push readers into a thought experiment that encourages reader skepticism and self-criticism. I place that passage in the context of the rest of Irving’s *A History of New York* and some of his peers’ writing that incorporates local and historical material. These contexts and the “Mighty Question” show that Irving’s text is not just metahistorical but also a comic treatise intended to help Americans develop more self-conscious and self-reflective reactions to representations of history, national pride, and political discourse.

Whether Irving wanted to pacify or rile his readers regarding the “mighty question,” he had no shortage of peers positively giddy about America’s future. Consider the “bird’s eye glance” passage previously quoted. In it Irving uses Knickerbocker to mock the desire of his peers to elevate themselves to the prospect poem position of omniscience at the same time that he critiques the way American critics were beginning to speak of novelists like Charles Brockden Brown as the “progenitor, prototype and precursor” of America’s literary future and to celebrate George Washington as the father of democracy. Irving reminds the reader that skipping back to write historically like Ramsay or skipping forward to write prophetically (as Joel Barlow had recently done in *The Columbiad*) exposes the ostentatious confidence of American authors, both for over-

confidence in their own roles, not usually content to refer to themselves as “little I”s and over-eager to proclaim themselves high enough above their peers to command a “bird’s eye glance” over present and future.

Irving parodies contemporary historical practice for laughs and to force readers to recognize the problems with the narratives they offer. Beyond these parodies, however, Knickerbocker’s interjected moments of narratorial reflection on historiography focus on what Jeffrey Insko describes as “*epistemology*, or how we arrive at historical knowledge” (622). Irving goes to great lengths to demonstrate that history is not a factual record; it exists only because authors—some of them earnest, like the early nationalists—and some of them parodic, like Irving—sift through data, records and anecdotes to create their own new narratives. Warning in 1809 what Hayden White would make famous in the 1970s, Irving works hard to show readers that what White called in an essay of that name “The Fictions of Factual Representation” were the key components historians employed in fashioning their narratives of the past.

Irving is both more critical of and more hopeful about his contemporary readers than he is of peer authors. Where Barlow deployed the term “republican reader” seriously and enthusiastically, for Irving the term works only in parody. Barlow admits in the preface to *The Columbiad* that he “cannot expect that every reader, nor even every republican reader, will join me in opinion with respect to the future progress of society and the civilization of states” (xiii). In 1797, when Barlow first used the phrase “republican reader” in *The Vision of Columbus*, it was not a common phrase, even if it might have described a reading phenomenon or fantasy of Republican print culture.

Federalist-leaning Irving would certainly not have joined Barlow in feting the republican reader or in cheering for a vision of “future progress.” Robert Ferguson shows that Knickerbocker quotes from the likes of Herodotus, Plutarch and Boethius because Irving “finds history to be cyclical rather than progressive,” and that as such he “ridicules the high seriousness of... republican mythmakers” (33, 30).

On July 18, 1809, the *American Citizen* described “A New Plot!!” in its headline with two exclamation points and a matching level of anxiety in the prose of its columns. Their subject: the failure of republican leaders to defend republican principles more vigorously than their own leadership positions. “If the republican reader has ever felt, and I know that he has, any solicitude for the character of his party, its consistency, its purity, its honesty, he will feel something like the throbbings of heart-rending pain, when made acquainted with the subject that has called forth the papers, of which this is the first.” Indeed, the *American Citizen* was first, though at least the *Evening Post*, that same day, and then the *Republican Watch-Tower* a few days later, would reprint the article. The article is a call to throw out the current republican leadership who ignore republican principles and constituents because they are “afraid of their OFFICES, caring nothing, however, about you, caring nothing about either the republican principle or the republican cause.” Indeed, “They care nothing about you, except as so many subjects to operate upon, for their amusement and advantage.” (“A New Plot!!” 2) The repetition of the phrase “care nothing about you,” almost exactly in successive paragraphs emphasizes the centrality of relationship between representative and subject. These “republican readers” are let down by their leaders’ failures to “care” for them even as the writer describes the

failure as one of disinterested principle. This is the sort of contradiction in the notion of a republican reader that Irving exploits in *A History of New York*.

While Irving does not reference contemporary authors by name in *A History of New York* except to attack them as a group for their use of “pedantic lore,” Joel Barlow’s reflection on a South American Indian past as a model for a North American white future might have made his 1807 *Columbiad* a target of Irving’s satire. Barlow—a staunch republican—would have been an ideal target for Irving-the-Federalist. Always conservative and wary of democratic rule, as evidenced by *Salmagundi*’s Mustapha papers about the pettiness of electioneering, Irving was in 1809 a vehemently anti-Jefferson Federalist. As such, he would have had little in common with the Jeffersonian republican Joel Barlow, for whose “sincere but overpatriotic admonitions” Stanley Williams reports Irving had no patience (122). The gimmick of *The Columbiad* is that a “Power” shows Christopher Columbus the history of South America, and, when that survey disheartens Columbus, since it requires him to acknowledge that his explorations made possible Cortez’s massacres, the “power” shows Columbus the future of North America to console him, carrying him up to a bird’s eye view from which he can see all—the same kind of temporal and geographical perspective that Irving mocks by placing the self-satisfied Knickerbocker atop the “little eminence.”

Reader Alien-ation: To the Moon and Back

Irving derides confidence in American futurity throughout *A History of New York*, but he is most explicit about attacking the language of progress that justifies European conquest over Native American peoples and land in a startling passage towards the end of

the Book I. In Chapter V, described in the table of contents as the place where “the Author puts a mighty Question to the rout, by the assistance of the Man in the Moon,” Knickerbocker asks his readers to imagine themselves in the position of Native Americans, because “argument is never so well understood by us selfish mortals, as when it comes home to ourselves” (420). Knickerbocker does not, however, attempt description of seventeenth-century Lenni Lanape culture to help readers empathize. Instead, he says he will “suppose a parallel case” and sends hypogriffs to earth carrying pea-green aliens and nitrous oxide, suggesting that only when imagining colonization and subjugation by an extra-terrestrial power can nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans understand the Native American experience at the moment of Spanish or Dutch encounter. Pea-green aliens help Knickerbocker present a comic scenario in the very first book of the two volume *History*, but its effect embodies the author-reader relation the entire text explores.

Irving’s peers fantasized about “white Indians,” imagining white settlers as the inheritors not just of Native American lands but the rightful population to continue their values and nobility. They asked readers to mourn the “vanishing Indian” while simultaneously allowing or ignoring the effect frontier violence, national policy, and imported disease played in displacing and decimating Native American tribes. Instead of the pleasure of contemplating that glorious future in which the Native American can be recalled, nostalgically, as a necessary casualty of [anglo] American progress, Irving conjures a dystopic future in which “lunarians” dominate earth both militarily and by controlling its population with a narcotic more powerful and deleterious than liquor. The reason Irving takes readers into this imagined dystopia: until they try this thought

experiment they cannot answer the question, “What right had the first discoverers of America to land, and take possession of a country, without asking the consent of its inhabitants?” (412) Readers should care about the answer, says Knickerbocker, because “until this mighty question is put to rest, the worthy people of America can by no means enjoy the soil they inhabit, with clear right and title, and quiet, unsullied consciences” (412). Irving thought Americans enjoyed quieter consciences than they deserved, and more than the rest of *A History of New York*, the first book makes this point with a mix of eighteenth-century satire and nineteenth-century periodical bombast. Irving’s answer to this “Mighty Question,” is startling for its candid and anti-progressive narrative about how Europeans cheated, intoxicated, and exterminated native populations. How does it manifest here, then, in this opening book regarding the “Mighty Question”? Not content simply to catalogue all the ways Europeans had abused Native Americans, nor to adopt the tactic of novelists trying to understand the position of the American Indian by encouraging empathy by identification, Irving wanted readers to imagine that “the inhabitants of the moon, by astonishing advancement in science,” “take formal possession” of earth. Knickerbocker’s aliens are capable of vast destruction because of their “superior knowledge in the art of extermination—riding on Hypogriffs, defended with impenetrable armour—armed with concentrated sunbeams.” “In short,” says Irving:

In short, let us suppose them, if our vanity will permit the supposition, as superior to us in knowledge, and consequently in power, as the Europeans were to the Indians. All this is very possible, it is only our self-sufficiency, that makes us think otherwise; and I warrant the poor savages, before they had any knowledge

of the white men, armed in all the terrors of glittering steel and tremendous gun-powder, were as perfectly convinced that they themselves, were the wisest, the most virtuous, powerful and perfect of created beings, as are, at this present moment, the lordly inhabitants of old England, the volatile populace of France, or even the self-satisfied citizens of this most enlightened republic. (421)

When Irving complains about the “self-satisfied citizens of this enlightened republic,” or addresses the “enlightened republican reader” in Book VII of the 1809 edition, he calls attention to contemporary discussions about citizen duties, and how quickly civic participation devolves into bellicose bluster (476, 673). This passage receives some attention by scholars writing about representations of Native Americans, but it has mostly been ignored by Irving scholars. L.W. Michaelson declares in a *Science Fiction Studies* article that Irving’s lunar fantasy “may well be the first story of an invasion of Earth from outer space as well as the germ of Wells’ War of the Worlds,” and that it “does humorously and briefly one thing that Wells does in deadly earnest and at some length: make us conscious of our hypocrisy in matters of war and conquest” (198). Michaelson claims that Irving inaugurates a sub-genre of science fiction—the extraterrestrial invasion. At its best, science fiction’s inversion of norms, abstraction at the level of plot, narration, or description, and allegorical license can discomfit readers in order to provoke or encourage a specific response about a social issue.³³

³³ Here I am thinking particularly of Ursula Le Guin’s *Left Hand of Darkness* and Samuel Delany’s *Hours in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*, for their intentionally disorienting exploration of gender, sex and race. Teaching Le Guin’s “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas,” I am always struck by how divided my students are about its moral message. Some quickly decide that it is a parable about the connections between suffering in the developing world or about American class inequity, while others find the story’s

In a later book, Irving mocks the dangerous and ineffectual progression that occurs when a group decides itself the “most enlightened, the most dignified, the most formidable and the most ancient community upon the face of the earth—and finding that this resolution was so universally and readily carried, another was immediately proposed—whether it was not possible and politic to exterminate Great Britain?” (693). They follow this act with a bonfire of British goods and a commemorative statue “intended to represent the province of Nieuw Nederlandts destroying Great Britain, under the similitude of an Eagle picking the little Island of Old England out of the globe; but either through the unskillfulness of the sculptor, or his ill timed waggery, it bore a striking resemblance to a goose, vainly striving to get hold of a dumpling” (693). Where Irving’s Dutch colonizers work, symbolically, to distinguish themselves and participate in national allegories that demonstrate their enlightenment, dignity, or formidableness, they often succeed only in showing themselves greedy and incompetent: not as elegant, warlike raptors but as waddling, greedy geese who succeed only in calling attention to their vain “striving.”

In a Book VII passage, Knickerbocker states that he knows the republican reader will disagree with the Dutch governor’s decision to discourage “social life from being dashed with the intoxicating ingredient of politics” so that they might become “more useful citizens and more attentive to their families and fortunes” (674). Given that *The*

evacuation of detail and its adamancy about its non-relational nature as evidence that Le Guin expressly did not want readers to map the story’s thought experiment so easily onto real-world examples. That the story supports both positions, of course, is part of the appeal of science fiction; some readers seek the relaxation and entertainment of [extra-terrestrial or extra-temporal] escape, while others want the mind-warp and self-reflection that the inversion or abstraction of science fiction invites.

Columbiad constantly equates “social” and civic or political virtues, Irving’s critique might indeed have caught the attention of “republican readers.” By 1848, however, the reference is gone, and so are a significant portion of “Dear reader” moments that enact the republican fantasy of reader and author interacting in a fashion much more closely aligned with a republican print public sphere than one in which a virtuoso historian gently leads a reader, uninterrupted, through his entire narrative.

Consider how frequently Knickerbocker confronts and engages the reader in the 1809 edition. He says in the opening book that of the multitudes of readers and reader-types, he aims to satisfy them all—to “delight the learned...instruct the simple, and edify the vulgar” reader (401). By Book III, Irving makes several distinctions about readers. There is the “doughty class of readers,” who “can be satisfied with nothing but bloody battles, and horrible encounters”; those fantastic readers “a little given to the marvellous,” seeking “astonishing narrations, that just amble along the boundary line of possibility,” a third class “of a lighter turn,” who “singularly delight in treasons, executions, sabine rapes, tarquin outrages...and all the catalogue of hideous crimes...that give pungency and flavour to the dull detail of history” and finally the fourth class of “philosophical” readers (475). This is a section of the book that warranted further revision; Irving repeats himself, reclassifying in the next chapters, adding the category of the “sentimental reader” who reads for the thrill of empathy, while the “mere” reader combines the doughty and the “third class” readers (513). Yet Knickerbocker also makes clear his preference for that “class of my readers...after my own heart; grave, philosophical and investigating; fond of analyzing characters, of taking a start from first causes, and so hunting a nation down”

(476). While Irving was a diligent and careful historical scholar, Knickerbocker makes clear that he disdains the hunt, to which his peer historians devote obsessively detailed attention. Unwilling to “describe minutely” the early settlement’s labors in raising the city, Knickerbocker says only “suffice it to say, trees were cut down, stumps grubbed up, bushes cleared away, until the new city rose gradually from amid swamps and stinkweeds, like a mighty fungus, springing from a mass of rotten wood” (476). If the point is to hunt the nation down, the goal is next to attack its overly-eager patriotic readers, too eager to hear that minutiae of how the white settlers subdued the wilderness. Instead, Irving gives them the brief passage above and the reversal of terms to describe how white civilizing efforts “violated” the “dark forests” of Manhattan and how the “savage hand of cultivation,” rather than improving, instead abused the land until it “degenerated into teeming orchards” (489).³⁴ Instead of celebrating urbanization as progress, Irving depicts a city built on a rotten foundation. Even when he matches the content of national history, he inverts its affect.

This classification of readers is only a sampling; Irving’s *A History of New York* is itself a teeming orchard of Dear Reader moments. In the 1809 edition, in the first book alone, Irving addresses the “idle reader,” the “unlearned,” “captious, discontented,” “indolent or chicken-hearted,” “inquisitive...querulous,” “unhappy...woefully jaded and fatigued,” “volatile” and “impatient and way worn readers” no fewer than twenty-seven times in fifty pages (383, 387, 387, 401, 405). These are only the most aggressive instances in that book—in other books Knickerbocker is even more abrasive, imploring

³⁴ I am grateful for the chance to have read Lindsay DiCuirci’s unpublished work on Irving’s *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* presented at the 2010 MCEAS EALMT workshop.

the reader not to interrupt or challenge him regarding his accuracy or presentation, taking his audience through an entire chapter in which “the reader is beguiled into a delectable walk” during which a storm rises of such force that Knickerbocker asks the reader to “fancy to yourself all that has ever been said or sung, of tempest, storm and hurricane—and you will save me the trouble of describing it” (491). The obvious comparison here is again Laurence Sterne, whose blank page in *Tristram Shandy* functions as a refusal of authorial depiction replaced by reader imagination, but where Sterne is apologetic, Irving is adamant that his and his readers’ time is better spent on historiography than mere description. Only a few of these demands survive in the 1848 edition. Of his expurgations, Irving’s biographer decides Irving was right to have “pared down the prosy disquisitions, such as those on the trials of historians; he knew he had been a bore” (Williams 116). Perhaps, but something else shifts as well between the two editions—Irving’s willingness to confront the reader. Those “prosy disquisitions” on the role of the historian, and his interactions with querulous, captious, and inquisitive readers bespeak an awareness or engagement with a republican notion of reading. Irving’s vehement opposition to Jefferson and disdain for electoral, “mob-rule” democratic politics, all demonstrate his antipathy for much of what republican ideology promoted. Yet his back and forth banter—his call for active readers—aligns him with a republican print discourse that was still pervasive in early American books.

Knickerbocker goes on to assure “conscientious readers that this “is one of those little privileges, strenuously asserted and exercised by historiographers of all ages—and one which has never been disputed” (644). He concludes this interruption of the narrative

leading up to the battle by congratulating his “most excellent reader, who, for thy faithful adherence to my heels, I could lodge in the best parlour of my heart” (645). Chapter V opened with Knickerbocker confessing that he is gradually altering his tone to the reader. “This is just my way,” he says, “I am always a little cold and reserved at first...and am only to be completely won by long intimacy” (634). Since this is well into the second volume of the 1809 edition, Knickerbocker is now willing to risk a little more warmth for his readers, who have proved their merit by outlasting those who bailed after they “only stared me full in the title page, and then walked off.” A few more “lingered yawningly through the preface” or endured the “hypogriffs and fiery dragons” and the “pagan philosophers and infidel writers” in the first “two or three knotty chapters,” but Knickerbocker reserves praise for the remainder. Of the “mighty host that first set out, but a comparatively few made shift to survive, in exceedingly battered condition, through the five introductory chapters.” Turning the question to these readers, Knickerbocker asks them,

What then! would you have had me take such sun shine, faint hearted recreants to my bosom, at our first acquaintance? No—no. I reserved my friendship for those who deserved it....And now as to those who adhere to me at present, I take them affectionately by the hand.—Worthy and thrice beloved readers! Brave and well tried comrades!... I pledge myself to stand by you to the last; and to conduct you, (so heaven speed this trusty weapon which I now hold between my fingers,) triumphantly to the end of this our stupendous undertaking (635).

By explicitly calling attention to the opening paratexts (title page, preface, and introductory chapters) Irving here acknowledges the important work they do in weeding out readers. Returning attention to those paratexts and chapters precisely when the “Author discourses very ingenuously of himself” and of historiographers in the next chapter makes clear that Irving’s passion is for historiography rather than history. Further, it offers additional evidence that he viewed those paratexts as crucial pedagogic (if satiric) tools to guarantee that readers would read the whole history with a historiographical rather than a patriotic or an antiquarian frame of mind. Finally, it shows that for Irving, one cannot discuss the role of paratexts or historiography without discussing and addressing his “Worthy and thrice beloved readers” (635). For Irving, the point of frustrating reader expectations cannot be separated from his historiographical polemic—ridiculing bad or shallow reading is the way that Irving imagines himself cultivating better republican readers. Though it can sometimes be difficult to determine whether Irving wants to ridicule or cultivate readers, I think that the ridicule of bad readers, especially as it appears in parodic paratexts and historiographical thought experiments is precisely the means Irving employs to cultivate his notion of better reading.

Irving’s 1848 revisions mostly trim and tame the original production. Irving slashed Book IV, where he had trained some of his fiercest satire on Jefferson (or DeWitt Clinton, according to Mary Bowden) because the allusions to 1809 events were no longer

common knowledge.³⁵ Even in 1825, John Neal would argue that much of the first edition's "laughable secret allusions" had not been "understood, anywhere—by anybody—save those who are familiar with American history" (*American Writers, a Series of Papers Contributed to Blackwoods Magazine (1824-1825)* 129).³⁶ By 1848, such details would have required extensive explanation, and Irving opted instead to excise the allusions to a (fictitious) Dutch/English 1638 "non-intercourse bill" which would have reminded 1809 readers of Jefferson's own 1807 Embargo Act and its March, 1809 repeal and revision into the "Non-Intercourse Act."

Critics have also argued that Irving bowdlerized the text to make it more palatable for the politer, broader reading audiences of 1848. The 1809 discussion of "platonic affection, or the art of making love without making children" (393)—becomes in 1848 "Platonic love—an exquisitely refined intercourse" (16). Stanley Williams says that Irving removed "racy allusions, and he deleted some anti-Catholic and anti-British passages; he regretted his exuberances" (128). Amongst these attempts to make the text tamer and more polite, Irving reduced demands on his reader in a way that suggests the republican print sphere has faded. Reading habits and desires, as someone like Fisher Ames feared as early as 1803, and Habermasian critics have noted since, were transitioning from active participation and towards more passive consumption.

³⁵ See Mary Bowden's "Knickerbocker's History and the 'Enlightened' Men of New York City" for a comprehensive discussion of Irving's targets.

³⁶ Of course Neal *did* get the allusions and goes on to offer a key for readers. And especially in 1809, Irving could be certain that there would be an audience that would not just get the allusions but that would be pleased (as Neal makes clear) that they were in on a joke only an elite would get.

William Hedges places *A History of New York* at the head of a list of “a long series of satiric or seriocomic stories and novels which deflate the American dream by presenting “progress” as an illusion, zealous humanitarianism as self-deception or hypocrisy” (Irving 88). Hedges also links *A History of New York* to Freneau, Barlow, Dwight, Bryant and Cooper. Like those writers, *A History of New York* stages its discussion of the fall of the Dutch empire in comparison to ancient empires. Yet Hedges’ assertion in a footnote that Irving eliminated “most of the rhapsody on the theme of ruins” from the 1848 edition merits further scrutiny (*Washington Irving: An American Study* Irving Fn 87). Hedges makes his claim based on a passage from the very end of the 1809 edition that Irving excises in the 1848 edition. In the 1809 passage, in the penultimate chapter titled, “Containing reflections on the decline and fall of empires, with the final extinction of the Dutch Dynasty,” Knickerbocker mocks the “woe begone historian” who “bends in dumb pathos over the ruins of departed greatness.” Knickerbocker says that such a historian “seems to sob to his readers, in the words of a most tear shedding Dutch author, ‘You who have noses, prepare to blow them now!’” (718) This is the introduction to a set of paragraphs that succinctly detail fallen empires, from the Assyrian to the Median and to the Saracenic and finally to Knickerbocker’s description of the British defeat of the Dutch. In the space of two pages, then, Knickerbocker discusses *translatio imperii*, bringing the reader up to date and ready to accept not the present glory of an empire, but another fall in its cyclical march—and to see that such collapse is tragedy only in the eyes of the “historian of sensibility” or his too easily-manipulated nose-blowing reader. Knickerbocker emphasizes that we should

see farce rather than tragedy, continuity rather than rupture, in the collapse of empire by noting that the only consequence of the British victory was the change of name from New Amsterdam to New York, and that the Dutch citizens “unanimously determined never to ask any of their conquerors to dinner” (721). As Warner and others have noted, another Knickerbocker tale has Rip Van Winkle return after the American Revolution to discover that even revolution produces only nominal change in some arenas—the pub, for instance, where the King George tavern has become the George Washington tavern by the simple instrument of new paint on the existing sign. Irving here reminds his American readers that their peers too often discuss revolutions and the collapse of empires in hysterical terms.

The 1809 edition attacks the reader and the historian, but in subsequent editions, Irving actually ratchets up his description of the horrors of history and the ruination it records by altering the address to the reader. In the 1809 edition, Irving makes a humorous comparison of the way that historians approach subjects as if they occurred specifically for the historian to manipulate. Joking that ancient civilizations such as Nineveh and Palmyra, “perished for want of an historian,” Knickerbocker compares the historian to “the great projector of inland lock navigation, who asserted that rivers, lakes and oceans were only formed to feed canals; so I affirm that cities, empires, plots, conspiracies, wars, havock and desolation, are ordained by providence as food for the historian. . . . the world—the world, is nothing without the historian!” (380) Although the “food for the historian” passage (with slight variation) occurs in both editions, Irving moved it in the 1812 and all subsequent editions. Perhaps he decided that the opening

books have plenty of this sort of discourse already, and by shifting it into the opening of Book IV (a chapter now expurgated of local, temporal references to Jefferson) he could spread out the historiographical commentary. Yet he makes one addition that deserves more attention, again regarding explicit address to readers. In the 1848, Irving's Knickerbocker explains that "when the lofty Thucydides is about to enter upon his description of the plague that desolated Athens, one of his modern commentators assures the reader, that the history is now going to be exceeding solemn, serious, and pathetic." In the 1809 edition Irving might have introduced this tragically, playing it for laughs and recommending that sentimental readers again prepare their handkerchiefs for a session of nose-blowing. Instead, here in the 1848 edition Knickerbocker says the "dolorous dilemma" at Fort Good Hope makes his "heart leap within me," for:

such are the true subjects for the historic pen. What is history, in fact, but a kind of Newgate Calendar, a register of the crimes and miseries that man has inflicted on his fellow man? It is a huge libel on human nature, though which we industriously add page after page, volume after volume, as if we were building up a monument to the honor, rather than the infamy of our species. . . . What are the great events that constitute a glorious era?—the fall of empires—the desolation of happy countries—splendid cities smoking in their ruins. (1848 edition 200)

This is a serious condemnation of readers and historians alike. Irving has elsewhere already attacked the "doughty reader" who wants a history of nothing but gore and guts; now he derides the historian whose heart leaps at the opportunity to depict "crimes and miseries." That Irving does not mention a reader, doughty or otherwise, has the effect of

re-directing attention to the idea that readers should expect better than just gore in their history. Contrast Knickerbocker's leaping heart at the notion that he will get to describe this disaster with the oft-quoted paragraph of Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" concerning the angel of history. Benjamin makes similar but notably different claims. Benjamin's angel has his face

turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

(Illuminations 257-58)

Both Knickerbocker and Benjamin's angel see history as a literally rising record—for Irving a "monument"; for Benjamin a skyward pile of rubble. Where Benjamin's angel can see through the progress narrative that makes a comforting "chain of events" out of what is actually a "single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage," Knickerbocker wants it to be clear that it is the recording of history (the "historic pen") that makes successive and cyclical desolations appear part of a progression as natural as the turning of "page after page, volume after volume."

He made this revision in 1812 and kept it in each successive edition—even in the tamest deathbed edition. Irving embarked on a career by writing light satires before

servicing in the navy and eventually assuming several diplomatic roles. He became the kind of celebrated historian of Columbus and Washington that the opening salvos of *A History of New York* caricatures. His “deathbed” revision, edited from his retirement Sunnyside cottage in 1848 as the newspapers filled with the rhetoric of manifest destiny and jingoist reporting on the brutal filibustering campaigns of the Mexican-American war, with its “splendid cities smoking in their ruins” and a singular reference to “annexation,” shows Irving moving away from his youthful focus on author/reader relations and more towards the melancholy reflection about the “libel” of what history records. Instead of the addresses to readers that appeared in that first edition, Knickerbocker in subsequent editions focused on the events and their textual recording, shifting attention towards the nightmare of history rather than the author and the philosophical reader together thinking about history and “hunting a nation down.” For Chris Looby, the placement of the “nothing without the historian” passage must necessarily occur in the first book (91). And it does, in every edition—here is one passage Irving never moved. Looby describes this as Knickerbocker’s goal of demonstrating that “historical truth was an effect of retrodiction,” that required the first book of Irving’s *A History of New York* to include a parody of the “metalepsis of historiographical reconstruction.” There is no question that the first book operates differently from the rest of the history, but it matters that Irving decided in revision that he could safely extend the critique from the first book into later books.

At the same time, Irving deserves to be defended as a paratextualist. Many aspects of the 1848 edition have been tamed. As William T. Gilmore says, as Irving “settled into

the role of ‘Father of American Literature, Irving came to feel deeply uncomfortable with his erstwhile insurgency” (675). Gilmore means that Irving decided in 1848 to embrace the literary trends and conventions he had attacked in the first edition of *A History of New York*, when he had been an “instigator of radical changes in the arts, a kind of literary ‘Son of Liberty”” (675). It is true that the “Author’s Apology” has aspects of genuine apology for his youthful and “presumptuous trespasses” into Dutch New York history. Irving’s choice to accompany this apology, however, by republishing the advertising hoax he perpetrated in the *Evening Post* reminds the reader that Irving the paratextualist wanted his mature “Father of American literature” laurels placed alongside his earlier manipulation of newspapers and their readers. That matters, I hope this chapter has shown, because a significant part of Irving’s project in *A History of New York* is the effort to show that serious historical research can be complemented by ribald humor and paratextual trickery, and that when readers are on the lookout for literary trickery, they also pay better attention to the kinds of patriotic nostalgia that was so popular amongst American historians in 1809 *and* the grand progressive narratives that were dominating mid-century American history by authors such as George Bancroft.

To read Irving as a paratextualist is to locate his determination to foreground reader relations as a tool that promotes more thoughtful historical consciousness not just in the paratexts but also in the body-text. Consider the late Book VI, which contains one chapter titled “In which the Author discourses very ingenuously of himself...” and another chapter titled “In which is shewn the great advantage the author has over his reader in time of battle” but in which he raises the subject of “historiographers” to attack

them. The advantage the author has over his reader is that while he may “shrink back with dismay” as his hero braves another “dolorous misadventure” he knows that

though I cannot save the life of my favourite hero, nor absolutely contradict the event of a battle, (both of which misrepresentations, though much practiced by the French writers, of the present reign, I hold to be utterly unworthy of a scrupulous historian), yet I can now and then make him bestow on his enemy a sturdy back stroke, sufficient to fell a giant; though in honest truth he may never have done anything of the kind (643-44).

This disregard for historical fact does not shock the reader by Book VI; it has been the hallmark of *A History of New York* and the author-reader relationship throughout it. That Irving returns to this sort of meta-critical comment on the writing of history further emphasizes that his project’s interest in Dutch New York is matched or exceeded by his need to remind readers about how literature is created by authors and their manipulation of readers. I have already mentioned that each edition maintained the section in which Knickerbocker skips to “some little eminence at the distance of two or three hundred years ahead; and casting back a birds eye glance, over the waste of years that is to roll between; discover myself—little I—at this moment the progenitor, prototype and precursor of them all, posted at the head of this host of literary worthies” (728). Irving achieved that eminence in just forty years and got to write back to Knickerbocker, Handaside, and all those readers for whom his narrator’s heart “throbs—worthy reader—throbs kindly towards thyself” when he issued his deathbed edition. That final edition’s demands on the reader are tamed, its politics updated in minor ways, and its paratexts

contained and explained instead of mischievously spilling across the periodical and book public sphere. Yet still, in every edition of *A History of New York*, Irving plays with the idea that author “worthies” and “worthy readers” are as complicit in the creation of historical memory as the “self-satisfied citizens of this most enlightened republic” are responsible for its unexamined defense of geographic inheritance and national futurity.

Chapter Two: Ingersoll
Tennis on the Transatlantic Lawn

A History of New York made Washington Irving famous, but it was not his first literary success. Between 1807 and 1808, Irving and his brother William, along with James Kirke Paulding, co-wrote *Salmagundi*, shepherding the satirical literary magazine through twenty issues. Washington Irving would again return to periodical work after he published *A History of New York*, writing for and editing *the Analectic Magazine* between 1813 and 1814. James Kirke Paulding wrote more than a dozen books, but also restarted *Salmagundi* in 1819, for which he wrote an essay in 1820 titled simply “National Literature.” This chapter argues that American literary nationalism underwent significant change between 1807 and 1828 because of the transatlantic and multi-format paper war that occurred during this time. The debate was necessarily transatlantic; the subject was America’s literary future in a transatlantic market. It was necessarily multi-format not just because Irving and Paulding, like many other authors in the period, wrote books and periodical essays, but because their writings for both the magazine and the book format show a hypersensitivity to an audience raised on both formats. Washington Irving’s promotion of *A History of New York* in American newspapers is evidence of this cross-pollination, but this chapter focuses on the even tighter symbiosis displayed when periodicals and books engage each other directly. In the chronology of the paper war surrounding Charles Jared Ingersoll’s 1810 book, *Inchiquin: The Jesuit’s Letters*,

periodicals are initially one of the subjects discussed within the book's letters. Then American and British periodicals responded to *Inchiquin*, and within a few months two authors published books that responded to a particularly nasty periodical review. These books then generated additional periodical reviews. Hence readers who wanted to follow the entire chronology had to go back and forth between books and periodicals. In this chapter I am particularly interested in the ways that paratexts and the book/periodical interaction require a "back and forth" experience for the reader.

This is also a chapter about the extraordinary ten-page footnote in *Inchiquin: The Jesuit's Letters*. Charles Ingersoll's 1810 text has received some critical mention because an 1814 *Quarterly Review* article about *Inchiquin* generated enough American disgruntlement that Timothy Dwight and James Kirke Paulding each answered the short review with books rebutting the *Quarterly Review's* claims. Ingersoll, Dwight, Paulding, and the American and British periodicals were participating in a transatlantic paper war that took place between the Embargo Act in 1807 and Andrew Jackson's election in 1828. While paper warring about literary nationalism occurred well before 1807 and lasted long after 1828, it occurs with particular regularity in these two decades.

I have already quoted David Foster Wallace on the "back and forth" of endnotes as a strategy to unsettle readers. Here, I argue for the intersection of three kinds of paratextual back and forth. First, footnotes require the least amount of back and forth of any paratext, since they are proximate but non-invasive. Second, periodicals require that readers be capable of various kinds of back and forth. Readers need to be able to think simultaneously of the journal they are reading and the material that the journal reviews—

often taking them back into texts printed months or years ago, and sometimes reviving subjects from years past to make a point about a current topic. Periodicals also throw the reader back and forth by their nature as miscellanies—readers encounter multiple genres, a variety of subjects, and the styles and voices of multiple contributors. Finally, these readers in this period had to think back and forth across the Atlantic in order to remain up-to-date on the latest volleys and skirmishes of the book and periodical paper war. As I argue in this chapter, the back and forth that these footnotes and periodicals require of readers should be considered for their paratextual effects because, like David Foster Wallace, the authors and editors of these texts used them to make readers uncomfortable. That discomfort was the tool of paratextualists that served to make readers more aware of the way that periodical and book culture was functioning in that moment.

This was a moment of intense national introspection, of self-critical literary nationalism, but conversation unfolded in journals with transatlantic authors and readers. Its participants included American writers who complained that American readers did not care enough about their native authors to buy their works and make their livelihoods possible and Scottish Whigs writing for the *Edinburgh Review* who worried that the continuation of slavery in America threatened the British prospects of their party and of republics in general. London-based *Westminster Review* reformers contributed because they understood that Washington's politics affected their own chances, and American Federalists joined in because they were convinced that British journals attacking America fomented the worst kind of nationalist reaction in America (i.e. radical, pro-Western Expansion and pro-slavery). When they attacked individuals, journals, parties and

nations, they aimed at their own nation's readers, whom these authors felt were far too complacent about their nations' intellectual productions and futures.

The transatlantic paper war fought over American literary nationalism in the early nineteenth century produced one quotation famous enough that the American author John Neal asked for it to grace his tombstone: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?"³⁷ That the egotistical and nationalistic Neal would want this sentence from the *Edinburgh Review* rather than his own prose on his grave illustrates the asymmetric relation of American literature in relation to Britain. I have already said that paratexts assume asymmetric power relations, elevating authors over readers. Everything about the paper war was asymmetric. It was fought in the lead-up, midst and aftermath of an actual war (The War of 1812) that matched a fledging post-colonial nation's barely organized military against the world's dominant naval power. Meanwhile America's literary culture boasted meager native audiences, under-developed distribution networks, and authors who pinned all their hopes on success abroad; there was simply no way to think about American literary nationalism except with regard to London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. The asymmetry extended to readership, too: many British books arrived in the United States, but far fewer American books returned to England stowed alongside the tobacco. Despite the obviousness of this asymmetry, there was enough transatlantic exchange to make America's authors and readers the subject of a paper war. When an

³⁷ The offending article came from an 1820 article by editor Sydney Smith. The article is wide-ranging, and, while regularly discussed in the context of American literary nationalism, deserves more attention for its hand-wringing about Scottish Whig endorsement and celebration of American politics—politics gravely tainted by slavery. Smith's review is: "Art. III Statistical Annals of the United States of America. By Adam Seybert." *The Edinburgh Review* 33 (1820): 69-80. (79) Neal's request appears in the preface to *Rachel Dyer* (ix).

Edinburgh Review editor dismissed America's nascent literary culture in 1818, casually declaring that Americans had no "native literature," he referenced that shipping trade as the reason Americans should not bother developing their own literature: "why should they write books, when a six weeks' passage brings them, in their own tongue, our sense, science and genius, in bales and hogsheads?"³⁸

While critical discussion of this particular paper war has focused on Smith's and others' attacks on America's authors, this chapter contends that the important part of Smith's famous question regards that group he disingenuously suggested did not exist: transatlantic readers of American literature. My method is necessarily dialogic and transatlantic; I focus on how a debate over literary nationalism shaped American authors' addresses to readers. Authors in the early nineteenth century were experimenting with many different kinds of reader address to respond to shifts in print culture brought on by improving printing technology, increasing literacy rates and more efficient distribution networks. Examples of four different approaches reveal playful withholding, fantastical distancing, biting sarcasm, and earnest entreaty for readers' attention. In *A History of New York*, Washington Irving details Peter Stuyvesant's failed attempt to start a "war of words" by letting "fly a tremendous volley of red hot, four and forty pounder execrations."³⁹ Irving's narrator then promises readers a real battle in the next chapter, but has

³⁸ This quote is also from *The Edinburgh Review*, but this article precedes the "Who Reads an American Book" article by several years—it was published in 1818 ("Article. VI.1. Travels in Canada and the United States, in 1816-1817" 144).

³⁹ Peter Stuyvesant's verbal attack fails because "it was utterly impossible (as it really was in those unphilosophic days) to carry on a war with words," but that only enhances Irving's satire; if word war

one small favour to ask of them; which is, that when I have set both armies by the cars in the next chapter, and am hurrying about, like a very devil, in the midst—they will just stand a little on one side, out of harm's way—and on no account attempt to interrupt me by a single question or remonstrance. As the whole spirit, hurry and sublimity of the battle will depend on my exertions, the moment I should stop to speak, the whole business would stand still— wherefore I shall not be able to say a word to my readers, throughout the whole of the next chapter, but I promise them in the one after, I'll listen to all they have to say, and answer any questions they may ask (133-34).

Here the narrator imagines himself as a general or maestro overseeing production for readers both passive enough to let him conduct the show but also active enough to query him in the next chapter.

Eaton Stannard Barrett comically dramatized the distance between creator, consumer, product and reviewer in *The Heroine: or Adventures of a Fair Romance Reader*, published in London in 1813. Quite successful, he revised and reissued it as *The Heroine: or Adventures of Cherubina* in 1815. The 1813 preface, written by the “Heroine to the Reader” and dated, “Moon, May 1, 1813,” explains that whenever a text is created on earth, its characters become corporeal beings on the moon, where the Captain Shandys and Quixotes of the moon turn crutches and spears on one another but present no threat to one another on the level of the “Scotch Reviewers,” with their “small sword and broad sword—staff and stiletto—flankonnade and cannonade—hurry-scurry—right wing and

didn't work effectively in Knickerbocker's New York, it certainly had been improved and regularly deployed by 1809 (647).

left wing—.” (XV) The lunar characters do not fear the violence of the review’s cuts and cannons but the influence the reviews exert; if a comedy is destroyed “Edinburgo-reviewically” and ceases to be read on earth, its characters cease to exist on the moon. The heroine concludes the preface by explaining that this note will reach earth when she sends it hitched to a small volcanic rock. Eventually, “about the time of the millennium,” the “Lunarians, like true satellites, [will] turn on our benefactors” and attack Earth with the same volcanic rocks, and ultimately so deplete the lunar surface that the moon will lose its gravitational independence and move towards earth until “both globes will come slap together, flatten each other, like sublunary pancakes, and rush headlong into primeval chaos” (xix). The satire here is loose enough to have many targets, but Barrett makes clear that if the distance between characters and readers was unbalanced, it is as constant as the moon’s orbit of the earth. Reviewers determine the fate of characters if readers follow the reviews, but when the characters rebel and cause the moon to hit the earth—altering the reviewer/reader/author/character orbit-distances—then chaos will prevail.

In another satirical discussion about periodical and reader/contributor interaction, *Blackwood’s* pretends in 1821 to shift editorial responsibility for its inclusion or exclusion of contributors’ offerings onto a blindfolded “printer’s devil,” (a low-paid worker or apprentice in the print shop) who they claim had randomly selected and ordered the monthly magazine’s contents “to be printed just as the blinded devil threw them up, on the principle of fortuitous concussion.” (3) In another number, *Blackwood’s* runs a fake letter to the editor, which is supposed to be the work of fourteen slighted reader-

contributors who meet at a health spa where they are all recovering from their disappointment at not being published. In the first case, the satire targets rival editors for their pride in compilation; in the second the joke is on the readers who believe their contributions deserve expeditious and guaranteed printing in the periodicals.

Finally there is John Neal, who played a prominent role in the paper war by writing a literary history of two hundred American authors for *Blackwood's* in 1824-25, and who, on his return to the United States, wrote in the *Yankee* in 1828 that literature, “in a time of peace,” does more for a nation “than our battles on the sea, or our battles on the land, in a time of war. In fact, authors are the militia of a country on the peace-establishment.”⁴⁰ While this appears to be about authors, Neal shifts responsibility to readers: “If we are to have a literature of our own, we must pay for it,” he says, and notes that while

it may be cheaper to buy our literature ready made, cheaper so far as the money goes for the present age, ‘to import it in bales and hogsheads,’ than to make it for ourselves, yet in the long run it would be sure to turn out otherwise. It would be cheaper to buy soldiers ready made, the mercenaries of Europe to defend us in time of war, than it would be to make soldiers of our fathers and brothers and sons—cheaper in the outset perhaps; and yet, who would leave his country to the care of a military stranger? (196)

If American readers want American fiction, they must buy it, says Neal—calling for consumer activists to improve literary production with their purchase choices, and

⁴⁰ *The Yankee* 18 Jun 1828: (196).

quoting the *Edinburgh Review* (bales and hogsheads) without any citation—evidence that its attacks from a decade ago still circulated and still smarted in 1828. From the playful demands of Irving in 1809, to Barrett’s “Lunar Annals,” to the mockery of *Blackwood’s* in 1821, to the earnestness of Neal in 1828, writers in this period explored the idea of authorship by incorporating or refusing readers as contributors of literary material, and by courting them as financial supporters of certain kinds of literary productions—both those imported in hogsheads and those written and printed on native soil. Of the Irving, Barrett, *Blackwood’s*, and Neal examples, only Neal’s can be said to come out of the paper war or to focus on literary nationalism; taken together, however, these samples show that reader address was part of the literary experimentation required of authors competing for transatlantic readers.

In such a reading, literary nationalism itself becomes a tool of marketing. Fought in the pages of novels, travelogues, statistical annals and especially in British and American periodicals, the paper war has most often been discussed as an early moment in the development of a distinct American literary culture.⁴¹ More recently, critics have noted the paper war’s importance for two nations negotiating a post-colonial relationship strained by political and military conflicts.⁴² Alongside political and military conflict,

⁴¹ See Robert Spiller, “The Verdict of Sydney Smith,” which briefly discusses the paper war on the very first page of *American Literature’s* inaugural issue in 1929, John McCloskey, “The Campaign of Periodicals after the War of 1812 for National American Literature” (1935) and Benjamin Spencer’s 1957 *Quest for Nationality*.

⁴² See Jennifer Clark’s “‘Poisoned Pens’: The Anglo-American Relationship and the Paper War”. *Symbiosis*, 6.1 (April 2002) 45-68. - humanities-ebooks.co.uk.” 14 Dec 2007 <http://www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk/Catalogue/Poisoned_Pens.html>. Also see Richard Gravil’s *Romantic Dialogues: Anglo-American Continuities, 1776-1862*. For more general discussion of the Anglo-American postcolonial relationship in this period, see Paul Giles’s *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English:*

literary exchange comprised an integral part of any negotiation between the former colonizer and colony. The exchange, moreover, is extraordinarily self-conscious in its nature: whether America should discuss its problems and its future on its own terms occupies a central place, as does what role American authors and readers should play in a transatlantic literary culture. As such, the exchanges provide a particularly rich archive for tracking the Anglo-American literary relations in the period. They also show not just literary nationalism taken to an exaggerated pitch, but also the degree to which paratexts and periodicals become the primary means of conducting literary warfare.

Inchiquin

Inchiquin manages to be representative of the paper war even before the paper war truly gets going. It praises American texts and attacks British ones, complains about British misrepresentation and unpatriotic Americans who accept them and it regularly plays with paratextual conventions and forms to address readers. Though it was never republished after its 1810 New York debut, *Inchiquin* nonetheless became central to British and American paper warring in 1814 when the *Quarterly Review* returned to it, sparking periodical reviews and even two books rivaling the original in length. *Inchiquin* and the discourse swirling around it display the symbiotic relationship between periodicals and books. The text and responses to it raise the questions, display the anxieties, and conduct the experiments with reader address that make the paper war a key site of paratextual experimentation in the early nineteenth century.

Charles Jared Ingersoll was a Philadelphia lawyer when he had *Inchiquin* published anonymously, probably because he was planning to run for office and wanted to see if it would be positively received before acknowledging authorship. The full title of *Inchiquin* is instructive: *Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters During a Late Residence in the United States of America, Being a Fragment of a Private Correspondence Accidentally Discovered in Europe*. The book presents itself as a collection of letters to and from a Jesuit living in the United States, along with a brief preface from the editor explaining how the letters were discovered in an Antwerp bookshop and brought to the United States for publication. The preface goes to great lengths to make sure readers will understand the satire of the first four letters, which are written to *Inchiquin* by ignorant, rude and bigoted Europeans. The latter four responding letters from *Inchiquin* serve to expose European prejudices and correct its errors. These letters mostly lack the rhetorical excess of the initial four letters, and praise the United States in a cool and calculated fashion, but the paratexts in the book and the periodical ones that surround it do not match that calm tone. Within the book, the paratextual moments teach the reader to approach the book's content as part satire of European errors and part defense of Americans, seemingly aiming for an educated reader who appreciates being the kind of savvy reader who can see through the satire. In one extraordinary footnote, however, that pretense falls away and the book's most unbridled nationalism appears, a footnote surprising even in comparison with the opening paratexts.

The book's paratextual manipulation begins on the title page, where the word "Europe" appears in a bolder, larger font than "The United States of America." Perhaps

this is simply a decision that continents receive larger fonts than nations, or that lines with fewer words need larger fonts to balance the layout. Alternatively, the layout appeals to readers who are more attracted to European productions than American ones—a phenomenon the text itself laments. Of course American publishers desperately wanted their books to make the trip described in the title; it was not uncommon for an American work of fiction to be published in Philadelphia, ignored at home until it was generously reviewed in London, and then cheered in the United States only after its London publicity. This text grants itself such a transatlantic history and circulation, but through private channels—it is “private correspondence” written in the United States, privately discovered in Europe and privately returned to the United States.

A further comment on transatlantic publishing practice comes in the opening pages, when the preface admits that “It is to be regretted,” that the book was not originally published in Europe, where its facts might have helped to dispel falsehoods about the United States (iv). Publication in Europe would also have boosted circulation and appeal in the United States and in Britain, but that goes unstated until the climactic footnote to the final letter complains about Americans’ traitorous preference for European goods and manners. Hence, the opening paratexts address the problem that Europeans will not correct their own errors about the United States and that therefore the Americans must publish for themselves, even if quality cannot be guaranteed. The preface continues: “the inducement to publish these letters, arose not so much from any intrinsic merit they can boast, as from the candid and favourable view they exhibit of the United States.” Since the letters are in fact written by an American, the prefatory subterfuge here seems

designed to ward off two kinds of complaints which appeared regularly in the paper war: first, that American writing lacks finish and style, and, second, that American authors are too ready to praise their own country. By stating that these are not published for their merit, the preface negates the first, and by using the ruse of a foreigner, avoids the latter charge even as it says it is refuting the “aspersions” of “former residents and tourists.”⁴³

The preface complicates the ruse, however, by offering the conspiracy theory that these letters may have been composed by Jesuits evaluating the United States as a replacement for the now “degraded, dispersed, and diminishing...empire” they had established in Paraguay (v). The preface puts American readers in the position of deciding if “the germs of another Paraguay may be intended for our soil” (iv). Ingersoll’s decision to disguise a work of pro-American fiction as an intercepted assessment of the United States’ suitability for Jesuit subversion only makes sense if his goal was to suggest that Jesuits’ imperial designs would require that they had an accurate assessment, and that the account can therefore be trusted. The preface concludes by placing responsibility onto the readers of the letters, first by distancing itself from the origin of the letters, since “the very air of mystery in which the correspondence is shrouded, may itself be counterfeit,” and second by acknowledging that the Jesuit’s intentions cannot be known: “But this is all surmise. And of its probability, as well as of the object of the writer of these letters, whether political, commercial, or ecclesiastical; and whether in truth the whole be not a

⁴³ The phrase ‘Former residents’ might be an attack on Thomas Moore or Charles Janson, emigrants to the United States who returned to the UK and published critical memoirs about their stays. In the United States Janson failed first as a farmer and second when swindled by a land speculator, but he succeeded with a literary revenge when he returned to London and published an 1807 memoir highly critical of the United States, titled *Stranger in America*.

fabrication, their readers, we repeat, must determine for themselves” (iv). All of this subterfuge and conspiracy can only serve Ingersoll’s purpose if it establishes a contract with a reader who accepts the premise of the book: the combination of fabricated and intentionally misleading satire paired with earnest description of the United States’ merits and challenges offers the best description of America and of its European critics.

These multiple calls to the reader to fact-check and “determine for themselves” encourage skeptical reading as the text moves into *Inchiquin*’s correspondence. Thus they are prepared for the parodies of bad travelers and philosophers that follow. The preface’s insistence on active reading and the responsibility of individual readers to create public opinion, rather than books in a paper war, makes Charles Ingersoll look like an eager adherent to a republican public sphere in which the circulation of true and valuable information gradually drowns out misinformation. For most of *Inchiquin*, Ingersoll lets presentation of European (prejudiced, ignorant) opinion find its (presumably more persuasive) counterargument in *Inchiquin*’s calm and measured responses. Only in the giant footnote does Ingersoll’s more rampant nationalism come out—and along with it an address to readers that displays far less confidence that readers can be trusted to choose even the best American prose when they can just as easily get European offerings.

The satire starts with caricatures of European letter-writers. The first letter to *Inchiquin* reads like a parody of Comte de Buffon, to whom Thomas Jefferson responded in *Notes on the State of Virginia*; it comes from a Frenchman asking for information about the “zoology” of America and “whatever statistical details you may think proper to communicate” (7). The letter’s condescending phrasing should not provoke American

anger since Ingersoll makes the French correspondent look ridiculous in his eagerness for details of the “appearance, manners, and education (if they have any)...of the American females” (5). The next letter to Inchiquin comments on Napoleonic advances in Spain; its inclusion reminds Americans of their luck in being geographically separated from Europe’s internecine fighting. This is followed by a letter from a London-based relative of Inchiquin’s who raises the sensitive topic of emigration with the relative guessing that the “American federation...cannot maintain itself much longer” and will soon require “the protection of a parent state, which it has ever studied to outrage” (28). Nonetheless, the relative mentions that since he has just been freed from a ship after being briefly impressed into the navy, he and his family may yet join Inchiquin in the United States.⁴⁴ Letter IV from Inchiquin sets up the Smyrna correspondence, warning that it may be “fabulous” and contain “traveller’s prejudices,” followed by the letter of a young merchant from Smyrna detailing what befell him after becoming lost near Washington, D.C. and then swiftly encountering every ailment, misadventure, natural disaster and ill-bred American type described by decades of European travelers. That letter of introduction from Inchiquin setting up the Smyrna correspondence is crucial, since the structure of the letters otherwise suggests that letters about American experience come from the well-informed Inchiquin. Without that introduction, the Smyrna correspondence

⁴⁴ European fighting and British impressment were frequent topics in the periodicals debate about whether the United States should pursue or avoid conflict with Britain; the Chesapeake Affair was one of the flashpoints leading the American public towards support for what became the War of 1812. On June 22, 1807, the American captain commanding the *Chesapeake* frigate refused to allow the HMS *Leopard* to board outside Norfolk, Virginia. The *Leopard* attacked, and the outgunned *Chesapeake* quickly surrendered. The British commander refused the surrender but impressed three Royal Navy deserters who were American. Though their sentences were ultimately commuted and Britain offered to return the sailors, American anger made war a distinct possibility and pushed Jefferson to use the Embargo Act as a last resort short of military confrontation.

looks like lament rather than parody, but the *Quarterly Review* reads it straight (or pretends to, anyway). The point of all these letters is to set up the reader to appreciate and commend the more generous and serious analysis of Inchiquin's responses in Letters V-VIII. Letter V refutes the Smyrna letter with a more accurate view of the capitol; Letter VI deals with political figures such as Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton, and Burr; Letter VII praises (for non-partisan parity) Jeffersonian republican Joel Barlow's *Columbiad* and Federalist John Marshall's *Life of Washington*. The lengthiest and final letter (VIII), divided into 5 sections, investigates the "national characteristics" of Americans.

Letter VIII is also the site of the footnote that takes over the document for a full ten pages. That an inquisition into the "Moral results" of America's "natural and political associations" might require some footnoting should be no surprise as it was the topic most discussed in travelogues, attacks and defenses of America. Yet here Ingersoll's emotional investment in the topic leads him to abandon the fictional persona of Inchiquin. And if it is difficult to imagine this Irish Jesuit writing the prose of such a footnote, it is impossible to imagine him finding space for it on the bottom half of even the very largest sheet of stationery.

A ten-page interruption far exceeds a footnote's generally accepted function as mere gloss or clarification. An author can interrupt the body-text with a quick parenthetical aside but since readers either have to read or at least skim through the aside to reach the next bit of body-text, an aside is near obligatory reading; it is as easy to read as to skip. An endnote, in comparison, intrudes both minimally and maximally—

minimally because readers can essentially ignore it and continue with the body-text, but also maximally since readers have to exert so much effort to follow one, possibly losing their page if not the thread of the narrative. Unlike a parenthetical aside, the footnote does not break the flow of text; and, unlike an endnote, readers can follow it without physically changing a page. The footnote (like the preface to *Inchiquin* which reminds readers they must read actively to analyze the text) offers readers the choice to interrupt their experience of the narrative, but lowers the entry costs and promises easy return to the body-text.

The footnote to Letter VIII, however, does not play by these rules. For ten pages it forces the actual letter to crawl along at three lines of full-size print per page while underneath more than thirty lines of sub-script per page recount two hundred years of European misstatements. A subscript footnote like this so completely supersedes the body-text that it breaks the fantasy that this is a transcription or a copy of a handwritten letter—no one could manually append so much prose onto the bottom of the manuscript page. If paratexts can carry the force but also liminal status of the comic actor's aside (those moments when a Falstaff or Bottom lean out towards audience members to address them directly), this footnote is that actor uncontrollably ranting, quite earnestly, from center stage, and readers cannot look away without much more effort than a footnote usually requires.

In a short book devoted to the development and transformation of footnotes, Anthony Grafton writes that:

footnotes flourished most brightly in the eighteenth century, when they served to comment ironically on the narrative in the text as well as to support its veracity. In the nineteenth century, they lost the prominent role of the tragic chorus. Like so many Carmens, they found themselves reduced to laborers and confined to a vast, dirty factory. What began as art became, inevitably, routine (229).

Their eighteenth-century use originated with fiction and “spread rapidly in eighteenth-century historiography in part because they were already trendy in fiction” (121). Yet even Edward Gibbon, whose bawdy footnotes contribute to his continuing popularity, only converted his endnotes into footnotes on David Hume’s insistence (Grafton 103). Grafton shows that nineteenth-century footnotes became “routine” bibliographic and factual extensions, but they remained a popular, if contested practice until at least the 1830s in American literature. Joel Barlow’s *Columbiad* (1807) was quickly ridiculed at home and abroad partly for its long notes, and poems-with-historical-notes was still enough of a genre for John Neal ten years later to title his first book-length poem, *Battle of Niagara: A Poem without Notes*.⁴⁵ Dominick La Capra argues in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* that footnotes are anxiety-producing because of their tendency to diverge from simple verification or support. Instead, their “qualifications of assertions or arguments in the principal text, at times to the point of establishing a critically dialogic relation between text and note or even something approximating a countertext in the notes” should best be thought of as moments in which an author's desire to represent thought as dialogue or contested ideas, rather than doctrine, manifests itself materially in

⁴⁵ In the second edition, however, Neal offers the poem with a sixty page preface and elsewhere heavily footnoted his own journalistic literary criticism.

the way a reader has to switch back and forth between body and paratext, or between a confidently stated idea in the body-text that receives a “countertext” note (7).

For all the trouble footnotes can cause, this ten-page footnote starts out innocuously enough.⁴⁶ Using a fairly standard line about republicanism and extravagance, Inchiquin notes in the body-text that it is “difficult and invidious to be magnificent in a republican country” such as America, where “a plentiful mediocrity, a hearty hospitality, a steadier and less ostentatious style of living” prevails (137). Preceding Alexis de Tocqueville by twenty-some years, Ingersoll’s narrator asserts that democracy leads to mediocrity and yet enhances a national public sphere’s power. In a nation like America, that has “but one class of society” in which “every man is a citizen... the empire of opinion must be omnipotent” (145, 141-42).⁴⁷

In the body-text, Inchiquin approves of the American republican experiment in which citizen opinion leads to ideal governance. But in the footnote, this “empire of opinion,” since it is not sufficiently pro-American, infuriates Inchiquin. The footnote names Buffon and D’Aubenton, Abbe Raynal and other “philosophers and historians” who have done damage from afar by ignorantly suggesting America’s species are diminutive or its populations unable to expand indefinitely, by biased observations from

⁴⁶ As Kevin Jackson notes in *Invisible Forms* (a playful corollary to Genette’s *Paratexts*) in his chapter on the footnote, footnotes can be classified as: “The Footnote Plain and Positive,” (simple citation); “The Footnote Paranoid” (comprehensive lists of related texts an author feels compelled to cite); and “The Footnote Perilous and Provocative,” described as a Jeckyll/Hyde personality disorder in which the body-text is sober and the footnotes full of venom, gossip, and irreverence. Jackson is no paranoid: it is unclear what sort of citational or co-authorial debt he owes to Patricia Duncker, a novelist to whom he attributes this classification scheme and quotes regularly but does not cite formally (153-54).

⁴⁷ Ingersoll is probably thinking of Benjamin Franklin’s “Information to Those Who Would Remove to America,” in which Franklin says that “The truth is, that tho’ there are in that Country few People so miserable as the Poor of Europe, there are also very few that in Europe would be called rich: it is rather a general happy Mediocrity that prevails.”

“former residents” like Thomas Moore, and the misconceptions of the “herd” of European tourists. Inchiquin’s attack repeats the responses which have been circulating since Jefferson and which will continue—occasionally citing the *Inchiquin* letters—well into the late nineteenth century.

The footnote, then, is startling only in its (relative) compact summation; Robert Walsh’s *Appeal* ran to seven hundred pages when he released it a decade later. The history lesson and rant, however, is only the tame first half of the footnote. Having attacked the “mongrel abbés” who write the travel narratives and the formerly popular-in-America poet Thomas Moore as a “slave of prejudice,” Ingersoll turns his attention to that group of Americans, “who, awed by perpetual comparisons with the superior refinement, power, intelligence, and happiness of Europe, have been rebuked into concessions of their own inferiority” (fn 143). Begging Americans to support American literature and culture and to avoid obeisance to the “courtly muse of Europe” was certainly not original to Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1835 (70). Even as early as 1810 it was hardly innovative, but Ingersoll goes a step further than most in chastising these Americans who are:

guilty of the most fatal species of treason: not that which boldly devotes a country to stratagem, blood and destruction but that more insidious and more certain hostility, which flows in unseen perennial channels, traducing, betraying and assassinating. Of such as these there can be, I trust, but few in this happy country.—Wretches, who have no God, household, or supreme—the creeping things of the earth, who feed on the offals of foreigners—who lick the foot that

tramples on them—who are despised by all others, even those they worship, and must despise themselves (fn 145).

After the 1807 Chesapeake incident and Jefferson's Embargo Act, everyone knew that war with Britain was again possible. While it took five years for Congress to declare war, invoking the idea of treason, betrayal and self-hatred in 1810 indicates the linkage in Ingersoll's mind between nationalism and cultural preferences. The footnote further blames wealthy Americans who go abroad and display "tameness and subserviency they themselves are not aware of" for making Europeans think these Americans are "types of the nation," and that therefore all of America lacks "original national genius and character" (fn 143).

If recent critical approaches to the period's literary nationalism explore this phenomenon in terms of post-colonial relations, Ingersoll and his peers, especially in the paratexts of the period, alert us to their own self-awareness about how political change did not instantly realign cultural alliances: Ingersoll says that many Americans still had that "colonial spirit which causes incessant struggles between an instinctive love of country and an habitual veneration for what is European" (fn 143).⁴⁸ Ingersoll then makes an odd choice to conclude his footnote. Directly following the crescendoed passage in which he says that American "wretches" who prefer foreign literature are godless, self-hating, offal-eating snakes, Ingersoll offers a complete verse of Walter Scott's 1805 poem

⁴⁸ Again, Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" is a pertinent example of one side of this sentiment, in which the comfort and ease to be found in continuity even in the face of revolutionary upheaval and violence outweigh the desire to enact Thomas Paine's call to "begin the world over again." Rip Van Winkle returns from his long nap to discover that his local tavern, the King George has become the GENERAL WASHINGTON but retained the old sign showing King George's "ruby face" (779).

Lay of the Last Minstrel. Turning to a foreign poet after using such exceptionally harsh terms to lambaste Americans at first seems if not hypocritical than just rhetorically unwise. How it functions with regard to this new set of transatlantic readers, however, becomes a little clearer in relation to the stanzas quoted.

The patriotic lines from Scott's poem were already adored by Britons and Americans alike because they were general enough to issue from anyone's lips: "Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, / Who never to himself hath said / This is my own, my native land!" Since these particular stanzas say nothing about Britain, the verses actually fit easily alongside Inchiquin's call to Americans to celebrate their own "native land." After all the nationalist vitriol and hyperventilation and gnashing of teeth, Ingersoll turns to Scott to demonstrate that provincialism is not the goal and that quoting select passages from a good foreign poet is not the same thing as eating their offal. With this interpretation, the quotation reads as a challenge; the American reader who might react so strongly, thinking "why tell us to avoid European culture and then quote from it?" is missing the point. For Ingersoll, what is more important than a grow-your-own literary nationalism is reaching awareness of how that "habitual veneration" for foreign productions can help and hinder the United States. In the phrase "tameless and subserviency they themselves are not aware of," the real venom is reserved for the lack of self-awareness, for a lack of what de Tocqueville calls "self-interest rightly understood" (129).

Reaching that conception of self-interest which best supports the moral and civic life of the citizen and the polity in general was a core republican sentiment but also one

the poem's lines endorse. A citizen who does not love his country would be unhappy, Scott says, because "despite those titles, power and pelf, / The Wretch, concentr'd all in self" will "forfeit fair renown." Republican ideology, though uncomfortable with some forms of contemporary nationalism, still endorses love of "native land," and here the Tory Scott's poem can be used to bolster a republican ideology that views desires such as luxury, genius and individual fame—of being too "concentred all in self"—as a danger to civic virtue. Scott's growing popularity in the United States did not require him to be a particular friend of the young nation or of republicanism.⁴⁹ Indeed, in 1810, the same year that Ingersoll was quoting his poem in *Inchiquin*, (and probably mulling the decision to run for office as a republican candidate in 1811), Scott was helping to found the Tory *Quarterly Review* that would four years later print the "odious" 1814 review of *Inchiquin*, which would inspire Timothy Dwight and James Kirke Paulding, the *North American Review* and *Port-Folio* to respond.⁵⁰ If Scott's poem failed to bring out the nationalists on either side of the Atlantic, the journal he nurtured did the trick.

While some authors in this period tried to appeal to an emerging transatlantic reading community, their appeals had to be issued using discussions of the day—discussions about politics, nations and contemporary literature. In the passage above, Ingersoll embraces the strand of republican ideology over the vituperative nationalism of

⁴⁹ Scott's American popularity exploded with the *Waverley* novels, but his 1805 *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was also very popular; indeed, James Kirke Paulding wrote a lengthy parody, *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle* that was well received in both the US and UK, where it was reprinted. Joe Rezek's excellent work in his dissertation and especially in recent conference papers traces the success of this particular verse of Scott's across American genres from 1820s epigraphs to President Jackson's inauguration.

⁵⁰ British and American political parties do not perfectly map onto each other in this period, but the American Federalists generally agreed more with the values and ideas of the conservative Tory party in Britain while British Whigs were much more likely to praise the United States' republican experiment and to approve more of its Republican party.

Americans who preferred foreign goods and literature, since they hoped intellectuals would focus on civic participation rather than seek personal, individual glory as authors representing the nation. Michael Warner has argued persuasively that Fisher Ames' fear of a national literature in his essay "American Literature" works along these lines, advocating a republic of letters centering on classical education and celebrating the best of literature across the ages and locations rather than local, contemporary productions (*Letters of the Republic* 142-49). The reception of *Inchiquin* demonstrates, however, that the periodicals and book marketplace hinges on very personal relationships even when participants are supposedly responding to questions of the nation.

Transatlantic Volleys

John McCloskey argues that after American periodicals like the *Analectic* and *The Portico* celebrated American naval victories in the War of 1812, they decided to describe Anglo-American literary relations as another form of combat—one Americans could win provided patriotic Americans agreed to support their own writers and periodicals. Against a backdrop of the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic wars, it was clear that this bloodless exchange was not an international conflict and that its participants did not seek the destruction or surrender of the other players. Instead, even as the barbs and quibbles in books and periodicals crossed borders, they were aimed at domestic readers. The volleys they traded on the subject of national literature and especially their choices in how to address readers curious about the topic help explain how changing print culture and reading habits were transforming the status of reading, writing, and the transatlantic book trade. On the American side, the 1820s paper war participants did include aggressive

national defenders attacking uncivilized habits or flaws of the foreigner's countrymen as well as the sighing, lamenting writers noting that the country needs to be so candid with itself to advance and improve. There were also, however, writers and readers determined to keep an aloof curiosity about such national debates without becoming too involved, and this is the group periodical editors sought with their reader-address experiments.

Periodicals in the early nineteenth century sought and needed transatlantic readers. With trade between the United States and Britain booming, bodies, goods and books crossed the ocean regularly. Some of the authors—Cobbett, Moore, Irving and Neal—lived for a time on both shores, but Americans purchased and reprinted so many British books that in the United States, it was nearly impossible to think of print culture, production and trade as anything but transatlantic. Some literary nationalism on both sides approached protectionism or isolationism, with British authors scoffing at uncouth and unsophisticated American productions and Americans condemning polished European works as uselessly delicate and decadent, but others recognized that with the increased ease of transport, reading communities need not and did not obey national borders. These readers are transatlantic because they are not creating an international community made of distinct individual national readers as much as they are experimenting with ways to imagine and cultivate a kind of citizenship in which nationality is only a small part of the individual's identity. In particular, the paratextual practices in this series of transatlantic volleys between British and American periodicals and books demonstrate that the paper war is about a version of reader-citizenship that extends beyond or de-emphasizes nationality.

To suggest that the transatlantic discussion of literary nationalism in this period was spurred by authorial anxiety over changing reader habits requires evaluating print culture through the notion of Jürgen Habermas' public sphere. Habermas suggests that the crucial innovation in the print public sphere is its non-temporal and non-spatial quality. *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* develops the theory of a public sphere formed in the eighteenth-century coffeehouse because for Habermas, the public sphere was ideally (if never quite in practice) a site of cultural participation rather than one-way consumption. Though one went to the coffeehouse to consume coffee and read the papers, it was also a site to discuss texts with peers and to feed letters into the boxes provided by the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (42). While Habermas considers the coffeehouse integral to the public sphere's development, the public sphere is distinct from other kinds of assembly in public squares or meeting halls. Michael McKeon says that what is particularly "new" about the eighteenth-century "public sphere is that it is a virtual space, a discursive realm of imagined collectivity" (275-76). Though the journals often discussed very topical matters, Habermas notes that they omitted dates from reader submissions in order to "emphasize the trans-temporal continuity" of the discussion. Unlike the physical spaces or actual conversations in the coffeehouses, Habermas highlights the importance of a public sphere structured on circulation rather than confrontation, and on extended, trans-temporal discussion rather than time-sensitive debate. Like paratexts, then, the public sphere acts as a virtual, liminal state, mediating between public and private, because its participants were both speakers at the coffeehouse (where discussion about literature and politics occurred) and the often anonymous

contributors of letters to the editors of the journals debated at the coffeehouses. In this sense, the authors, editors and readers of the journals in the early nineteenth century were still negotiating how to communicate and interact in this trans-temporal, virtual space—and increased transatlantic shipping made the virtual, non-coffeehouse interaction all the more evident.

Habermas views “consumption” as the failed, degenerate form of participation in the pure public sphere. In the ideal public sphere participants actively contribute to the format, discourse, and content of public discussion. In the failed form, individuals join groups, rather than the public sphere, passively accepting and consuming the products of writers. A similar debate keeps the paper war going, as its participants accuse opponents of bad consumption and insincere participation and as they implore readers alternately to ignore and to fight misrepresentations. Meanwhile, the authors and editors use the periodicals to debate how important it is to involve readers as contributors to the literary as well as the financial health of the magazines. Sometimes they use volume prefaces or “Editor’s Notes” or “Notes to Contributors” sections, but sometimes a review article will also veer into this meta-discussion about periodicals production. *Blackwood’s* provides an apt case study of these issues, since the magazine was produced not by reader contributions but by a core group of writers.⁵¹ *Blackwood’s* bet correctly that a set of readers would not only be quite content as passive consumers but would also enjoy the mockery of contributory culture. Consider their mockery of over-eager contributors in the

⁵¹ Bibliographers who have studied their logbooks suggest that *Blackwood’s* relied on a small group of writers to produce almost all content. See: Alan Lang Strout, *A Bibliography of Articles in Blackwood’s Magazine, Volumes I Through XVIII, 1817-1825*

1821 July number in which Christopher North, the magazine's fictional editor offers a "FEW WORDS TO THAT IMMENSE BODY OF MANKIND WHICH FORMS THE MASS OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS." North admits that unanswered correspondence has now "grown into the size of a stack of chimneys," and while certainly not apologizing for tardy or absent replies, hopes "the hams, and other such affairs, which we sent you, came safe, and proved acceptable. Our worthy friend Oman executed a prodigious order for us, at the house of those excellent persons....whom we recommend as very fair fellows, and our constant readers" (July, 1821, 465).

Since no one sends ham in July, and especially not the fictional editors of financially strapped literary journals, the magazine's "constant" as well as its casual readers must have known that no one was eating *Blackwood's* ham. In the August number *Blackwood's* continued the joke by printing a lengthy letter back to Christopher North, citing the July article, and which is supposedly written by that committee of fourteen aspiring contributors that I mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter. These fourteen, "by an indescribable sort of freemasonry" discover that each of them has offered a piece to *Blackwood's* but has received no confirmation from the magazine about the likelihood of publication (August, 1821, p. 116). While recovering at the beach spa, they take responsibility for their own cures by evaluating each other's contributions, and resubmit the ones they agree most merit inclusion in *Blackwood's*, each equitably signing the letter in a circle at the bottom so that no signature would appear first or last. This fictional note to the fictional editor then gets a footnote in which *Blackwood's* apologizes that its printer cannot reproduce the circle in linear text and therefore the order of the list

of names should not be misread as implying hierarchy amongst the contributors. Here *Blackwood's* draws attention to the pettiness and mental instability of writers who need spa treatment while waiting to hear back from an editor, but the real mockery is aimed at the self-importance and general misconception about how *Blackwood's* commissioned and produced the bulk of its monthly offerings. Again the tone is satiric and knowing, and again makes clear that *Blackwood's* was betting not only that readers were tuned in to a discussion about periodical participation and constraints (both in terms of lacking enough pages for fourteen amateur texts or typographic flexibility to reproduce a circle of signatures) but that they would enjoy a condescending send-up of fourteen of its pathetic (if clearly fictional) members.

Periodicals exemplify the reader-relations experimentation and opportunities explored by nineteenth-century authors and editors in all kinds of paratexts, but periodicals are not usually classified as paratext. Genette's discussion of the epitextual periodical reviews or interviews that comment on a particular body-text does not acknowledge that in this period, periodical culture and book culture were so tightly interconnected that they borrow freely from one another and often expect readers to be familiar with both cultures. I am arguing that the two cultures of print were so enmeshed that periodicals function like paratexts for the texts they excerpt, summarize and critique, but also that broader consciousness about what books were already being discussed in periodical culture meant that periodical reviews could obliquely refer to other books and reviews without making their intervention explicit. A book in the early nineteenth century's transatlantic market is mediated to the reader not only in its own paratextual

material such as the peri- and epi-texts listed above, but also in the metatextual reviews and comments it creates in the periodicals and the way that periodical culture permeates the rest of literary culture; *Inchiquin*, for instance, sparks a British periodical review which in turn inspires two American book-length responses. Genette here limits “the elements in the public and private history of the book,” to texts directly linked to the author or publisher, but such a narrow definition does not account for the tight interlocking (and generative) interaction of books and periodicals in the early nineteenth century. This paper war, I argue, serves as a paratext to the period’s literature because that literature so frequently responds to the periodicals. While prefaces, footnotes, and frontispieces are clearly peritexts because they offer something outside but still intimately, physically linked to the texts they appear beside, the era’s periodicals serve as epitextual paratext to the books and ideas they discuss because the texts are so aware of and responsive to the periodicals—even when an ocean rather than merely a few pages separates the text from a paratext.

While critics including Marilyn Butler have recently returned to periodicals as important literary documents in their own right, Mark Louis Parker emphasizes that writers in the moment were considerably more sure of periodicals’ dominance and importance.⁵² The literary magazine, Parker says, was “the preeminent literary form of the 1820s and 1830s in Britain,” yet critical approaches have not yet adequately categorized the genre’s form or grappled with what its preeminence meant for the literary

⁵² Marilyn Butler’s “Culture’s Medium: The Role of the Review” emphasizes the centrality of periodicals in Romantic and especially post-Romantic Britain (120). Parker’s book-length treatment expands on her work with a useful description of methodology as well (143).

culture. Instead, critics have relied on two problematic approaches—one author-centric and the other discourse-centric, neither of which accurately represent the genre since “the form of the magazine itself undermines either an exclusively author-centred or an exclusively poststructural approach” (4).

Parker explains his methodology by citing pieces written by contributors to 1820s quarterlies and monthlies. Both James Mill and William Hazlitt made similar observations about the problem of reviewing peer periodicals, but took very different approaches to their analysis, with Mill focused on the periodical’s overall tone and perspective and Hazlitt more interested in individual author contributions. Parker himself narrows his study to “the run—as opposed to the entire periodical, as Mill proposes, and the author, as Hazlitt would have it—as the basic unit of study” (11). By “run” he means different things for different magazines—a period of the *London* defined by John Scott’s editorial “cultural program” or *Blackwood’s* “collaborative series “Noctes Ambrosianae.” Parker emphasizes that a periodical’s often drastic changes over a decade or even a five-year span make studying its entirety as discourse too reductive to be useful. The prevalence of anonymous and pseudonymous compositions combined with aggressive editing practices leaves an author-centric analysis “vulnerable to the deconstruction of agency inherent in contributions by multiple hands,” while a discourse-centric approach fails because “if we consider periodicals as “discourse,” we run afoul of the intentionality of this consciously anonymous production” (5).⁵³ Studying a series of articles, a

⁵³ Judith Yaross Lee views this as a divide between literary historians and periodicals scholars; “whereas literary historians tend to focus on periodicals as a midwife to literary production, periodicals scholars examine the published periodical as the result of a collaboration among editors, contributors,

particular editor's reign, or the full run of feature's regular appearance aims for an "experience-near" recounting of periodical culture (16).

Parker's is an effective approach for analyzing individual experiments by periodicals, but it is imperfect for the paper war or for thinking about the back and forth of most paratextual subjects and objects. Unlike the guarantee that a quarterly or monthly magazine will appear four or twelve times a year, or that favorite contributors or features will appear in consecutive issues, this paper war does not unfold with any constancy or regularity. Instead it splutters and flares depending on what is being published, the level of vitriol in the reviews and responses, and contemporaneous transatlantic political developments. Therefore it makes sense to focus on specific moments and texts and to find a way to study the flare-ups. Instead of the "run," then, I am interested here in the "volley" as a unit of study and as a unit participants themselves could identify—since they often acknowledged, recounted or even reprinted major sections of past articles to bring readers up to the present.

The volley is a useful metaphor here for its simultaneous evocation of racket sport and naval cannonade. At times the exchange looks like a tennis match played by rival periodicals and spectated by polite transatlantic readers: Wimbledon, with its mostly civil matches but the occasional frisson of a young John McEnroe pouting on center court. At other times, the language and the attacks turn bellicose and the national antagonism seems quite real. These volleys, however, were not always immediately transatlantic. A new work of fiction, statistical annal or travel memoir might receive limited criticism on

readers, and other stakeholders of a particular time and place." (198)

either side of the Atlantic until finally a review's nastiness or tangential topics sparks a spirited response, which in turn sparks fiery and then dispassionate replies until finally enough months have passed, or another text or topic replaces it. At this point, the volley ends after a bit more transatlantic squabbling over who won the exchange. Additionally, since the participants could not quite decide if they were playing tennis on a transatlantic lawn or firing forty-four pounders across contested international waters, the volley's ambiguousness as a term matches the writers' own ambivalence about what the exchanges were supposed to achieve.⁵⁴

Studying a volley instead of recurring themes makes it possible to close-read shifts in critical reception of texts, but that does not mean that this paper war did not have favorite subjects. A few topics surface regularly enough to leave the impression that the paper war was caused by lousy tavern beds, stalled steamboats, and the incompatibility of slavery and republicanism. Critics who focus on the favorite topics of paper war participants conclude that American land speculators needed positive reviews to lure potential emigrants, that British Whigs and republican sympathizers worried that American slavery threatened their hopes, or that both nations were inexpertly negotiating their half of a new post-colonial relationship. Attention to these economic, political, and post-colonial conditions often neglects the specificity of the individual exchanges. Focusing on the small skirmishes, maneuvers and volleys around texts reveals just how

⁵⁴ David Waldstreicher describes "ambivalence – the denial of the political that legitimates creative political practice" as "one of the contributions of the founding fathers, some of whom would have preferred that politics remain their more or less exclusive domain." While literary output is not Waldstreicher's focus, his argument equally applies to American literature in this period, as authors worked to combine what he sees as the "local and the national, the politicized and the consensual" (14).

interconnected the American and British authors were in this time.⁵⁵ Periodicals, like today's Twitter-sphere, assumed great familiarity with hyper-contemporary issues and exhibited intense introspection about their own practice, so debate about a single text shifted as discourse built around it. Periodicals adjusted reporting for what they knew their readers were already watching; how they manipulated that pre-existing interest is the real story here.

Parker writes that if culture had once been a descriptor of process (acculturation through learning) it was in the Romantic period becoming “in and through the agency of the magazine, a thing in itself. Hence the task in the study of literary magazines is to investigate both the place of the magazine in culture and the place of culture within the magazine” (11). In the paper war, the magazine was also the site to discuss the role of the reader *of* the magazine and *in* the magazine. With the paper war, the essays and articles were often so self-reflective that one can say that the magazines themselves took on the task of studying the interaction and interrelation of culture and the magazine. Bloodless, sporadic, inconclusive, the paper war did not resolve anything about literature or nationalism, but it is an ideal locus for assessing how the writers in the period viewed literature's role in a national and international context. Some writers saw literary nationalism as a means of boosting patriotism while others thought it dangerously inflamed jingoism. Some thought the cause and effect was reversed; only patriotism could boost appreciation and sales of native works. Another group, however, saw in this

⁵⁵ As discussed later, James Kirke Paulding's anti-federalist nationalism would make him eager to respond to the *Quarterly Review*, but close attention to the *Quarterly* makes a personal motive more likely; the same issue that attacked *Inchiquin* brilliantly dismissed a recent English edition of Paulding's own long poem, *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle*.

transatlantic market an opportunity to court readers whose support for their nation's literature was not about national pride but rather a hope for an international republic of letters.

Inchiquin's Reception

In appealing to transatlantic readership, authors did not escape the regional, national and ideological labels, and their peers regularly called them on it. When the Boston-based Federalist *North American Review* attacked a Scottish Whig paper like the *Edinburgh Review* regarding an article on slavery, what was their primary intent? To make Bostonians angry at the Scots or Baltimore residents? To align them with Londoners? To rally Americans against Britons? To demonstrate subtle differences between New England Federalist opposition to slavery and British Whig abolitionists? Assessing Ingersoll's attachments is also complicated; Herbert Eldridge says Ingersoll aimed for non-partisanship throughout *Inchiquin*, praising two republican and two federalist presidents as well as the radical republican poet Joel Barlow for his *Columbiad* and the federalist historian Marshall for his book on George Washington (51). But Ingersoll was not above using his book to advance his own political career, since he claimed authorship of it once it met approval and then used its success to bolster his candidacy as a democrat/republican running for House of Representatives.

The importance of national politics in *Inchiquin* and the paper war in general becomes clearer through attention to its reception. Before the *Quarterly* got to it in 1814, in 1810 the Philadelphia *Port-Folio* and the New York *Cynick* gave *Inchiquin* its initial limited critical reception in the United States. The Philadelphia *Port-Folio* was first,

writing a two-part review acknowledging the book's moderate achievement and encouraging American readers to purchase it. The *Port-Folio* tempers this praise by stating that their goal is less to praise the current book than to encourage the anonymous author to write something "superior" in the future, echoing the lines in *Inchiquin's* preface about publishing the letters "not so much from any intrinsic merit they can boast, as from the candid and favourable view they exhibit of the United States" (iv). Typically cautious in its reviews of an American work, this American periodical recommends a text to readers without actually commending it.⁵⁶

Only one additional periodical reviewed *Inchiquin* between 1810 and 1814, and *The Cynick's* review is at once more pointed and more suggestive. Declaring its determination to ignore the "very ardent and scolding" footnote in *Inchiquin* which had attacked periodical journalism for having become "mere base organs of faction, ribaldry and sedition" and conducted with "a single eye to circulation, sale and profit," *The Cynick* nonetheless feels it must respond to *Inchiquin* or risk confirming that American periodicals fail to review (or even to read carefully) native works (132). Yet again demonstrating the interdependence or symbiosis even of formats attacking each other,

⁵⁶ The first two reviews assume that the author is American even before Ingersoll, between April and May of 1811, revealed that he was the author. The *Port-Folio* review alerts readers to the satire offered in the early letters and assures them that in the later letters (to be reviewed in successive numbers) "the writer steps forth, the gallant and masculine defender of our country" (*Port-Folio* April 1811, 318). On the final page the author promises the third installment, since the last two letters "relate to matters in which our national reputation is vitally concerned," and to comment on its faults, too, but that installment was never published. The body-text of the *Port-Folio* May article stated that "Inchiquin does not come forth clothed in the habiliments of party," but the revelation that it was written by the outspoken republican Ingersoll caused them add a footnote stating that Installment 2 (including the line about the book's non-partisanship) had been written before it was known that Ingersoll was the author. That revelation may have been enough to make the Federalist *Port-Folio* decide the writer they had previously praised for non-partisanship was actually a republican hack, and to cause the canceling of the third installment.

Ingersoll convinced a periodical to advertise his work by berating American periodicals in general for being too partisan or too Anglophile to praise American productions.

Between 1810 and 1814, *Inchiquin* disappeared from literary conversation.

Because positive or negative reviews by British periodicals were nearly always reprinted in American periodicals, it is likely that until 1814, *The Cynick* and *The Port-Folio* provided *Inchiquin* with its only publicity, since *Inchiquin* itself was not republished.⁵⁷

Perhaps it disappeared because, as Herbert Eldridge argues, the period of 1810-1814 was one of relative calm regarding transatlantic literary affairs. Eldridge argues that during these years, American periodicals tried to believe in a friendly international republic of letters even as or perhaps despite the war between the two nations. American periodicals therefore did not call attention to or refute British periodical criticism during this period. Instead, despite a few ungenerous articles about the United States printed in both journals, the *Port-Folio* praised both the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* and lamented that the current war was putting a “second Atlantic” between the two nations. Eldridge writes that it was the 1814 “Inchiquin Episode” that convinced Americans that the “confraternity of letters” had expired (67). If the *Quarterly* could write such attacks, then the Americans had to respond, and therefore Eldridge (and Clark) see this as the episode that starts the paper war. Actually, however, the *Quarterly* makes the argument

⁵⁷ Eldridge asserts that aside from the *Port-Folio* reviews, *Inchiquin* disappeared from the press until the *Quarterly Review* returned to it in 1814. Curious about how much the Proquest APS database might add to his research, I did my own keyword searches and found only the one additional piece in *The Cynick* (53). Joseph Eaton presented a very good paper titled, “‘Every Free-Woman in this Country is a Voter’: New Jersey Female Suffrage in the Anglo-American Paper War” in which he offered a careful reading of *Inchiquin*’s reception. The paper was delivered at the April, 2011 Omohundro Institute conference, “Warring for America.”

that it is the British who have held their tongues to protect the endangered literary fraternity until 1814:

a notion had been fondly entertained, that between England and America there was a certain sympathy of taste and feeling which formed them, above all nations of the earth, for an intimate union of councils and affections with each other. No sacrifice therefore was thought to be too great, no deference too humble on the part of this country, for the purpose of keeping well with America....America was a young nation, therefore she must be humoured. She was wayward, therefore she must be soothed....The poor old mother went on doting and drivelling for a long time, on the score of natural affection, and kindred habits, and similitude of language and so forth; until in the hour of her trial and utmost need, the sentiments of her hopeful child towards her were made manifested in a way not to be mistaken (“Art. XI, Inchiquen’s Favourable View of the United States” 533).

Peter Coviello notes in his article, “Agonizing Affection,” that leading up to the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson’s early drafts of the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* describe America as the aggrieved child of an abusive English mother. A generation later, the *Quarterly Review* sees England as the ‘doting mother’ of a child that has become an incorrigible and ungrateful daughter, a daughter who in Britain’s hour of “utmost need” chose to back her enemy, France. In terms of military might and cultural capital, there is no question that America had only the power of a child and the frustration of a teenager who must pass a driving test before asserting the freedom he is sure he deserves. This is the asymmetry of the transatlantic relation that

I return to throughout this dissertation, and as I have mentioned in the introduction, I think the asymmetry of the transatlantic power relation is part of the reason that the asymmetry of paratextual reply appeals to American authors.

Although periodicals often responded quickly to other periodicals during paper war volleys, books remain targets long after publication, partially because they allowed wider-ranging review articles. In this instance, the *Quarterly* makes clear immediately that they are reviewing *Inchiquin* because it offers the opportunity to “inquire a little into the character of the people whom its government are thus inflaming into unextinguishable hatred against us, and whom we are so desirous of ‘conciliating.’” (494). Though the review strays far from *Inchiquin* and literature, its criticism of the text itself is accurate enough that subsequent American responses do not question it. The *Quarterly Review* is unimpressed with the “stale conceit...resorted to in the preface,” since the “Unknown Foreigner” quickly revealed himself as the author, and generously bestows advice on that author: “in passing, we would just hint to [the author], that his summary mode of ‘refuting the aspersions cast upon the country by former residents and tourists,’ in a single note... is no refutation at all” (496). The review also makes the accusation that the War of 1812 is not about national defense, naval impressment or trade negotiations: “the truth is not to be disguised. This war is on the part of America *a war of conquest*” (536). The review certainly does go out of its way to be nasty. In its concluding paragraph, having moved well beyond *Inchiquin*, the article assures Britons that the government ought to negotiate a peace with the United States, since Britain has signed treaties with tyrants before, and the United States will be “easier to bind” than Napoleon. Therefore:

we should strike a treaty, for what is it to the question of peace or war that the manners of the Americans are not exactly congenial with our own? That *bundling** prevails among them within doors, *gouging*, without...that they give high prices for the scalps of their Indian neighbours provided that ‘both’ ears are hanging to them, and that they have been taken ‘before the 15th of June?’ (539)⁵⁸

Bundling, gouging, and encouraging Indians to slaughter each other for cash were commonly referenced in attacks against the Americans, but by linking their basest actions to state diplomacy the *Quarterly* hits the Americans where they were most sensitive. As a Tory, government supported paper, they may have benefited from being nationalist and nasty, but the paper may also have worried about a shift towards transatlantic readership that was less likely to benefit the cautiously and explicitly conservative Tory paper.

No American paper seems to have reviewed or even reprinted portions of the *Quarterly Review* piece until James Kirke Paulding wrote *The United States and England*—a book equal in length not only to the *Quarterly Review* piece but nearly to Ingersoll’s original document. Paulding’s book makes clear the centrality of periodicals to the era’s literary culture; books provided the inspiration or starting-point for periodical reviews and essays, and periodical reviews provided the same function for books. Like the *Quarterly Review* piece, Paulding’s book quickly moves beyond the *Quarterly Review* and *Inchiquin*. He replies less to the *Quarterly Review* than to Ingersoll’s fictional Clanrickard, *Inchiquin*’s London-based brother, who had wondered in *Inchiquin* how

⁵⁸ The asterisk leads readers to a footnote that cites the English editor’s notes on James Kirke Paulding’s *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle*. Paulding’s decision to respond to the *Quarterly Review* piece was likely inspired by this (admittedly critical) reference to his work.

much longer the United States would manage to maintain its fragile union. Paulding answers that it is

the dissolution of our great national compact, which alone, of all the events to be reasonably anticipated, can destroy the fairest prospect that ever dawned upon the infancy of a state. It is believed that the people of America know and feel this momentous truth, and that it will be long, very long, before the intrigues of disappointed ambition, baffled in its attempts at distinction in the national government, will be able to succeed in acquiring a petty and ignominious consequence, founded on the destruction of our bond of union. (104-5)

Paulding's generous nationalism was probably not his primary motivation; the same 1814 number of the *Quarterly Review* which attacks *Inchiquin* also had few but choice words for Paulding's book-length poem *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle*: "It may be safely prognosticated that America will in time produce poets, painters, and musicians.—But we must attend to the work before us" (Article VIII, 463). And in their review of *Inchiquin*, the *Quarterly Review* quotes from its own review of the English edition of Paulding's poem. This demonstrates that even during a war which limited availability of American literature in Britain, the *Quarterly* still paid close attention to American works.

The next salvo came from Timothy Dwight, who claimed not even to have read *Inchiquin* or Paulding's reply while drafting his *Remarks on the Review of Inchiquin's Letters*. He replied, he claimed, because Britain and the United States were "naturally friends" and should remain so unless Britons insisted on writing such nasty attacks (preface, unnumbered). Dwight considers the stakes not merely literary; if Britain

continues their disrespectful attitude, the American government's love affair with France will be unnecessarily continued—and in 1815—when Napoleon has just been defeated, this is a serious matter for Britons and Federalist Americans. Unlike Paulding, Dwight uses the reply to make the partisan Federalist point that the War of 1812 was “unnatural, impolitic on our part, causeless, and unjust” and essentially agrees with the *Quarterly Review* that it was a war not over naval impressment but conquest (15). Dwight believes most Americans rejoiced that Britain saved the world from “the jaws of the *Corsican Cyclop*....The human race are your debtors: and to you, under God, it is owing in a great measure, that the inhabitants of this country are in possession of their own liberty and independence” (159-163).

Like Ingersoll, Dwight believes nothing the British can say about the United States is half as bad as the American propensity to believe it: “Amid all the base reflections, cast upon the people of the United States, for their destitution of understanding, and worth, in these dirty-minded effusions of spite and ribaldry, there is not one, half so humiliating, as the fact, *that the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews are republished in this country*” (159 emphasis original). And he walks a thin line between party politics and an international republic of letters, arguing that the Federalists are “continually reproached by the Democrats for being friends to *Great Britain*. The charge is false in the sense, in which it is alleged: in a higher and more honourable sense it is true,” and therefore the British should ask themselves: “what will you gain by establishing a firm and enduring hostility between the people of *Great Britain* and the people of the United States,” since “*we are the best customers, which you have or which*

you can have” (167).

After two American books, one written by a republican appealing to Americans to unite nationally to defend themselves against such British periodical attacks, and the other a Federalist author focused more on reminding the British that the military war just concluded did not have uniform American support but that this unnecessary paper war will, the American periodicals themselves finally respond. Neither the *North American Review* nor the *Port-Folio* were especially fond of either Dwight’s or Paulding’s responses; they used the occasion of the American book responses to register their own anger with the *Quarterly Review*. The *North American Review* writes that “In the whole history of literature, it will be difficult to produce a more disgraceful paper, than the one, which this pamphlet was written to answer,” and describes the ludicrousness of Dwight’s nearly two-hundred page book responding to a forty page article as “supererogatory chastisement—it is answering a pop-gun with a blunderbuss.”⁵⁹

The *Port-Folio*, meanwhile, argued that the *Quarterly Review* piece was “so odious in its character, that had it passed between individuals accessible to each other, blood perhaps, would alone have atoned for the insult.” Ignoring such an affront “without a call for satisfaction under some form,” the *Port-Folio* says, “would have been a mark of insensibility or cowardice.”⁶⁰ This is the language of the era’s duel challenges, but in this transatlantic paper war, no one dueled and no one died. Would it have provoked a duel between more proximate men? Perhaps. In 1821, the London-based *New Monthly* noted that their readers might not have realized that instead of the usual individual vanity

⁵⁹ (*North American Review*, May 1815 “The United States and England,” 61-65)

⁶⁰ *Port-Folio* Jan 1815,” (“Review: The United States and England” 103)

customarily displayed by authors, a “race of paper-warriors of Boston and Philadelphia, magnanimously dismissing all consciousness of themselves, are displaying a more expanded fretfulness, as assertors of their country’s reputation.”⁶¹ They still write with the “blind and morbid zeal, and all the petty punctilious susceptibility of affront” authors usually use to defend their own production, but now they are starting an international discussion about the role of national literatures. And so, on a transatlantic lawn, at a remove of five thousand miles instead of fifty paces, the popguns, blunderbusses and forty-four pound execrations killed no one and ended no debates, but they did create a transatlantic literary culture for a transatlantic public. These volleys offer extreme examples of temporally and geographically stretched paratextual exchanges. At the micro-level, long footnotes take readers away from body-texts, but allow readers easy return to focus on the body-text. By thinking of periodical reviews as paratexts to the body-text of the discourse they comment on, however, we see that editors of periodicals (and eventually, the authors of books reacting to those periodicals) determined that readers were willing to make readerly journeys back and forth across months and years and an ocean. These transatlantic paper warriors were paratextualists, too, I am arguing, because in regions we recognize as paratexts (in footnotes and editorial asides) and sometimes in the books or periodicals that comment on pre-existing body-texts, they focused on reader self-awareness. They simultaneously promoted and debated the role of periodicals in shifting national literary and political opinion. They fluctuated between confidence that readers would recognize and support the best literature and feared that the

⁶¹ *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, April 1821 (“On the Complaints in America against the British Press” 145)

very magazine culture that disseminated literature even further was also diluting reader discernment, and they wrote as paratextualists to maintain and improve that literary culture. By blurring the distinction between periodical and book discourse, they made it necessary to think of the era's periodicals as examples of the paratextual back and forth.

Chapter Three: Neal

John Neal, Novelist as Journal Editor

OR:

How to Write a Blackwood Article in Five ~~Easy Steps~~ Novels

The single famous line to survive the transatlantic paper war was Sydney Smith's question, "who reads an American book?" One American author, John Neal, claimed that constantly hearing the "insolent question of a Scotch Reviewer, repeated on every side of me by native Americans" inspired him to travel to London to refute the question (*Rachel Dyer* ix). The transatlantic paper war, at least for Neal, presented opportunity: he would travel, he would write, he would convince transatlantic readers that Americans could produce worthy magazine material and novels. Neal participated in the back and forth of the periodical paper war as a journalist, a novelist, and a traveler. Moving between Baltimore, Philadelphia, London and Portland, Maine, John Neal took paratextual experimentation to new extremes as a means of evoking reader self-awareness. Neal may have been genuinely perturbed by Smith's question, but he recognized that it had managed to draw attention to the question of literary nationalism precisely because its aggressive tone made American readers ask themselves if indeed they were properly supporting American literature. Neal was determined to help readers go one step further. He wanted readers not just to support native productions, but to become savvy and discriminating consumers who understood how America's publishing conventions, journalistic practices, and generic expectations were constricting its literary future.

Convinced that abrasive paratexts would force readers to reach this understanding, Neal endlessly experimented with reader address in the novels he wrote between 1817 and 1823.

Neal would eventually write more than a dozen novels, but during his lifetime he was most famous for a series he wrote for *Blackwood's*. Edgar Allan Poe, one of John Neal's earliest admirers, ranked Neal "first, or at all events second, among our men of indisputable *genius*," and he knew that Neal's literary fame—fame that made it possible for Neal to start his own literary journal in 1828—was largely the result of the fifteen articles Neal had written for *Blackwood's* in 1824-25.⁶² Poe lampooned William Blackwood and his magazine in his 1839 story, "How to Write a Blackwood Article," but the magazine's brutal criticism and its adventure fiction were widely admired.⁶³ So how did Neal write his *Blackwood's* articles? Always eager to "do what nobody else had done, or would have the impudence to attempt," Neal prepared for *Blackwood's* by writing five novels and publishing them in Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York between 1817 and 1823.⁶⁴

Neal did not mimic journalistic tone or incorporate journalistic content with periodical serialization of his novels in mind. Nor did he use his (moderate) success as a novelist to recommend himself as a journalist to William Blackwood. When he arrived in England he approached Blackwood using a pseudonym and wrote anonymously for the

⁶² (Poe, *Poetry, Tales, and Selected Essays* 1148).

⁶³ Poe's story was first published in 1838 as "Psyche Zenobia": The title character is called Suky Snobbs and Psyche Zenobia, although "Nobody but my enemies ever calls me Suky Snobbs." Poe republished the story as "How to Write a Blackwood Article" (Poe, *Poetry and Tales* 278).

⁶⁴ Neal described his impudence and his experience moving to England in "Yankee Notions" for the *London Magazine*. (N [Neal] 448)

magazine. In arguing that Neal wrote and published five novels as if they were contributions for the transatlantic periodicals market, I am suggesting that Neal chose this strategy primarily because he relished the role of periodical editor. He believed himself capable of writing and publishing so expeditiously that he would be able to converse with his novel-reading audience as regularly as if he were a highly regarded editor of an American or British quarterly review.⁶⁵ While his first novel, *Keep Cool*, parodies what Neal saw as the sloppiness and puffery of American periodicals, his last novel of this period, *Errata*, borrows its nasty tone and personal attacks from Edinburgh's boldest, most scandalous monthly magazine. Indeed, Neal incorporated enough of the style and content of Scottish journals that when he moved to London in 1823, he was able to copy word for word some sections of literary criticism that had appeared in his epistolary novel *Randolph* and get them published in his 1825 *Blackwood's* piece, titled "Late American Books." The *Randolph* literary criticism appeared within the body-text as letters from one character to another, but for the most part Neal presented himself as an editor by supplementing his novels with a great variety of paratexts: inventive title pages that play with author-function and onymity; prefaces that theorize the novel; and postscripts and Editorial Notices that add biographical details about Neal even as they deny his authorship of the texts they discuss. It would be a mistake to view Neal only as an editor who happened to write novels; what appealed to Neal about editing, and writing as an

⁶⁵ Letters Neal wrote to Henry Carey at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania illustrate Neal's determination to publish several novels within the span of a few months and Carey's refusal to take such a risk. Neal eventually turned to James Robinson, a Baltimore publisher, who was willing to bring out multiple novels in 1822-23. I thank James Green for directing me to these letters and for explaining details of Neal's publishing arrangements with Henry Carey.

editor from the space of the novel, was that it gave him such room to express himself paratextually. Given the special, liminal, marginal, and ambiguous role that paratexts played for Neal and others in this period, it was inevitable that he would exploit them for the kind of reader engagement so precious to his project of convincing readers that they would better appreciate all literature when they understood how it functioned generically and within/against the literary conventions of the day.

This chapter examines the multiple and multiform paratexts of *Keep Cool*, the novel Neal wrote when he was just beginning his literary career as a journalist in 1817, and *Errata*, the last novel he wrote before moving to London and finding employment with *Blackwood's*. I read them as extremes of the formal experimentation in John Neal's earliest novels. What Neal writes in these paratexts explains why, in spite of writing and publishing five novels between 1817 and 1823 and more than a dozen in his lifetime, he thought of himself as an editor and a journalist rather than a novelist, even during his most prolific novel-writing period. Mark Louis Parker has written that in its prestige, popularity and in the sheer volume of its pages, the literary magazine was the early nineteenth century's "preeminent literary form" (1). For John Neal and the generation who followed him, its influence extended well beyond the monthlies and quarterlies. A preliminary answer to the question of why Neal wrote a *Blackwood's* article, then, is that he adapted British periodical practice to the novels he wrote because he believed it was the best way for him to build a reputation. Neal strove to write as if he were William Blackwood—or, better still, *Blackwood's* conglomerate fictional editor, "Christopher North." In the shifts between *Keep Cool* and *Errata*, Neal adjusted his prose to parallel

changes in the tone and content of British periodicals. Analyzing the shifts that Neal made shows how one American author tried to use the novel form to participate in a culture that privileged regular, periodic publication.

Neal's three twentieth-century biographies rely heavily on autobiographical revelations in Neal's novel *Errata*, on periodical essays Neal wrote for *The London Magazine* and *The Yankee*, and on his own autobiography *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life*.⁶⁶ These accounts emphasize Neal's initial poverty and self-education. Neal clearly relished an image of himself as an outsider succeeding against the odds. He had a difficult boyhood in Portland, Maine, then became an adolescent shopkeeper and quickly graduated to life as a smuggler on the Eastern seaboard during the War of 1812. When the war ended smuggling's profitability, Neal moved to Baltimore in 1814, entered business briefly with John Pierpont, and then, in 1816, began to read for the Baltimore bar exam. While studying law, Neal began the literary career in which he would eventually write for magazines in Baltimore and Philadelphia, then Edinburgh and London, and finally New York, Boston, and Portland. He wrote about Byron, bundling, copyright, Goethe, gymnastics, American presidents, and the evils of reprinting. In the mid-Atlantic press his prose and poetry appeared in the republican *The Portico*, the Federalist *Port-Folio*, and the politically ambiguous but geographically sure *Federal Republican and Baltimore Telegraph*.

⁶⁶ In chronological order, the biographies are: 1) Irving Richards, 1933, Harvard thesis, "The Life and Works of John Neal," 2) Benjamin Lease, 1972, *That Wild Fellow, John Neal*, 3) Donald Sears, 1978, *John Neal*.

When he first arrived in the UK, he wrote for the conservative (Tory) and culturally adventuresome and scandalous *Blackwood's* before aligning himself with Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill as a contributor to the *Westminster Review*.⁶⁷ He wrote a several-issue detailed analysis and review of Byron's poetry for the *Portico*, the first literary history of American authors for *Blackwood's*, and used his own gazette, *The Yankee*, to launch acerbic rants against the low quality of American newspapers and literary reviews. When Neal returned from London to Portland in 1827, he remained there, writing and editing, until his death in 1876. In this literary career spanning his first major publication in 1817 to his last book just two years before he died, John Neal published a book of poems, a tragic drama, and more than a dozen novels. He gave frequent orations, contributed literary criticism and political essays for well over one hundred magazines on both sides of the Atlantic, and edited seven American journals and newspapers. He was a lawyer, reformer, fitness fanatic, and real estate developer. Described as a feminist and supporter of suffragism and Native Americans, Neal also dabbled in phrenology and backed the Colonization movement before eventually coming around to abolitionism.

Well known in his day and studied intermittently since, Neal has been depicted almost exclusively as an inspiration to the generation of American authors who followed him: during his editorship of *The Yankee* he gave Edgar Allan Poe his first public recognition; his novels and the short stories that he published in gift annuals influenced Nathaniel Hawthorne; he edited *Brother Jonathan* while Walt Whitman wrote for the

⁶⁷ After distinguishing himself at a debate held by Bentham, Bentham invited Neal to live at his house, and Neal stayed there until he left England.

paper.⁶⁸ This influence demonstrates a second, more important point—Neal’s novelistic representation of, and participation in, periodical culture was part of his fascination for later authors.

Jonathan Cilley wrote to Hawthorne hoping that *Twice-Told Tales* would not bear the imprint of Neal’s “damned ranting stuff, which you, while at Bowdoin, relished so highly” (Lang 295). Hawthorne’s own sketch from 1845, “P’s Correspondence,” borrows much from Neal’s novel *Randolph*, in which British and American characters exchange letters regarding the nation’s literary development as if they are rival periodical editors and gives some backhanded praise as well. “What is there new in the literary way on your side of the water?” asks the character identified only as “P” in Hawthorne’s story: “There was that wild fellow, John Neal, who almost turned my boyish brain with his romances; he surely has long been dead, else he never could keep himself so quiet” (300). In fact Neal had continued to publish and was editing *Brother Jonathan* in the 1840s when Hawthorne wrote this sketch, but Neal never regained the notoriety he had held as a novelist and periodical contributor in the 1820s. The speaker of the story places Neal in the company of William Wordsworth as opposed to those better read, deceased authors (Hawthorne mentions Shelley in particular), whose popularity keeps them in the public imagination and therefore alive.

⁶⁸ Irving T. Richards’ unpublished four-volume Harvard thesis from 1933 remains the most complete account of Neal’s life and work (Richards). He contributed a bibliography for a 1962 *Jahrbuch Fur Amerikastudien* collection of short essays and stories by Neal, and I have culled Neal’s publication statistics from this bibliography (Irving T. Richards, “John Neal” 297). Neal praised Poe in *The Yankee* in September, 1829 (168).

An author who praised sparingly, Edgar Allan Poe appreciated Neal's work and showed the gratitude he owed Neal in his playful and biting journal pieces. While Poe's criticism of Neal's novels and stories is as brutal as it is accurate, his playful skewering of periodicals' style and content continue Neal's own experiments in novels and as an editor of *The Yankee*. Whitman, too, could easily have seen himself as the ideal American author Neal so often described: a writer who records the raw beauty of natural speech and quotidian life and who shares Neal's confidence in the nation's literary future. Indeed, it is not so far from Neal's literary nationalist hope in 1819—"We have had battles worthy of such bards—and shall have bards worthy of our battles....the treasures of American poesy have been discovered, and will yet prove boundless and inexhaustible as our mines,"—to the expansiveness of Whitman's "these United States are essentially the greatest poem."⁶⁹ Hawthorne, Poe and Whitman maximized their fame as short fiction writers and poets by astute use of periodicals, gift annuals, and serialization. In the period of 1817-1823, Neal took a different approach. Having failed to make periodical work pay his bills or to establish him as a prominent literary personage as an editor, he promoted various periodicalist versions of himself in his novels instead.

Jocology: The Delphians and The Portico

Neal's participation in periodical culture started in 1816, when he helped found the Delphian Club and began writing for various journals, including Paul Allen's *The Journal of the Times* (Baltimore) and Philadelphia's *The Portfolio* (Irving Trefethen

⁶⁹ Neal's quote is from *Battle of Niagara*, Second Edition, 1819 (xxiii). Whitman's line is from *Leaves of Grass*, but in many ways "Democratic Vistas" is a more polished version of the literary nationalism displayed in Neal's "Unpublished Preface" to *Rachel Dyer*.

Richards 296-319). The Delphians, a small group of Baltimore professional men including Tobias Watkins, Paul Allen, and John Pierpont, met for dinner and experimented with language, literary form, “clubicular” names, and parodies. Most of these experiments are playful, like the letter of application sent to the club president signed by “Alliterate, Alloquy of Alligrade,” who described himself as “absolutely ascended with aches to become acquainted with the acromatical association of which you are the adept actuary” (*Delphian Club Papers MS 284 238*).⁷⁰ The club minutes offer a useful archive of how this small group of men recorded their own literary experiments at the same time that Neal was drafting his first novels, poems, and periodicals pieces. These experiments preview what Neal explored further in his novels’ paratexts. Neal’s closest friend John Pierpont, an amateur linguist, was given the “clubicular name,” Hiero Heptaglott. Neal used his clubicular name, “Jehu O’Cataract,” as the pseudonym on the title page of his first book of poetry; that choice suggests both that he wanted his Delphian peers to notice and that he was proud enough of the association with the group that he did not mind determined readers connecting the book to his real identity. Each “ancient” (i.e., founding) member was also given a title: Neal was “Professor of Jocology” because of his need to explain jokes at length—a fault, or at least a habit, that he never learned to edit out of his own prose.

Included in the logbook’s collection of bawdy drawings, occasional poems, descriptions of debate topics and bad dinners, one contribution stands out—and not just

⁷⁰ Special thanks are due to the Maryland Historical Society for letting me view the fragile Delphian Club logbooks.

because it is a half-sheet pasted onto a logbook page that looks like a ransom note or a Dadaist poem, with each individual word cut-and-pasted from various newspapers (“Delphian Club Papers MS 284” 237). The text of the cut-and-pasted paragraph says that its creator (actually the president of the club, Tobias Watkins, but signing his name as Mitchill Quack-Ology, HUMBUG) hoped to win favor with the club by “send[ing] you These specimens of the *refined taste* of our newspapers and... phrazeology borrowed from rubbish of one kind or another,” combining them and submitting it as a kind of application for initiation into “the arcana and mysteries of your important ingenious intellectual fanciful learned *Cock-a-doodle* classical and HONORABLE club.”

While the note reads like an introduction to a collection of “These specimens,” nothing else is pasted in or recorded. Perhaps the author of the note tired of the labor required to create it and therefore only sent the short piece. More likely, the entire point of providing the cryptic and brief piece of text was to give Watkins the opportunity to gloss it at the next meeting. In this case, that gloss briefly stood in for the text itself, because the piece was temporarily lost. Therefore, Watkins described it for the club, saying that in it he had presented himself as

the author, or inventor, or if you will, the accoucheur, of a sort of non-descript bantling, or child of many fathers, bearing all the evidence of a multifarious propagation, and decked out in the characteristick patches of its maternal original—which said monster, I did with felonious and wicked secrecy, lay at the door of our multinominal Secreatary-Treasurer [sic] Laureate Blaerig Von Crambrograph, in the form and shape and character of a printed communication,

thereby vainly hoping (and criminally, because vainly) to procure it to be cherished by him, and received into this Club, as the offspring of a true, and genuine, and original wit (212).

As an accoucheur is a male mid-wife, here the “inventor” imagines himself as an assistant to the birth of a text rather than its mother or father. This “criminal” desire to cobble together prose from many fathers and have it accepted as “offspring of a true, and genuine, and original wit” received no commentary in the minutes. Like Washington Irving’s reference to a “cloud of authors” as the nation’s “variety of fathers,” this bantling-text also has “many fathers.” But this short comic piece touches on topics central to the literary concerns of this group of young lawyers and professionals. Should Americans cultivate their own “original genius,” or should they continue in the best British traditions, allowing “characteristick patches of [their] maternal original” to show through their own work? What constituted literary debt or influence, and what was appropriation or plagiarism? The group explored these questions in dinner debates and recorded some of the arguments in the minutes; applauded contributions were polished for publication in *The Portico*.

The parody also comments on periodical reprint culture. In this parody circulated only for the Delphians (not for the journal), the patchwork letter mocks or parodies the idea that authors were capable of presenting themselves as selfless republicans writing only for the increase of general knowledge rather than personal advancement. Here even the simple “accoucheur” seeks the same literary fame of named author celebrities. Hence the Delphian club president’s newspaper remix of scraps of text coming from

“multifarious propagation” also functions as an extreme parody of the review essay, which pulls and reprints those same “characteristick patches of its maternal original” and arranges them to earn its magazine a reputation for “true and genuine original wit.”⁷¹

The Delphian logbooks detail regular ribbing and jokes at one another’s expense, but their journal *The Portico* looks positively tame in comparison to contemporary British periodicals and to *Blackwood’s* in particular. The aspects of *Keep Cool* that parody periodical culture reflect the older American style of periodical (deferential to authors and publishers, rarely attacking American authors as individuals) more than they do the nascent, personally vituperative British model—not surprising given that *Blackwood’s* only formed in 1817. Part of Neal’s process of learning to write a *Blackwood’s* article, then, began with his participation in the Delphian Club and his contributions to *The Portico*. Unrevealed by the Delphian Club minutes and Neal’s contributions to *The Portico* are Neal’s editorial opinions about periodical culture at large. Despite the opportunity presented as temporary editor of various journals, during this period Neal mostly reserved his editorializing on periodical culture for the paratexts of his novels and books of poems. Neal’s first and last novels in this period (*Keep Cool* and *Errata*) demonstrate how Neal’s thoughts on periodicals shifted in this period as he embraced the new British style of personal attack.

⁷¹ The group also collaborated on a novel titled *Incomprehensibility*. Several members wrote one chapter in succession; John Earle Uhler reports it to be “entirely devoid of merit, being vague, verbose and tiresome” (341). Of the manuscript housed at the Maryland Historical Society, I can say that the novel is indeed incomprehensible: not because of difficult or disorganized content but because the cramped and sloppy handwriting of everyone but the secretary made the novel unreadable.

By 1818, Neal had published extensively in journals without receiving any financial compensation and had edited *The Portico*'s last number. Like most American periodicals, the journal was a financial failure and collapsed less than two years after its launch. Neal later claimed that it was his own tedious and unacceptably long essay on “free agency” that had fatally “knocked it in the head” but lack of subscribers and the departure of the editor, Tobias Watkins, were probably more significant.⁷² The scrapbook Neal kept of his periodicals contributions fills a volume and the twentieth-century bibliographic index of articles runs to ten pages of small print.⁷³ Despite Neal's success getting writing and editing jobs, no editing position in his life ever lasted longer than two years. Clearly periodicals were a passion of Neal's, but not one that offered steady cash or job stability. Meanwhile, however, Neal wrote a novel, *Keep Cool*, and managed to sell the copyright for two hundred dollars—for him at the time a sizable sum—to William Cushing, who published it in 1817.⁷⁴ Between 1818 and 1823, Neal continued to study law, index *Niles' Register*, write for and edit multiple Baltimore periodicals, and publish another four novels. Each novel experimented with genre and paratextual address, and each borrowed aspects from periodicals, whether reviews, letters, wit, poetry or popular romance. Most important for Neal's personal life and his appreciation for *Blackwood's*, he also developed talent for personal invective bordering on libel.

⁷² Neal's quote is from *Wandering Recollections*. It is also quoted by Frank Luther Mott, when he praises *The Portico* for offering (compared to its peer American periodicals) decent if “rather stern” literary criticism (295).

⁷³ The scrapbook is housed at Harvard's Houghton Library. Irving T. Richards compiled the bibliography primarily by indexing the scrapbook.

⁷⁴ Although he wrote much of it from memory, Neal's *Wandering Recollections* remains the most complete source of details of his life (195, 197).

Neal's paratextual experimentation in each of these novels demonstrates his attempt to incorporate elements of periodical culture into prose fiction. His experiments often derail plot and character development entirely and even suggest that novel-writing had ceased to interest Neal as an aesthetic in its own right. At the very least, they show Neal unable to settle on a subgenre of the novel that entertained him enough to write in repeatedly.⁷⁵ *Keep Cool* is a comedy of manners, *Logan* a gothic tale, and *Seventy-Six* an historical fiction. *Randolph* is a modified epistolary novel that is part gothic novel and part literary criticism, while *Errata* is a first person autobiography that reverts to the gothic in its second volume. This generic restlessness suggests that Neal wrote novels because they paid and he could write them quickly; the novels also show the degree to which periodicals and the life of the celebrity editor appealed to Neal.

Keep Cool

Keep Cool is nominally a story about writers, lovers, and the psychological cost of honor and dueling. The novel reads like an adaptation of Royall Tyler's play, *The Contrast*, with its collection of fops, poets, coquettes, and serious beauties as well as its too-excitabile military men and the duel challenges they issue one another. Here, however, the duel challenge in *Keep Cool* is accepted. A main character, Sydney, is wounded in the duel, and then so stricken with remorse that he falls, like his victim, into delirium. Despite reconciling himself to the dying challenger, Sydney flees North to live

⁷⁵ Nor would he put his own name on a novel until *Rachel Dyer* (1828). Neal was willing to allow his poetry to be traced back to his person, probably because poetry remained the elite genre in which to establish oneself as an author, and one could more easily maintain a professional life as a lawyer and publish poetry on the side. Hence Neal did acknowledge authorship on the cover page of the second edition of his book of poems, *Battle of Niagara*, and on the first printing of the Shakespeare-esque drama, *Otho*, both in 1819, but the "second edition—enlarged" is most notably increased by a sixty page preface.

for several years as the adopted chief of a tribe of Canadian Indians, returning just in the final pages to rejoin his sister and marry a long-lost love on the final page.

Neal's own memory of the novel makes clear that he did not prioritize innovation or excellence in plot. Instead, he had parodied literary conventions:

In writing this story, I had two objects in view: one was to discourage duelling and another was—I forget what. I only know that, inasmuch as it had become a settled fashion to head the chapters of a story with quotations, like those of Sir Walter Scott, which had seldom anything to do with the subject, I sat down and wrote several pages of dislocated and fantastic verses, which I handed to the printer, with general directions to divide the chapters, according to his own good pleasure, and to prefix the mottoes, without any regard to their applicability, hit or miss; all which he did; so that no wonder people could never quite satisfy themselves that I was not making fun of the reader. (197)

In this description, it is easy to imagine that Neal, given the chance to review Scott's latest novel for a periodical, would have compiled its most ridiculous chapter mottoes and then offered cutting quips about whether they had "hit or miss[ed]." Instead, Neal wrote *Keep Cool*, and rather than explain his own curious mottoes, he left his audience to "satisfy themselves" as to whether *Keep Cool's* mottoes are the result of deliberate satire, editorial whim, or authorial ambivalence. Indeed, all of *Keep Cool's* extensive paratexts are commentaries on contemporary novel-writing and reviewing practices. The title page also includes a pun in the Latin phrase that teases the reader and raises the question of what an anonymous author's work reveals and withholds. Neal remembers overhearing

two men mistranslate the phrase, “*Anguillam cauda tenes*” as “You hold a snake by the tail.” Some fifty years later, Neal (ever the “Professor of Jocology”) explains in his autobiography that the trick is to “translate it, ‘You hold *an eel* by the tail:’ don’t you catch the idea? But how could I explain it, without betraying the author?” (*Keep Cool, a Novel* 200) The pun—(you hold *a Neal* by the tail/tale) maintained Neal’s anonymity but made the author’s identity available to those close enough to the author to confirm their suspicions about its authorship, at the same time alluding to the novel’s autobiographical aspects: Echo, one of its main characters, is a self-sketch.⁷⁶ An eel, however, is a slippery thing, and Neal was at this time eagerly exploring the slippery status an author shared with his non-authorial identity. How much of the man do you get when you hold him by his tail/tale, and how much of that biography can one trust from a book? Just how much “his-story” do we get from this “author of sundry works of great merit—never published or read, from his-story?”

Neal always wanted his customer-readers to see that their understanding of literary culture was dangerously filtered and altered by literary magazine reviews. He thus confesses in the dedication that “This *Review* is written by the—Author—an uncommon case I admit; but not half so uncommon as the acknowledgment.... The author has one great advantage—he is sure to know what is in his book:—the public may be certain that *he* has read it” (v-vi).⁷⁷ Here Neal calls attention to what he sees as dishonest

⁷⁶ *Wandering Recollections* says it is a self-sketch. Neal’s contemporaries were offered one guarantee for figuring out the pun in a final nota bene after the novel’s conclusion: “N.B. The reader is informed, that if any of the within jokes are unintelligible, he may call on my Bookseller, who has promised to explain them at the halves” (196).

⁷⁷ The dedication continues, discussing reviews so bland they appear to have been filled in from form

and lazy reviewing practices—dishonest when authors write their own reviews and do not publicly acknowledge the practice and lazy when reviewers read too superficially to offer thoughtful critiques.

That review offers the closest duplication of a periodical's look in form and content that Neal included in a novel. Like reviews in *The Portico* and other contemporary journals, this one opens with a paragraph in dense, small font, giving the bibliographic information of the novel. Multiple footnotes within the review, marked by *, †, and ‡ reduce the amount of regular font print on the page and give it the material appearance of periodical pages. And for several pages, Neal offers a relatively honest and non-satirical critique of his own novel. Then, however, the review turns on itself:

He even reviews his book himself, another miserable joke—and with tolerable justice; but *we* cannot forbear reminding him, that his attack on *us* Reviewers, to say nothing more of it, is certainly very imprudent. It will not be for *his* interest, or his bookseller's, in a country where the people never make up their minds on the merit of any work, till *we* have placed *our* mark upon it.... People may do as they please, about reading this "Keep cool;" but let them not blame *us*, whether they read it or not.

Thus, *dear* reader, have I attempted to hit off the manner of these dispensers of fame;—these awarders of immortality, whose judgments are listened to, as oracles. (*Keep Cool, a Novel* xv)

letters: "*blank reviews*:--like quack certificates—funeral sermons—charter parties." Neal promises "one of these skeletons in full dress." (viii-ix)

Putting aside the mise-en-abyme effect or time-traveling marvel of a review reviewing a review within the review, this passage offers two important points. First, it takes Neal from mimicking contemporary review practice into mocking it. The italicization of the pronouns (the “*we*” and “*us* Reviewers”) makes clear Neal’s contempt for the self-importance of the reviews, and indicates a real frustration that the reviewing “*we*” can so powerfully affect reading and purchasing habits of peers. Second, with the change from the reviewing *we* to “Thus, *dear* reader, have I,” the author returns as an individual imploring individual readers to make their own decisions. In content no different from the satirized *we* telling the general populace to “do as they please... but let them not blame *us*,” the shift in address to a single “*dear* reader,” from the single “*I*” author has significant implications for how Neal thinks about authorship.

While it appears here in 1817 just as a theoretical preference, in a culture where authors (including, eventually, Neal) faced duels for the extent to which their prose could be traced not merely to an editorial *we* but to individual, lead-ball vulnerable “*I*’s, this distinction becomes increasingly contentious and important. Neal’s own challenge resulted from something he wrote in *Randolph* and which he himself discussed at length in *Errata*. I will discuss the transatlantic phenomenon of literary dueling at greater length in the *Errata* section, but it is in this context of “responsibility” and dueling risk that Neal argues the review should come publicly from the author: “It should be done publicly:—it is more manly:—and his opinions are entitled to more respect than those of any anonymous writer. No matter whether that author be known, or not; he is always responsible as *author*” (vi). Presenting himself only through the pseudonym of

“Somebody M.D.C.,” Neal claims he will still be responsible as the author and therefore attentive to criticism without being personally endangered or compromised. Neal recognized that the pseudonym was less than ideal:

Intrepidity must be encouraged:—when a man gives a work to the publick, the more boldly and frankly he does it, the better. If he give it without his name, that publick should whip it, right or wrong:—it is the only way to discover the author. Besides, it is impossible that the criticism should be *personal*.—And it is equally impossible, that the author can *feel* in his concealment; because he is a sort of non-entity. (vii)

Since Neal in 1817 was not “intrepid” enough to sign his name as the person, “John Neal” on the title page, he claims responsibility here only as “author,” at the same time promising a more objective response to future criticisms since his authorial non-entity would not “*feel*” it bodily or personally. In principle this is what composition classes ask of students when they peer-review each other’s work; focused on the mechanics, structure and ideas, students are told that they are not evaluating their peers but only specific components of their peers’ work. Likewise in a republican literary culture where one separates one’s self from personal promotion, it might be possible to imagine that such a division (author vs. person) could function to advance literary culture in general. In practice, duel challenges flew back and forth during this period as journals attacked the personalities and flaws of persons, not just authors, granting them no “concealment” at all. The period’s writers faced the very real risk that if their anonymous writings were deemed offensive and were linked to their persons they might find themselves challenged

to duels. Indeed, Neal eventually gained himself such a challenge, and in his negotiations, described in great detail in a postscript to his 1823 novel *Errata*, Neal depended on being able to maintain this distinction between the anonymous author as non-entity and the person who may or may not be identified as the anonymous author. In 1817 the question for Neal was not yet a question of life and death but rather of his desire to maintain a separate career as a professional lawyer and write novels on the side. In the following sections, I evaluate Neal's test of nineteenth-century onymity in *Logan*, *Randolph*, and *Errata*. In Appendix 3, I provide a list of Neal's major works in this period along with their place on the spectrum of onymity and traceability to Neal.

Logan

After *Keep Cool*, Neal published some poetry and a verse drama, and then two historical/Gothic novels: *Logan* and *Seventy-Six*. In their adherence to generic convention and (relatively speaking) simple paratexts, neither novel requires extensive treatment here except to note something about their narration: it is a lucky character that can speak from a Neal preface, advertisement, or first chapter and live through it. As further evidence that Neal preferred the multi-vocal, multi-generic opportunities of periodical work to the uni-vocal narration of most of the period's novels, Neal's dying narrators necessitate frames and paratexts for additional levels of commentary. A dying narrator ought to give the opening of the novel the force of those recording their last testaments. Dying narrators face no reply, no risk of rebuke or rebuttal in the next issue of a periodical. The finality of their deaths makes the uninterrupted monologues very different from periodical discourse or the colloquial conversation Neal prized so highly, but Neal's

narrators are instead framed by compositors (such as those “editors” who collect letters for epistolary novels).

In the most extreme case, one of *Logan*'s narrators dies a mere twenty-seven lines into the combined “Preface-Dedication.” Even here, in what might be a pure instance of Gothic emotional outpouring, Neal is actually making a veiled point about literary nationalism—the sort of argument that generically fits better in a periodical where readers expected to find discussion of the relationship between national politics and literature. *Logan* has received more critical attention than most of Neal's novels because of its depiction of “white Indians” and as an extreme example of how American authors used Native Americans for Gothicizing an otherwise history-sparse America, but no one has noted how much Neal diverged from his usual paratextual practice in *Logan*.⁷⁸

Neal acknowledged in 1826 that he had written *Logan* “for an experiment,”⁷⁹ and this is Neal's only early novel to omit any name in the author position on the frontispiece—no joking pseudonym, clubicular name, or even reference to other titles.⁸⁰ The only name on the frontispiece is “Logan,” a name that would have been familiar to

⁷⁸ Teresa Goddu argues that *Logan*'s experimentation helped Neal fashion his “argument for a uniquely American literature written as a literature of blood and excessive emotion” (53). Certainly the novel does not lack for blood or excessive emotion, but only the blood is unique to *Logan*; excessive emotion is a constant in Neal's writing and for him the marker of true feeling, not mere adherence to Gothic convention. Dana Nelson studies its depiction of “white Indians,” since Logan is not actually a Native American but a British lord who has fled England and married a Native American woman (94).

⁷⁹ Evidently proud of this description of his novel-writing practice, Neal reprinted this for “Yankee Notions,” a series of three articles published in the *London Magazine* in 1826. The original comes from the preface to *Seventy-Six* (v). In typical form, Neal could not resist noting that the unauthorized British copy of *Seventy-Six* had omitted his original preface and so provided it in full, followed by a description of his personal hubris in believing himself so fortunate to have been reprinted by the Whittakers as well as his later cognizance that they were disreputable re-printers rather than prestigious publishers (*London Magazine* 418).

⁸⁰ *Brother Jonathan*, published in 1825, also has no name on the title page. See Appendix 1 for more details on Neal titles and title pages.

Americans because Thomas Jefferson made his gruesome history and oratory famous in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Logan and his descendants are silenced before the novel begins, since late in the novel we learn that Logan has killed his son Harold and the remaining descendant expires while delivering the one page combined “Preface—Dedication.” This descendant states “I hate Prefaces. I hate Dedications. Enough for the one to say, that here is an American story; that the child of Logan was an American; that he was brave, wicked, and miserable, and that he and I are descendants from Logan the Mingo Chief” and then dies at the end of the page after refusing the Dedication’s usual purpose:

I do not dedicate my book to any body... To whom shall I; to whom *can* I dedicate it? To my Maker! It is unworthy of him. To my countrymen? They are unworthy of me. For the men of past ages I have very little veneration; for those of the present, none at all. To whom shall I entrust it? Who will care for me, by tomorrow? Who will do battle for my book, when I am gone? Will posterity? Yea, posterity will do me justice.... I—I—I have done—the blood of the red man is growing cold—farewell—farewell forever!— (3)

Dana Nelson offers a complex psychological reading of this passage, suggesting that Neal’s own childhood loss of his father and subsequent business failures contributes to this bizarre non-dedicatory dedication. She then builds a reading in which this passage represents Neal's anxiety about a “national genealogy, an imagined community structured by symbolic fatherhood to provide an imaginary haven from the agon of competition that was increasingly an ineluctable feature of U.S. capitalist citizenship” (99). The novel’s

explicit focus on Native American rights, however, implies that the novel is as much a caustic lament about an unwritten, unrecorded Native American past as it is a coherent imagining of a community based on symbolic patriarchy. The novel pairs description of gory battles and incestuous relationships with extended orations from the section in which one of Logan's descendants (Harold) travels back to England to make impassioned speeches to the British Parliament on the plight of Native Americans. In *Logan*, and in short stories and periodical pieces he wrote after it, Neal was genuinely interested in the question of Indian rights.⁸¹

Logan's last words can also be read as an allegory of Neal's feelings about his own place in American literature. Authors like Charles Jared Ingersoll, Timothy Dwight, and Robert Walsh obsessed over whether American authors should address or dedicate themselves to courting British critical opinion and current American audiences, or whether it was best to cultivate no "veneration" for "those of the present" and place all hopes on America's futurity and rely on "posterity" to recognize the contributions of earlier authors. As such, American literary nationalists in the early republic could be hopeful and full of confidence about American futurity, but also voiced two kinds of despair: a lament that its current and recent authors might die unappreciated in America as in William Dunlap's introductions to posthumous editions of Charles Brockden Brown's novels, or worse, that current mediocre production in the present might prevent transatlantic acceptance of better future efforts. Either the American novelist goes

⁸¹ See "Otterbag: The Oneida Chief" in *The Token* and editorials condemning Andrew Jackson in *The Yankee*. Edward Watts does an excellent job connecting "Otterbag" to Neal's *Rachel Dyer* preface and *Blackwood's* pieces regarding Native American representation (453-455).

unheard and unappreciated, like the character of the preface, or worse, the present generation, like Logan accidentally killing Harold, might doom its own progeny by convincing more than just the *Edinburgh Review's* Sydney Smith that in the “four corners of the globe,” no one reads, and no one yet need read, “an American book.”⁸² Even in *Logan*, then, of all Neal’s novels the least paratextually efflorescent and the most true to gothic convention, he is working out ideas about the literary nationalism that he expands upon more explicitly in novels like *Keep Cool* and *Errata*.

Something else changed for Neal between *Keep Cool* and *Errata*: *Keep Cool* was useful to Neal as a medium for displaying clever paratexts and publishing his own verse. By *Errata*, Neal had concluded that he actually believed in the project of novel-writing not just as a means of support but because it reached different audience. He wanted to reach readers who could benefit from the conversations unfolding in periodicals but who would only encounter them if Neal could address them within novels. In his novel *Seventy-Six*, two characters discussing Oliver Goldsmith’s *Vicar of Wakefield* lead Mr. Arnaud to assert that it “requires greater talent to write a great novel, than to write an epick poem, a tragedy or a comedy—many a sermon, and many an oration” (*Seventy-Six* 229). Surveying his options, Neal concluded that novel-writing was difficult enough to challenge the most talented writers. The only remaining step was for Neal to believe that novels were useful. Since he had recently completed a long poem (*The Battle of Niagara*), a verse tragedy (*Otho*) and a comedy of manners (*Keep Cool*), this novel appears to state Neal’s conclusion about his own novel-writing: speedy and remunerative,

⁸² Smith’s comment comes at the end of an article on Adam Seybert’s *Statistical Annals of the United States of America* (79).

but not “great.” The reason to write novels, Arnaud continues, is that their influence is “greater than that of all other literature. People read novels, who never go to play or to church. People read novels, who never read plays, sermons, history, philosophy, nor indeed any thing else: And people read novels secretly in all weathers, from morning till night—who do nothing else” (229).

The characters in *Seventy-Six* praise Goldsmith and Richardson for novels of positive moral influence, but what interested Neal more than morality was the kind of education on a broad variety of topics that periodicals offered. Hence, approximately one-third of Neal’s next piece, the epistolary novel *Randolph*, consists of the literary and political criticism he was then able to adapt for *Blackwood’s* in 1825. Neal had created for himself a way to write for periodicals within the boards of two-decker novels, and to convince himself that by doing so, he was broadening the education of a whole set of readers who had selected the volume for its story and accidentally found themselves educated about American literature, history, or politics.

Randolph and Errata

Character traits and plot carry easily from *Keep Cool* into both *Randolph* and *Errata*. All three discuss writers, lovers and duelists. Differences in style between Neal’s 1817 and 1823 novels demonstrate how much Neal’s opinions about novel (and periodical) excellence had changed. Neal’s title page for his novel *Randolph* states in the physical position generally reserved for the publisher’s imprint that the novel has been “PUBLISHED For Whom It May Concern.” Without any knowledge of Neal’s personal life and his willingness to explore it in his fiction, this title page presents itself to readers

as the decision of an author or publisher to mask and withhold certain details about the publication of the book. It also shifts responsibility from author or publisher to the reader; where the standard phrase “published by” would emphasize production and creation, Neal’s “For Whom” privileges the individual “concerned” reader. The simple substitution of “For” in place of “By” works on the level of a text directed outwards for anyone who may encounter it. Details from Neal’s personal life and the oblique references to it in the preface, however, give the “for Whom” an additional level of interest. Certainly this is part of Neal’s continued exploitation of paratextual convention, but because this book is described by Donald Sears, one of Neal’s biographers, as his “novel of justification,” the phrase “for whom it may concern” can have another meaning which only makes sense with a detour into a sordid chapter of Neal’s own biography (Sears 53).

In 1818, Neal wrote to his friend John Pierpont to explain how or why it was that while boarding at the house of Pierpont’s brother-in-law (Joseph Lord), he had surprised Lord’s fourteen-year-old daughter Abby in her bedroom in the middle of the night. Neal claims unconvincingly that he was sleepwalking in a dream, found himself in Abby’s bed, and fled when her screams woke him—and that Abby was not sure if she had dreamed about Neal’s intrusion or it had really occurred. Pierpont advised Neal to say nothing more about the matter, and it seems that everyone was relieved when Abby became engaged shortly thereafter to someone else. But in 1822 Neal and Abby resumed contact, and the engagement was so compromised that Pierpont refused all friendship or further contact with Neal. They reconciled three years later, but in the interim, Neal took his revenge in the form of self-justification in *Randolph*, in which the main character

goes to a fourteen-year-old girl's bed not to harm her but to teach her a lesson about the dangers she would have risked by flirting with a less principled man. Abby's name is changed, but her fiancé, a Mr. Green, is described as "Mr. G," and Joseph Lord is "Joe." In case the Pierponts might not have realized what Neal had done, he wrote Pierpont a letter acknowledging that the novel "is attributed to me" and "illegible to but a few & unaccountable to others;—nay, perhaps to the few intelligible only, and not justifiable except on the ground of self defence, a justification."⁸³

Perhaps it would have remained "illegible" if *Randolph's* paratexts were not so tauntingly suggestive. Readers can usually assume that the dedications, advertisements and prefaces of fictional works come from an author distinct from the characters or narrator of the body-text. This assumption Neal abuses at every opportunity. Following what Genette calls Sir Walter Scott's "fictive authorial preface" strategy, the book's Dedication to a "DEAR ——," comes not from Neal but from one of the book's characters, who cautions the "Dear ——" addressee not to open the volume "in the presence of another...your agitation might betray a secret, that is unknown to every other living creature" (*Randolph* 3). This "dedication"/threat/warning to a single individual gives way to an "advertisement" that expands the invocation to all readers and then narrows it again to two specific individuals: "There are some people, and two in particular...whose feelings I would spare....To *them*, this advertisement is addressed, as a warning; and I pray the publisher to indulge me so far, as to place it where it will

⁸³ Benjamin Lease's *That Wild Fellow John Neal* provides evidence from many letters to and from Neal about this period of Neal's life (quoting Neal's letter to Pierpont, October 3, 1823, p. 35) and regarding reconciliation (127).

immediately attract the eye” (4). In the advertisement’s last paragraph Neal does address an actual audience by stating that “the publick may be amused, and agitated, perhaps, for a little season, without any suspicion of the truth” (4).

Neal’s biographers conclude that this is directed at Abby Lord and John Pierpont, especially since the novel fictionalizes something very like what happened at the Lords’ house in Boston and the whole plot of the novel can be said to revolve around the question of whether Edward Molton is, as widely thought, a seducer and murderer or whether his self-justifications are to be believed. So the novel has one kind of personal involvement with Neal’s biography—self-justification of his own actions, coupled with revenge in the plot on the Lords and Pierponts. The novel’s epistolary form gives Neal the opportunity for Molton to send an English friend lengthy descriptions of American manners, art, and literature. While the book is a rambling and forgotten mess, Neal decided that the literary criticism could stand on its own, and he eventually published most of it as part of his “American Writers” series for *Blackwood’s* in 1824-25.

What actually got Neal challenged to a duel, however, had nothing to do with the opening paratexts, the closing “Editorial Note” or the very critical look at America’s authors.⁸⁴ It had everything to do, however, with the *Blackwood’s* style of personal attack. As part of a description of American justice and trial law, Neal denigrated an aging and respected Baltimore lawyer whose eloquence and courtroom prowess Neal felt were over-appreciated. William Pinkney died while the book was in press, but Neal,

⁸⁴ Since Neal transformed *Randolph’s* literary criticism into the *Blackwood’s* pieces, and it was the *Blackwood’s* pieces that Americans felt were unfair to the rest of American authors, it is the material in *Randolph*, Neal’s novel of “justification” that gets him posted twice, once for cowardice and once for treason.

rather than remove the attack, made it worse by adding a footnote stating that the truth must remain even if the man could not defend himself.⁸⁵ William Pinkney's son, however, was more than willing to defend his family's name. When a bookseller showed Edward C. Pinkney the eight pages about his late father, Pinkney demanded that Neal meet him for a duel or be "posted . . . in the worst terms that contempt can devise" (*Wandering Recollections* 232). Facing the prospect of a duel with an aggrieved and grieving naval midshipman who was rumored to have survived several duels already, Neal replied that he would neither "own nor deny" authorship of the anonymous novel and after a day's thought, Neal told Pinkney that he was refusing the challenge. Pinkney responded by posting handbills around Baltimore calling Neal a coward, and Neal obtained a copy and had it reproduced, with annotations, in the postscript to *Errata*.

Meanwhile Neal posted himself into Baltimore's public and social life—making a point to abandon the stiletto-cane he had recently begun carrying—and wrote in his autobiography that once he found the handbill, "from that moment, [I] went by myself, alone and unarmed, into every public place of the city; to the theatre, the concert-room, the soda-water establishments, then just introduced, and always in full blast, night and day" (*WR* 234). Determined to show that he was refusing to engage Pinkney in the semi-privacy of a duel and that he would not adhere to the aging aristocratic rules of honor-coded societal negotiations, Neal instead described himself as eager for confrontation in the public sphere of Baltimore's coffee-shop equivalent, the "just introduced" soda-water café. In place of the traditional codes and practices—the aristocratic duel and the foppery

⁸⁵ Irving Richards' careful thesis work on Neal's letters and known composition schedule make clear that he had plenty of time to remove the offensive passages after he learned of Pinkney's death.

of a stiletto cane that he discarded—Neal embraced wholeheartedly the new form of particularly nasty personal attacks prevalent in British periodicals reviewing—the attack on “Personality” most famously deployed by *Blackwood’s*. Clearly confident that there can be no such thing as bad publicity, Neal used *Errata* not only to re-post the “worst terms” in which Pinkney had “commit[ted] the craven to his infamy,” but also to attack the young Pinkney (*Wandering Recollections* 233). Neal requested, in a letter published as part of an “Editorial Notice” at the end of *Errata*, that the handbill be reprinted “in the very same type; word for word; and letter for letter—taking care to mark the size of the paper, by little dotted lines” (*Errata; Or, the Works of Will Adams* 349, 352).

At this point Neal’s identity as the author of *Errata* must have been clear; his name appears in the Copyright and is sprinkled throughout the Postscript and Editorial Notice, but Neal still maintains a slight fictionality to the presentation. The “editor,” speaking from the Editorial Notice following the Postscript, says he makes “no apology for publishing...the following remarkable letter; from a man, who has been challenged, as the author of *Randolph*” (350). In the letter Neal claims as Neal that “Mr. Edward C. Pinkney may thank me, for giving effect, to his own mode of punishment,” by giving the handbill a far greater publication run and permanence than the meager edition of two hundred handbills Pinkney had printed. Neal did present it, as promised, surrounded by “little dotted lines,” and I have no reason not to believe that it was presented “word for word.” “Word for word,” that is, with Neal’s additions. He interrupts the handbill with six numbers in parentheses that correspond to the six footnotes Neal added underneath the dotted lines, explaining the merits of his own position, mocking its tone as “quite

diplomattick” and citing William Blackstone. When Neal brings an epitext (the handbill) into the peritext of his own novel (the Editorial Notice), he cannot help himself from adding the additional paratextual flourish of vituperative footnotes.

In its multiple paratexts and its formal duplication of periodical forms (footnotes, annotations, letters from publishers and writers, and cryptic references for readers-in-the-know), *Errata* has elements of *Keep Cool* and American periodical culture, but I hope it is also clear that *this* is how one writes a *Blackwood's* article; not just by making the personal public, but by insisting that that person is “of the public” and therefore unique enough for gossipy attention and universal enough for others to enjoy and study. To get from *The Portico* and *Keep Cool* to *Randolph* and *Errata* did not require pistols at dawn; it did require the desire to write like *Blackwood's*. If *Keep Cool* copied the form of a periodical's review section for its review, *Errata's* postscript also replicates a feature of nineteenth-century journals in its printing of duel negotiation details. After the handbill what appears next is a printed version of what Neal claims is his entire exchange with Pinkney, from the initial challenge to the handbill's posting.

Finally, on the very last page of the *Editorial Notice*, Neal used the last sentence he published before moving to England to goad another writer—John E. Hall, who was then editing the *Port-Folio*. In a postscript, Neal writes “I wonder that Mr. John E. Hall has not challenged me, since I have been posted for a coward. But I take it for granted, that he has not heard of it, yet;—or that, he still entertains a doubt on the subject of my cowardice. I am told...that I may depend upon a challenge, whenever he shall come to be satisfied, that I won't fight” (364). Neal's experience with personal attacks on individuals

in *Randolph*, and the reaction from Edward Pinkney evidently did not make him reconsider the practice. Instead it encouraged him; clearly Neal felt that such personal attacks were a useful way to build publicity for an author or an important check on how other authors and public figures conducted themselves. Here, Neal attacks the editor of the *Port-Folio* hoping not for a duel but for a puff—in the hope that other periodicals or the *Port-Folio* itself might review *Errata* precisely because of its unscrupulous attacks.

Ideally duels and negotiations were conducted entirely in private to mitigate legal and social consequences, but when negotiations failed and no duel occurred, it was not uncommon for both sides to print conflicting accounts of what had happened. One duel that Neal would certainly have known about occurred in 1821: John Lockhart, an editor of *Blackwood's*, challenged John Scott of *The London Magazine*, and when no peaceful settlement could be reached, John Scott was killed by Lockhart's appointed second, John Christie. A brief detour into its details helps explain Neal's decision to print the negotiations in his novel rather than using a periodical. In his article "Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain," Peter Murphy argues that in its earliest years, *Blackwood's* editors engaged in a form of literary critique which "can be described as a nearly obsessive interest in the interaction, attachment and slippage between authors (published names) and persons (bodies indicated by names)" (626). Murphy notes that this created a paradox: *Blackwood's* "authors seem to ask that writing circulate in a highly abstract and well-scrubbed world, created by authors, not people," but in their nasty critiques of those authors, *Blackwood's* authors denigrated their foes by "dragging the person of the author into the written world, very often by making fun of social

standing, personal affectations or deformities” (629). There were eighteenth-century predecessors for this sort of attack—one example with extensive enough paratext to have caught Neal’s attention is William Gifford’s long poem *The Baviad*—but *Blackwood’s* and Neal went further than most by mixing what was clearly satire (in something like an eighteenth-century poem) into periodical and novelistic pieces where the satire is less clear and the vitriol therefore more potent and less playful. When *Blackwood’s* attacked an author’s stilted prose by reference to the author’s limp or Neal in *Randolph* mocked William Pinkney as a nose-picker and therefore also as a slovenly, sloppy lawyer, there was real danger that offended parties would demand extra-legal recourse.

John Scott, the highly respected editor of *The London Magazine*, decided in 1821 that *Blackwood’s* personal attacks had gone too far, and that the anonymity of “Christopher North” was part of what protected their editors from the responsibility they should shoulder as critics. His solution was to declare in the *London Magazine* that John Lockhart was an editor of *Blackwood’s*. The accusation provoked Lockhart into demanding that Scott retract his claim or negotiate a duel. As critics have noted, Lockhart could almost claim that he was not an editor because *Blackwood’s* was formally edited by William Blackwood and it was not publicly confirmed at this point that a group of three paid employees (David Maginn, John Wilson and John Lockhart) were the men behind the fictional conglomerate editor who signed his pieces “Christopher North.”⁸⁶

Once Lockhart challenged Scott to a duel, Scott said that he would not duel Lockhart unless Lockhart denied that he was an editor of *Blackwood’s*, since if he was,

⁸⁶ Leonidas Jones’ article, “The Scott-Christie Affair” gives the fullest account. [127]

then he was no gentleman and therefore not the sort of man one could meet for a polite assignation at dawn where grown men fire pistols at each other. Meanwhile Lockhart refused to deny that he was an editor because this would give Scott an “advantage.” At this point it might have ended with Lockhart returning to Edinburgh and each man publishing his own account of the negotiation, but after the accounts were published Lockhart’s second, John Christie, continued the negotiations and eventually killed Scott at Chalk Farm.

Neal made his decision not to duel and to publish the negotiations in *Errata*’s postscripts while the papers were still reporting the Scott-Christie duel, several other high-profile literary duels in London, and recent political duels in the United States. In choosing his own novel rather than another periodical’s editor to publish the annotated handbill, Neal maintained more control, but also got to play his favorite role: journal editor. What comes across most clearly from the *Errata* advertisement, preface, postscript, and editorial notices is Neal’s fondness for the kind of address possible in a journal editor’s voice. It should, therefore, be no surprise that when Neal left for London, he sought opportunities to offer the kind of cultural critique, personal attacks, and aesthetic commentary the journal contributor and editor could deliver.

To Blackwood’s and Back

Neal probably went to London believing that since two of his novels had recently been republished there in unauthorized form, he would be able to secure copyright and payment by offering and writing additional novels once he arrived. When he approached

Whittakers, which had published *Logan* and *Seventy-Six*, the publisher was uninterested.

Running out of cash, Neal wrote to William Blackwood:

I have met with your magazines in every part of the world. I like the bold familiarity, temper, talent, and spirit of it, and should like to become an occasional contributor to it, from this time forwards... I have written a good deal for other people; made some sacrifices for the promotion of literature and science, and done a good many things, for the profit and reputation of others. It is high time now, that I should begin to think more of myself.”⁸⁷

As a three-word description of *Blackwood's*, one cannot do better than “bold familiarity, temper.” His attack on Hall’s cowardice and the nastiness of *Randolph* before he left the United States make clear that Neal relished exposing others’ personal traits and lives with “bold familiarity.” Neal’s assertion that he had written enough for others (probably a reference to the work he did on Paul Allen’s *History of the Revolution* and index work for *Niles Register*), further suggests that he wants to build a reputation for himself, even if the initial plan is to write for *Blackwood's* anonymously. Neal’s biographers disagree about whether Neal can be believed when he says that he went to London to answer Sydney Smith’s claim that no one was reading American books. Neal claimed in his autobiography that he planned to “get possession of that blazing rocket-battery” of the English periodicals, and then “turn its fire upon the swarming whipper-snappers who were always lying about our institutions, and habits, and prospects” (*Wandering Recollections* 245). Regardless, Neal, pretending to be “an Englishman, who has seen

⁸⁷ April 16, 1824. Letters are at the National Archive in Edinburgh, but this particular letter is also reprinted in part in Lease’s biography of Neal (Lease 58).

something of the Americas,” did manage to write successfully for *Blackwood’s* between 1824-25, contributing considerable material for most issues in that period.

In his “American Writers” pieces for *Blackwood’s*, now acknowledged as the first literary history of America, Neal was hypercritical of the two hundred authors he discussed. No authors were sufficiently American except three: Charles Brockden Brown, James Kirke Paulding and the author whom the anonymous *Blackwood’s* writer praised most fulsomely—John Neal. John E. Hall, the same man whom Neal attacked in the last sentence he published before crossing the ocean, comes in for particularly personal criticism. Neal wrote that since getting “possession” of the “fountain” of *the Port-Folio* after Joseph Dennie’s death, Hall was now poisoning the nation’s readers with

a pernicious exhilarating drug—month after month—until there are those, who relish the taste, and love the sparkle, of these impure waters.... With *that*, [the *Port-Folio*] he is now able to provoke the indignation of those—whom, but for *that*—he could never hope to move anything more than the pity of. With all his abominable stupidity, however, the man had cunning enough to see, that if he ventured much of *his* loading upon, the Port Folio, it would go to the devil, of course ; and himself with it: wherefore he has contrived, year after year, to keep it afloat—and *his* chin above water—though he has been over head and ears with it, more than once—afloat—in spite of his own, dead, ponderous imbecility, by freighting it with a buoyant material, which he pilfered from our [British] magazines—whenever he went ashore—that is, about once a month. (“American Writers No. IV” 55)

This passage serves as a suitable endpoint for studying Neal's use of novels as a substitute site for material more regularly deployed in periodicals. In *Keep Cool* Neal satirized the "we" of the periodical as an abstract attack on the critics, but not yet the persons-behind-the-anonymous-critics of periodicals. In *Randolph*, Neal began to experiment with the aggressiveness of *Blackwood's* in attacking individuals explicitly. Even after he knew that there were consequences (because of Pinkney's challenge), Neal continued to insult individuals, as evidenced by his attack on Hall at the very end of the postscript to *Errata*. Neal's shift towards personal revelation and literary gossip was also a solid business decision; clearly *Blackwood's* appreciated having an author who knew enough about American literature to offer their readers a main course of literary information and analysis served with a spicy side of invective.

Theo Davis argues in a discussion of *Rachel Dyer*, a novel Neal published in 1828, that Neal's entire aesthetic identity can be summarized in his representation of dialogue. *Rachel Dyer's* "cacophonous aggregate of voices," Davis argues, comes from Neal's attempt to convey "the experience of an entire community, tendered externally in dialogue" and is ultimately "trying to turn his personal voice into one owned by the public, to render the "I" into an "anyone" (57). This is a compelling reading of Neal in general, since he seems so sure that offering up personal details of his own life does not endanger his actual person nor prevent readers from finding their own emotional response. Davis is right to note that Neal manages to slip out of the duel negotiation and the author-function responsibility by a steadfast belief that "personal matters *were* public (not just negotiated with the public, but of the public)" (71).

Davis' reading of *Rachel Dyer's* prefaces, however, focuses too much on their negative tone. True, Neal does claim in the so-called "Unpublished Preface" that this is his last offering as an author, and Davis reads this as a lament that "what nationalism would portray as a necessary reflexivity between individual and generality is here an impossible ideal" (72). I agree that Neal imagined (or at least presented) a model of "reader-as-lover" and that the "Unpublished Preface" seems to mourn that model's failure (73). Yet by the time Neal published the "Unpublished Preface," he was already editing *The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette*, carrying on dialogues with actual readers in the "Letters to the Editor." When Neal grew frustrated by the author/reader relationship possible in a novel, he used paratexts to those novels to add a level of address from the author in which the author depends much less on the reader's constant love. By 1828 he had settled on the more iterative, conversational medium of the weekly gazette, in which Neal did promote his own novel, but also charted its progress across the region by printing the letters he received back criticizing, praising, and bemoaning its late arrival in small towns across Maine.⁸⁸ Earlier that same year, Neal declared that he was abandoning the still-dominant use of "we" as the editorial voice of a literary journal for the singular "I." Again, as always with Neal, there is the possibility that pure pride motivates his announcement; Neal was writing almost all of the content for the paper at the time and perhaps just wanted all the credit. But his note, titled "To Subscribers,"

⁸⁸ In the *Yankee* pages, Neal again plays with the author/ person gap, here signing himself as "N" and speaking of himself as "the author" regarding his own financial investment in the edition: "Literature. Our friends in the South will receive their copies of *Rachel Dyer* as soon as may be. At present however, it is not possible to have the work bound up so fast as it is called for. This for the publishers, who otherwise may be charged with neglect. The author has no interest in this edition. N." Nov 26 1828 ("The Yankee; and Boston Literary Gazette" 378a).

displays the ambivalence and humor Neal brought whenever he discussed his participation in or revolt against convention:

Our subscribers will perceive, or more properly my subscribers will perceive that I have cast aside the regal pronoun we, and adopted one of a more honest and more republican character (where but one person is speaking or writing)—namely I. If nothing occurs to change our view, or my view, or the view of the Editor of this paper, I—that is, we, that is, he, will continue the practice (151).

Neal's confident assertion that the "I" is a "more honest and more republican character" than a regal *we* is indefensible, but the image of the editor interrupting himself, correcting himself and then distancing himself-as-person from himself-as-author, even as he proclaimed a new direction, was quintessential Neal. What John Neal showed American authors, therefore, was that it was possible to enter or at least to imagine various versions of one's self to be part of a transatlantic conversation—one generally associated in America only with the elite periodicals such as *The North American Review* and the *Portfolio*—from within one's own novels. His success at getting prose that could pass for *Blackwood's* articles published in Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, and then his transition to employment at *Blackwood's*, made a much more durable impression than the novels themselves. Poe, then, learned this much from John Neal: to write for *Blackwood's*, one does not need William Blackwood's "fountain." Each time Poe published "How to Write a Blackwood Article," he accompanied it with "the following Blackwood article, in the tone heterogeneous," first titled "The Scythe of time and later "A Predicament: (A Sequel)." John Neal proved that when one writes as-if for

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, one can publish in America, too. Mary Gove Nichols wrote Neal requesting that he “wouldst write a book all preface.”⁸⁹ Alisdair Gray gave her one, one and a half centuries later, but as editor rather than author, in *The Book of Prefaces: A Short History of Literate Thought in Words by Great Writers of Four Nations from the 7th to the 20th Century*. Just the fact of its heft and clothbound, acid-free paper gives this otherwise liminal and oft-excised part of a text instant cultural capital in Gray’s elegant codex.⁹⁰ Gray’s codex (and Nichols’ request) both fundamentally alter the way we usually encounter paratexts—as intrusions, digressions, or distractions from the body-text. To read Neal properly, I am arguing, is to recognize how important it was for him to occupy the liminal zone of the paratext and the uncertain status of the paratextualist. He chose paratexts because he found there his best chance to reach readers and to tutor them in how the functioning of literary culture manipulated their reading habits. It is not enough just to say that Neal wrote the most exuberant prefaces of his day; he wrote as a paratextualist because it let him occupy multiple roles (author, editor, provocateur) without claiming one of those roles as a defining identity. When we read Neal as a paratextualist, we see why he went to such lengths to position himself in roles that would ultimately allow readers to judge their literary options for themselves.

⁸⁹ Nichols’ letter from 1839 to Neal reads “P. S. I want any thing of thine that thou choose to lend me. I have wished much to know if thou wrote “Keep Cool” and find by the preface to Niagara etc. that thou didst. I was very much diverted with that, especially the preface and the conceit of reviewing thy own book. I have sometimes wished that thou wouldst write a book all preface” (Irving T. Richards, “Mary Gove Nichols and John Neal” 341).

⁹⁰ I am indebted to Joseph Rezek for the importance of “heft” as a factor in the physical experience of smaller and larger-size books, a goal inverted by the quest for ever sleeker, lighter and thinner e-book readers in which the platform technology, not the individual volume, tells on-lookers about the reader’s economic choice of how to read.

Chapter Four: Brown

Done Brown but Not Used Up:

Authoring and Editing in William Wells Brown's Autobiographical Narratives and *Clotel*

This final chapter focuses on William Wells Brown to connect the themes of editing, periodical/book interplay and autobiographical revelation that earlier chapters explore, arguing that William Wells Brown's endless revision and republication of autobiographical material constitutes a coherent political strategy that only makes complete sense when we view him as a paratextualist. We have seen that Irving embraced the role of paratextualist in the promotion of his novel by weaving together newspaper hoaxes and advertising, and then continued the idea of a dispersed author by parceling authority to a variety of editors; Brown alters this tradition by reprinting newspaper anecdotes within his novel and by expanding the definition of novel-author to compiler and commentator on newspaper stories. In the volleys over *Inchiquin* and the role of autobiographical gossip in John Neal's novel prefaces and postscripts, paratextual experimentation and excess revealed the anxiety over authorship as a respectable American profession and as an identity worth defending (or sometimes worth denying even when the consequences of denial may be violence). Brown tackles the idea of authorship as it affects African Americans, using paratexts to demonstrate the ways that white publishing grants only specific functions to black authors; his paratexts demand

that readers confront the ways those functions negatively affect African Americans and the abolitionist cause.

My primary subject in this last chapter are those functions of the paratext that are implicit in many of its forms—authorization and authenticity. Footnotes lend authority by their citation of supporting arguments or complementary facts. Appendices, tables, and figures buttress text with data and graphical illustration. Allographic prefaces (those not written by the author of the body-text) lend additional gravitas or praise that would be unseemly coming from the author. Allographic and sometimes autographic prefaces play the additional role of guaranteeing authenticity by offering details of the author's life that verify her prior presence at the events described, her familiarity with a region's customs or language, or the breadth of her literary credentials. In the context of nineteenth-century African American expression, John Sekora's concise claim has long held sway: "not black storytelling but white authentication made for usable narratives" (497). The title of Sekora's essay, "Black Message, White Envelope" figuratively poses the problem that Brown confronts—white authentication becomes the frame that envelopes, encapsulates, positions, and describes, and the black messenger is responsible only for providing the raw message-content of the body-text. Brown's highly inventive paratextual revisions, however, invert the idea of the black message and white envelope in a variety of ways that reveal aspects of the period's practice of editing, editions, and the power of juxtaposition.

This chapter views the self-authorizing and self-authenticating efforts in William Wells Brown's autobiographical narratives and in *Clotel* as a refusal of white publishing

norms. He relies on discomfiting white readers so that they will recognize the pervasiveness of the effects of slavery's oppression—extending into the realm of bodies, print, and how abolitionists view the African Americans tasked with representing slavery's ills.

Clotel's amalgamation of genres and its complex revision of history make it a particularly fascinating case study for historians of the book. When book historians recount its generic variety, however, they have too often described Brown's technique as plagiarism and assemblage rather than recognizing the important framing and careful juxtaposition that accompanies the borrowing and the compiling. Brown's attention to paratextual framing and juxtaposition has not been given due attention, but it is the hallmark of the successful paratextualist and a significant factor in the text's confrontational stance towards readers. In the latter half of this chapter, I focus on Brown's paratextual experimentation as an editor in many of the senses that that meant to nineteenth-century writers—whether it involved compiling and presenting the work of others, prefacing his own work, or re-editing it for later editions.

One of the ways that Brown and other African American authors brought attention to their status as participants in literary culture was to explicitly discuss the materiality of that culture. While authors like Irving dispersed authorial responsibility (via Knickerbocker and the printer's devil and the "Editor" of *A History of New York*), and others like Ingersoll (via anonymity) initially denied it or like Neal (via pseudonymity) redirected it, William Wells Brown and William Grimes instead focused attention on the ways that print culture affected black lives. This is not to say that white

authors were not conscious of the ways that print culture visited violence on white or black lives, metaphorically or in actuality. A few examples clarify the very different stakes for white and black authors. In “The Mutability of Literature,” a short piece in *The Sketchbook*, Irving laments that easy access to printers and paper has “enabled every mind to pour itself into print, and diffuse itself over the intellectual world while the library becomes “a kind of literary catacomb, where authors, like mummies, are piously entombed, and left to blacken and moulder in dusty oblivion” (861, 855). As I mentioned in the introduction, Hawthorne encouraged readers of “The Custom House” to imagine him as a “decapitated surveyor” writing from beyond the grave; Irving notes that most authors crumble into obscurity as if they are dead.

John Neal went to great lengths to avoid directly connecting his person to his authorial identity, partially to avoid the potential violence of an actual duel. I have mentioned that Neal wrote opening paratexts in which the narrators actually expire while speaking from the preface, but it should also be noted that Neal himself often threatened never to write again, promising that he was “bidding the novel-readers of the day, on both sides of the water, farewell, and in all probability, forever” (*Rachel Dyer* vi). Projecting the death of the speaker/author or his silencing by other means, Neal was exploring metaphorical violence against the idea of authorship. Hawthorne imagines figurative violence done to himself as a “decapitated surveyor” rather than as an author of *The Scarlet Letter*, while Dimmesdale’s self-inflicted chest-brand is its own commentary on self-identifying guilt while avoiding public responsibility.

Asking readers to imagine the figurative death of an author or even describing the

steps taken to avoid pistol duels over authorial identity is very different from the thought experiment William Grimes requests in the final paragraph of his 1825 autobiographical narrative. There he makes a stark connection between the violence of slavery and the materiality of books:

I hope some will buy my books from charity, but I am no beggar. I am now entirely destitute of property; where and how I shall live I don't know; where and how I shall die I don't know, but I hope I may be prepared. If it were not for the stripes on my back which were made while I was a slave, I would in my will, leave my skin a legacy to the government, desiring that it might be taken off and made into parchment, and then bind the constitution of glorious happy and free America. Let the skin of an American slave, bind the charter of American Liberty.⁹¹

This gruesome passage comments on the economics of free black authorship, the motives of consumers of antebellum antislavery narratives, and the practice of bookbinding. Despite the variety of printing, subscription and distribution challenges for black authors in this period, Grimes managed to get his work published on his own and for copies to survive into the digital age. Grimes, who had worked in print-shops as a slave in Georgia, took the unusual step of applying for the copyright to his narrative as a free man. With this action, he linked one kind of story about his past self (*Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*) to a self as author, whose rights were declared if not protected by the

⁹¹ William Grimes, *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave. Written by Himself* (68). The full text is available as part of University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's "Documenting the South" digitization project. See <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/grimes25/grimes25.html>

copyright page. Within a national legal system that allowed slaves in the South to be marked by the lash and the “legacy” of slavery but also granted free blacks the chance in the North to mark themselves as citizens and authors via copyright, Grimes raises questions about the connections between location, citizenship, and print participation. What, for instance, does it mean to speak of early African American print culture when the opportunities for Southern and Northern participation in print culture were so different? Grimes’ last paragraph condemns the state rather than the inverse, when he takes the treasured founding document of “glorious happy and free America” and demands that readers recognize how the state-authored story the Constitution is supposed to celebrate cannot be separated from slavery.

Book historians might wonder what he is actually asking readers to imagine. Is Grimes thinking of a copy of the Constitution written or printed onto a scroll of human skin as if it were animal parchment? Or does he imagine a copy of the Constitution that circulates not as a handwritten or copper-plate impression but as a typeset document, printed on paper, in codex form, and bound in skin? Grimes’ repetition of “bind” suggests that he wanted readers to think here not of a scroll but of a book like the one the reader holds while viewing the last page of the *Life of William Grimes*. While anthropodermic bibliopeggy, the practice of binding books in human skin, was never widespread and even with DNA testing is difficult to confirm, there were certainly wills and confessions of executed criminals bound in the skin of their testators and confessors. The practice flourished during the French Revolution; there are several skin-bound copies of the French Constitution. In addition a Spanish law treatise is allegedly bound in the skin of

Jonas Wright, who, according to an inscription in the book, “was flayed alive by the Wavuma on the Fourth Day of August, 1632.”⁹² Grimes may or may not have known of the French constitutions or the law treatise bound in “flayed” skin, but it is clear that he uses the last page of his narrative to discomfit readers and to make them think about the document they are reading as a record of both the African American experience and as a material contribution to print culture. Invoking the hypocrisy of the Constitution, the binding of books and the shackling, binding, and whipping of slaves, Grimes forces readers to connect the goals of abolitionists and apologists with the material objects they used to promote their causes.

Despite nineteenth-century authors like Grimes making this parallel between the materiality of the book and the physical effects of slavery, literary scholars have not sufficiently studied the materiality of African American book history. Leon Jackson’s remarkably comprehensive 2010 *Book History* article, “The Talking Book and the Talking Book Historian: African American Cultures of Print—The State of the Discipline” argues that disciplinary approaches in book history and print culture studies have differed widely enough from African American literary studies approaches that scholars have not sufficiently incorporated the specific knowledge and data or the methodological advantages of their peers in both fields. Jackson describes African American literary studies before the 1960s as focused on content, combing through slave narratives for documentary and ethnographic evidence of the black experience (255). In

⁹² For a discussion of anthropodermic bibliopeggy, particularly of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century medical texts bound in human skin, see Carolyn Marvin, “The Body of the Text: Literacy’s Corporeal Constant” (130-149).

the following decades scholars such as Robert Stepto, Houston Baker, and most famously, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., turned greater attention to African-American literature's formal features, identifying blues and jazz aesthetics and signifying a complex strategy for relating to peers and the literary marketplace. Their work, according to Jackson, produced excellent close readings of texts and necessary approaches for describing the forming canon of African-American texts, but rarely focused on the bibliographic or material conditions of the texts themselves (Jackson 256). It should be noted that Gates has been arguing for decades for better attention to form, content, and literary culture: he concludes a piece titled "Preface to Blackness: Text and Pretext" from 1978 with a call for more scholarship that focuses on "the nature of intertextuality, that is, the nonthematic manner by which texts—poems and novels—respond to other texts" (Gates 254).

Jackson also asks why book historians have neglected African-American print culture despite an ever increasing archive of information about black printers, editors, and booksellers, about the printing and reprinting of black periodicals, the circulation of authors as lecturers and the books and pamphlets they self-marketed. While this neglect is being remedied by current scholarship, Jackson suggests that part of the problem was that critical bibliography as a discipline had focused on European print networks and archives with extensive edition variations, printer logbooks, and manuscript correspondence to analyze (256). For many African-American texts this information is difficult to track or entirely unknown, but of course these gaps should challenge rather than derail print culture scholars, and should force the field into new directions. The materiality of print,

the economics of publishing and distribution, the kinds of knowledge and social networks facilitated by the circulation, citation and republication of texts—these are important factors in the shape of American print cultures and African-American literature’s position in those cultures. If scholars lack the evidence to construct neat, complete bibliographies of individual African-American authors and texts, new methodological and theoretical approaches will have to focus on the culture in which the evidentiary fragments circulate. Thinking of Genette’s categorization of ancient Greek drama titles for which the plays themselves are lost as “paratexts without texts,” we should consider these fragments not just as “texts without authors” or “incomplete texts,” but as the details and aspects of the culture that were preserved—against all odds—instead of so many other pieces of nineteenth-century ephemera that have been completely lost (*Paratexts* 3). With William Wells Brown, however, we are lucky to have a very full archive because Brown was so productive in so many genres and mediums. Indeed, *Clotel* itself includes newspaper anecdotes, poetry, fiction, and autobiography. Here I am particularly interested in the ways that Brown uses the space of the paratext for autobiographical narration that partially participates in white print culture’s expectations about black autobiography, but then uses that same paratextual, autobiographical space to confront white readers about those very expectations. This confrontation can be most clearly recognized by attending to shifts between Brown’s 1847 and 1853 narratives, but first it is useful to move quickly through the conventions of the white authorizing paratexts that regularly preceded captivity and slave narratives.

Authorizing Paratexts

Written in 1853, *Clotel: The President's Daughter* constantly reminds readers that British Christians, Northern Abolitionists, and American politicians, including Thomas Jefferson, are now and have always been tied to slavery, directly or by inaction. Calling attention to the hypocrisies that haunt American history, authors like Irving, Hawthorne, and Brown resist the memes of national histories that Americans have always preferred, including the city upon a hill, the biographies of revolutionary heroes, or errands into the wilderness. Troubling the ideal of a pure national founding and showing its racialized past and present, Brown offers his “Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown” as a distinct section from the novel *Clotel* that it precedes. It also functions to demonstrate that Brown’s fiction comes from deep personal knowledge of slavery, New Orleans, and escape routes north. Yet like so many paratexts discussed in this dissertation, Brown’s prefatory “Memoir of the Author” quickly exceeds a mere authenticating role.⁹³ In doing so, it offers a compelling case study in how one black author managed to publish in a mostly white and transatlantic market.

Brown chose to subvert several norms regarding black authorship and captivity narratives to produce the multi-generic and self-authorizing *Clotel*. A brief history of these norms shows the extent of Brown’s innovation. The “authorizing paratext” has had a particularly vexed history for narratives describing enslaved or captured Americans. To give just two very different examples, authorizing paratexts in America are appended to texts about a white sailor captured off the Barbary Coast and a black woman enslaved in

⁹³ The narrative is referred to in the book itself variously as the “Sketch of the Author,” “Memoir of the Author,” and as “Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown.”

Jamaica; the way they introduce and authenticate the subjects significantly alters the way readers encounter the actual narratives. *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Sailor* (1817) describes a white American sailor who recounted his capture and “three years in slavery by the Arabs of the Great Desert” to Samuel Cook, who identifies himself as editor rather than author in a preface and “Concluding Remarks.” Cook also convinced Joseph Dupuis to buttress Adams’ narrative with a letter placed at the end of the editor’s preface and in an extensive appendix verifying key details. If this is insufficient for skeptical readers, Cook also mentions that while he was interviewing Adams, “upwards of fifty gentlemen saw and interrogated him at different times; among whom there was not one who was not struck with the artlessness and good sense of Adams’s replies” (xiii). In the page count and its variety of authorizing strategies, Adams’ account is dwarfed by the apparatus that supports it; like other forms of early nineteenth-century editing, it is the editor’s skill as a collector that earns the text praise for its literary achievement.

This is the case even when the editor explicitly denies such intentions, as Thomas Pringle does in his preface to the anti-slavery text *The History of Mary Prince* (1831). “The idea of writing Mary Prince’s history,” Pringle assures us in the preface’s very first line, “was first suggested by herself. She wished it to be done, she said, that the good people in England might hear from a slave what a slave had felt and suffered” (55). Pringle writes that it was “taken down from Mary’s own lips by a lady who happened to be at the time residing in my family as a visitor,” turning Prince into something of a found object transcribed by an unnamed amanuensis and edited by Thomas Pringle, who guarantees the veracity of the narrative by “Mr. Joseph Phillips, who was a resident in the

colony during the same period, and had known her there” (55-56). Pringle writes that: “It was written out fully, with all the narrator’s repetitions and prolixities, and afterwards pruned into its present shape, retaining, as far as was practicable, Mary’s exact expressions and peculiar phraseology” (55). The second half of the sentence works to emphasize the work of an editor in preserving “peculiar phraseology,” while the first half of the sentence emphasizes Pringle’s editorial role in “pruning” the “narrator” into a readable and acceptably literary product. These two examples are not quite what Genette calls the “allographic paratext,” since their “narrators” are so clearly contained and governed by their “editors,” who appear to have been very active composers and shapers of the prose that appears. Neither, however, are they “autographic” in the ways that William Wells Brown makes his preface to *Clotel* authenticating and within his control.

Prince’s and Adam’s captivity narratives are also examples of the kind of slave narrative that Robert Stepto calls an “*eclectic narrative*” or a “first phase” slave narrative. In contrast, a document for which “the various forms (letters, prefaces, guarantees, tales) and their accompanying voices become integrated in the slave narrative” constitutes a second phase “*integrated*” narrative (257). In Stepto’s further classification, third phase slave narratives can either present themselves as “generic narrative” in which “authenticating documents are totally *subsumed by the tale* or as “authenticating narrative” in which the tale is “*subsumed by the authenticating strategy*” (258). Under this classification, Stepto identifies Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* as a generic narrative. Douglass’ voice and narration, rather than the supporting paratexts by white abolitionists

William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips dominate the reader's experience, and even the supporting documents by white authors are ancillary anti-slavery propaganda pieces rather than simple acknowledgments of Douglass' authenticity as a slave or author (268-270).

William Wells Brown's first publication, the first-person *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave* (1847) has many of the features of a generic narrative: the claim that the text was "Written by Himself" on the title-page; first person narration; and multiple white authenticators. Contrarily, the autobiographical narrative that Brown uses to preface *Clotel* is for Stepto an "authenticating narrative" because "the narrator exhibits considerable control of his narrative by becoming an editor of disparate texts for authentication purposes" (277). This is certainly the case, but Stepto moves too quickly beyond the implications of Brown's editor-function. I will have more to say about this when I consider *Clotel's* use of juxtaposition as an inventive editor, rather than a strictly utilitarian and authenticating editor, but it bears repeating here that Brown is not just an author, or an author collating material and assuming the role of editor at the same time.

Like Irving and Neal, Brown's mode is best understood as paratextual experimentation, and his role best understood as that of the paratextualist. Describing him as an author who plagiarizes the work of others through laziness does not do enough justice to Brown as a collector and compiler. Focusing on Brown simply as the kind of collector that Andrew Piper describes discounts the effect of Brown's narrative contributions that stitch the novel together and complicate its political critique. Combining narratives about his personhood (as we have seen in Neal's increasingly

autobiographical prefaces and postscripts in his own role as paratextualist) with editorial intervention regarding white publishing norms and white religious and legal hypocrisy, Brown achieves an unsettling effect as a paratextualist. We need to think of him in this light, I argue, because critics are too quick to apologize for his failure as a novelist, apologize or condemn his plagiarism, or applaud his compilation. Viewed individually, Brown-the-novelist, Brown-the-plagiarist or Brown-the-compiler is a failure. Viewed as a paratextualist, however, he is both part of the group of authors and editors my project connects, and a formal innovator whose paratextual experiments make *Clotel's* aggressive stance towards readers possible and effective. Critics go to great lengths to explain that despite *Clotel's* failure as a novel it still warrants our attention, generally by discussing aspects of its editorial or citational practice. What I argue in this chapter is that those editorial and citation choices make sense only in the context of Brown and others' deliberate paratextual experimentation.

Paratexts, Passivity, and Price in the 1847, 1849, and 1853 Narratives

***Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave* (1847)**

Brown's first publication, the 1847 *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave* is a first-person slave narrative, but it begins with several third-person authenticating paratexts. First there is a misattributed and misquoted epigraph. It is followed by a dedication to Wells Brown (first-person), a letter from Edmund Quincy asserting that he has minimally edited Brown's prose, and then a short rallying cry to abolitionists from J.C. Hathaway that calls Brown's "little book" a "voice from the

prison-house” (7). The epigraph misattributed to Cowper, the dedication to Wells Brown, and the allographic prefaces from Quincy and Hathaway: these are fairly standard marks of slave narratives that slot black lives easily into white envelopes. Ezra Greenspan even describes Brown’s choice of the subtitle “Written by Himself” as a passive choice that Brown allowed as a “tag phrase amounting to a badge of identity required for authentication of African American authorship” (xi). Brown’s first text established him as an important new voice in abolitionist circles, but it did not do so with paratextual innovation or subversion. Instead, William Wells Brown mostly described himself as a victim (or near-victim) of print culture rather than a contributor to it.

Brown connects violence perpetrated against slaves with the mechanics of print when he describes his own work for a printer while still a slave. Carrying type from one office to another, he remembers being attacked by “sons of slave-holders, who pelted me with snow-balls. Having the heavy form of type in my hands, I could not make my escape by running; so I laid down the type and gave them battle....they overpowered me and would have captured me, if I had not resorted to my heels. Upon my retreat they took possession of the type” (19). The literal meaning here is that Brown put down the type in order to fight back, and that he had to abandon the type when he was overpowered. The fact that this narrative is titled *William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave*, further emphasizes Brown’s relation to print—still a slave, still, often, a victim of the workings of white print culture.

In another instance of Brown’s recognition that white writing had the power to cause him harm and that understanding of that culture could help him, he describes how

he avoided a beating while still a slave. Even when he was illiterate, Brown understood the collusions and menace white writing made possible. Taking a note to the jailer for his master, Brown worried about its content, so he asked a sailor to read it to him and discovered that his master had contracted-out Brown's whipping for a misdemeanor the day before. Determined to avoid the whipping, Brown persuades another black man to go to the jail instead, giving him the dollar intended for the jailer and telling him he only has to run a simple errand. That man gets the whipping *and* a receipt from the jailer saying he had whipped the "very saucy boy," which note Brown then takes back to his master, wets his own cheeks to simulate tears, and deceives his master into thinking he received the whipping (33-34). Brown concludes the anecdote by saying that "this incident shows how it is that slavery makes its victims lying and mean; for which vices it afterwards reproaches them, and uses them as arguments to prove that they deserve no better fate" (35). Thus even as a slave, Brown recognized that white writing could make him into a passive victim unless he found the means to subvert it. Brown again experienced this when he tried to escape. Newspaper runaway-slave notices and reward advertisements traveled faster than the escaping slaves could, making their journeys north even more treacherous. The masters partially funded the newspapers with their advertisements, and some of those papers then wrote the "arguments" justifying slavery about slaves who "deserve no better fate." Indeed, the very next chapter describes how Brown's first escape attempt was thwarted by a man holding the handbill advertising him as a runaway (41). Brown makes explicit, therefore, the violence that white writing wreaked on black bodies. These are examples of the direct violence and subjugation made possible by white

writing, but Brown was especially interested in the subtler ways that hostile and friendly white writing presented African Americans to white readers.

Narrative of William W. Brown, An American Slave (1849)

In the 1847 narrative, Brown had described having to drop the type to do battle against the sons of slave-owners. In 1849, Brown brought the type to the fight, carrying stereotype plates of his 1847 narrative to England. It is in the 1849 edition that we begin to see the makings of Brown the paratextualist, although this edition has received scant critical attention. Brown slightly alters the narrative's title: he now declares himself an "American Slave" rather than a "Fugitive Slave" in the subtitle. He adds the poem "Fling Out the Anti-Slavery Flag," which he had published in 1848 in his collection of anti-slavery poems, *The Anti-Slavery Harp*. Fearing that white slaveholders were taking "possession" not just of bodies and rights, but of narratives that justify the "peculiar institution," he directs a new "Note to the Present Edition" to British readers, since they are also facing Southern apologist propaganda he fears is altering the battle back in the United States. The "slaveholder, crafty and politic, as deliberate tyrants generally are," writes Brown, "rarely leaves the shores of Europe without attempting at least to assuage the prevalent hostility against his beloved 'peculiar institution'"(iv). Brown writes that he has come to Britain to "diminish their influence," for which "the cultivation of a correct public sentiment at home and abroad" will be necessary" (iv). Already this is a divergence from the belief that passive/raw presentation of slave-life best serves the abolitionist movement—Brown is acknowledging that slave-holder apologists can sway

British opinion by persuasion—and that he believes simple narration of slavery’s ills will no longer effectively combat the “crafty and politic” opposition. This necessitates his additional paratextual glosses—and marks his development as a paratextualist.

This British edition is also the first site where Brown adds a startling new authenticating paratext, which he uses to turn the tables. Brown sent his 1847 narrative to Enoch Price, his former master, and Edmund Quincy received a letter back from Price. In the 1849 edition, Brown writes that “it tells its own story, and forever settles the question of my having been a slave” (vii). In that letter, which Brown reprints, Price states that Brown “is a slave belonging to me, and ran away from me the first day of January, 1834.... I was told that he was going to run away, but I did not believe the man, for I had so much confidence in William. I want you to see him, and see if what I say is not the truth” (vii). Brown has decided that it is no longer enough just to tell his own story in the first person or to rely on friendly white authenticators. He replaces Hathaway’s preface with Price’s letter, and he makes his former master, “tell [his] own story,” further emphasizing the limited role that Brown feels mere narration can achieve. When Price narrates his ownership of Brown it has no effect—Brown is free, and far from Price’s grasp, in England. Placing the hostile authenticator into the paratext, Brown decreases Price’s power—except that he serves the same function of white authentication by “settl[ing] the question of my having been a slave.”⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Trish Loughran also notes Price’s powerlessness in this first letter, but she is quoting from the 1853 narrative, which also includes the next letter from Price, after the Fugitive Slave Law gives Price additional power (413-16).

“Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown” (1853)

Christopher Mulvey goes so far as to say that William Wells Brown only wrote one book, over and over—his autobiography.⁹⁵ Critics including Robert Levine and Mulvey demonstrate that many of the anecdotes in the novel section of *Clotel* also come from Brown’s other narratives of his life—some are lifted almost word for word even from the biography that precedes the novel and under the same covers. That biography is called “Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown.” New details emerge in the 1853 narrative, however, that Brown had not previously published, particularly regarding Brown’s life after slavery. The 1853 narrative is significantly shorter than the other narratives even though it covers many more years of his life. Crucially, the new details that Brown adds in this third-person narration emphasize Brown’s argument that writing is itself a political act, and that he worked hard to control as many aspects of publication and circulation as he could—even outside of traditional print media.

For instance, we learn that, like Frederick Douglass, Brown fed starving white schoolboys in exchange for basic help reading and writing. Even before he could write proficiently, Brown began publishing his new name: he describes tricking another schoolboy into teaching him how to write by making “some flourishes with no meaning,” and then challenging the boy to “beat that writing” (29). The boy obliges, writing the name “William Wells Brown” correctly for Brown, who then “marked up the fence for nearly a quarter of a mile, trying to copy, till I got so that I could write my name. Then I

⁹⁵ “Revising and re-inventing his life-story was his great, ongoing, life-consuming project. Almost every year after 1853, he produced if not another version of *Clotel*, then new versions of other works” (Mulvey).

went on with my chalking, and, in fact, all board fences within half a mile of where I lived were marked over with some kind of figures I had made, in trying to learn how to write” (29). The name given to him by the Quaker Wells Brown becomes truly Brown’s when he writes it all over his neighborhood. This account of how Brown’s “given” name, gifted to him by Wells Brown, became his own, constitutes an important part of his description of education-as-liberation. It also reveals Brown’s determination to publish even when the extent of his ability extended only to his own name, when his audience was only as large as the curious bystanders who observed him chalking fence boards around town, and when he had no access to the organs of print culture other than the chalk he owned and the fences he appropriated.

Ezra Greenspan writes that Brown’s borrowing and citation “treated the domain of public discourse as one to be cleared of proprietary fences,” in a manner that matched the transformation of “print culture into an inchoate industry subject to federal law and regulation” (Greenspan xx). When Brown “actively gathered,” therefore, he was “self-consciously engaged in undermining such restrictions.” In doing so, writes Greenspan, Brown “engaged repeatedly in verbal acts of violating the violator. As slavery violated black bodies, families, and customs, so he reciprocally violated white cultural norms and forms” (xx). Such a designation does not go far enough, because as a paratextualist highly attuned to the effect that paratexts in particular have on readers, Brown was especially focused on violating a specific cultural norm: white, abolitionist reader expectations. To read Brown’s paratexts is to find an author unwilling simply to confirm for white readers that the institution of slavery degrades black bodies or that it is as

unchristian as it is indefensible. Brown's primary goal was to discomfit white readers—to show them the operation of cultural norms around black authorship, and how those norms also had the effect of degrading the very black bodies they believed they were supporting with their lecture tickets and their book purchases.

It is in this context that Brown's paratextual narrative of his coming-into-writing so emphatically connects writing, property, and individual expression. Good fences demarcate physical markers of property, markers of boundaries, and definition. In choosing them as his first publishing medium (and, crucially, deciding to make this a key episode in a highly condensed description of his life), Brown was writing himself onto a liminal territory to which he had no claim, but which could hardly be considered theft or trespass—vandalism or desecration, perhaps, but not theft. Brown's use of autobiography, whether it occurs liminally, in the physical paratexts of the books he writes, or in the expression of his name on the physical property boundaries of white fences, functions as commentary on the limits of white publishing to acknowledge or to restrain black writing. Genette compels our understanding of onymity to include a variety of authorial assertions and deceptions; Brown's determination to publish his name even on fence boards is a paratextualist's move because it aggressively asserts that his very name is worth the attention of others.

The value of active (and responsive) public circulation is also a major theme in Brown's 1853 narrative. Consider one of the few parts of Brown's narrative presented in the first person: "The following interesting account of Brown's first going into business for himself, which we transcribe from his "Three Years in Europe," will show the energy

of the man.” Explicitly citing his own work already in print-circulation, Brown proceeds to explain how he had set up shop first as a barber and then as a banker, having a printer create his own “Shinplasters” that he honored in his barber shop. “At first,” he writes, “my notes did not take well; they were too new, and viewed with a suspicious eye. But through the assistance of my customers, and a good deal of exertion on my part, my bills were soon in circulation” (68). The parallels between “wildcat banks” and print culture are notable; “notes” do not take well at first, when they are suspicious, new, unapproved by periodicals or literary elites. Once in circulation, however, his “notes” do just fine. Fine, that is, until a competitor organizes a “run” on his bank to “try the soundness of [his] bank” (68). The run (requesting other money in exchange for Brown’s Shinplasters) quickly depletes Brown’s cash reserves, but it does not end his banking. On the first day, he closes shop early and says that he “was completely done *Brown* for the day. However, I was not to be ‘used up in this way’” (69).⁹⁶ He consults the friend who helped him set up as a banker, who convinces him that whenever anyone brings back Shinplasters, he needs to immediately “send them out and get other money for them.” By keeping his own notes in constant circulation, Brown keeps his bank “on a sound basis.” By constantly recycling his own prose and reprinting useful text others had written, Brown wrote autobiography that could be continually recycled and revised without using him up. Updating autobiographical versions of himself and circulating them in print was the paratextual strategy Brown employed not just for self-promotion, but as a reminder to

⁹⁶ “Done brown” was a slang term for swindled, but as Robert Levine notes, it must also have been a pun on his own name and on race (69, editorial note).

readers that black authors could only control narratives about their authorial and personal selves when they kept those narratives circulating on their own terms.

It is in the paratexts of the 1853 narrative (which is itself a paratext accompanying *Clotel*, of course) that Brown most emphatically confronts white literary culture. In the paratext Brown inverts the very idea of white authentication as guarantor of black authorship. The 1849 narrative replaced one friendly white authenticator with one hostile authenticator, his former master. Instead of first person narration of those first two narratives, Brown relies in 1853 on third-person narration, which has the effect of making him the speaker of the kind of third-person authenticating biography that J.C. Hathaway offered on his behalf in the 1847 narrative.⁹⁷ Edmund Quincy's letter sent to Brown has been replaced with the letter sent to Quincy from Enoch Price. As in the 1849 edition, Brown reprints Price's letter in the 1853 edition, but he also adds additional letters from a variety of abolitionists that also authenticate his merit as an anti-slavery speaker. On the last page of the narrative, however, Brown returns to let Enoch Price have the last word once more, in which Price sends a second letter and increases his price for Brown's freedom because "the Fugitive Slave Bill has passed since then. I can now take him anywhere in the United States" (80). Concluding the narration like this gives the text particular urgency and currency: Brown cannot return to the United States until Price is paid or the Fugitive Slave Act is repealed.

The last letter from Price reminds readers quite directly about the uncomfortable connection between white readers and white slave-owners; they both pay for Brown's

⁹⁷ Robert Levine makes a version of this argument in his critical edition of *Clotel* (49).

life, whether that is a life of labor or a life in autobiographical prose. The first letter, however, demonstrates Brown's efforts to invert authentication strategies. Instead of relying on a sympathetic abolitionist to endorse him, Brown has a distinctly hostile witness, his former master, Enoch Price, verify Brown's slave past, and even verify how much trust Price had in him as a slave despite being warned by a peer: "I was told that he was going to run away, but I did not believe the man, for I had so much confidence in William. I want you to see him, and see if what I say is not the truth" (71). Of course, any time that white British supporters went to see Brown speak on the abolitionist speaker's circuit, they were placed in the same role of gaining "confidence in William." It is complex enough that Brown uses a letter requesting payment for the offer of his manumission as authentication of his slave past, but I think that Brown also wants readers to experience the particularly uncomfortable recognition that there is not that much difference between Enoch Price reading the 1847 narrative and requesting payment for Brown's freedom and their own desires that Brown (and all slaves) will gain freedom. It also aligns Price and abolitionists: to Price, Brown is worth three hundred twenty-five dollars before the Fugitive Slave Law and five hundred dollars after its passage—how much do the abolitionists value their man?⁹⁸ The logic of abolitionist literature, however, still requires that Brown can prove his authenticity and merit—and even when he self-authorizes his narrative, he proves his authenticity by citing Price and reminding

⁹⁸ In fact, Brown turns out to be worth three hundred dollars to the abolition movement and the institution of slavery it opposes: Ellen Richardson paid Enoch Price for Brown's manumission in 1854 and Brown returned to his anti-slavery career in the United States within a few months.

abolitionists about the links between white authentication in publishing and the assertion of white property rights over black bodies.

Trish Loughran's otherwise useful commentary on how Brown and his former master both invoke the Fugitive Slave Law to measure Brown's worth also does not go far enough in thinking through the consequences for readers. Loughran writes that Brown, like Whitman, connected that "master-text of 1787 with its heir in 1850 (explicitly linking the Constitution and the Fugitive Slave Law as two texts that overlap within a material field of historical circulation), but rather than citing England as the metropolitan source of America's present day corruption, he ironically hails it... as a site of freedom" (415). This is certainly true, and Brown quotes regularly from the Constitution and cites the Fugitive Slave Law throughout *Clotel*, further reminding readers of the hypocrisy that can let both those documents circulate simultaneously. Indeed, as Loughran notes, Brown makes that combined circulation clear and puts it into a transatlantic context: the Fugitive Slave Law makes it dangerous for Brown to return to the United States, but it also gives England cultural and moral superiority that must have riled even the most federalist or loyalist of New Englanders. Price, Brown's former master, has no legal authority to take him in England, as Brown notes:

my old master may make his appearance here [in England], with the constitution of the United States in his pocket, the fugitive slave law in one hand and the chains in the other, and claim me as his property; but all will avail him nothing. I can here stand and look the tyrant in the face, and tell him that I am his equal! England is, indeed, the 'land of the free, and the home of the brave'" (73).

Price's letter invoking the Fugitive Slave Law should embarrass Southerners, because it shows them their powerlessness to contain Brown's print production or restrain his geographic freedom; he can travel to Britain and still publish in American abolitionist papers. It embarrasses northern abolitionists because it is one more reminder that they have lost one of their best speakers to England, and that Brown is now publishing, in a transatlantic context, material that further emphasizes British superiority: *they* recognize Brown's merit; *they* protect the "free" and harbor the "brave"; *they* stand up against the tyrant. The Fugitive Slave Law, Brown reminds abolitionists, strips the titles "freedom-fighter" and "tyrant-tamer" that the United States had enjoyed since that first "master-text" of 1787, and which they now must cede back to the British. Brown, by citing himself and citing his own necessitated exile and the inability of southerners to harm him, phrases his exile in terms of American loss: loss of power to control black lives; loss of moral superiority; loss of the kind of cultural pride Americans could formerly claim as the transatlantic center of political reform.

What a paratext does, here, is to turn one genre into another; autobiographical narratives were seen as the primary product African American authors could produce; Brown showed that he was capable of producing (in the 1847 narrative) and then condensing and extending (in the 1853 narrative) the traditional shape of the slave narrative. Turning primary product into preface, Brown reorients abolitionist reader assumptions about the value of black literary production. In this context, the additional paratexts that Brown adds to *Clotel*, including citation to *Anti-Slavery Harp* as epigraphs, function as further reminders that black authors are fully capable of the wide range of

literary genres available to white writers (autobiography, editing, novels), and that they can use even the most precious American political documents (the Constitution) to expose the prejudices of Antebellum literary and political culture.

Brown as Editor

His fence-board authorship and his shinplaster circulation show that even before he published in print, Brown was finding ways to occupy what Andrew Piper calls “writerly space.” Piper is referring to nineteenth-century translators, who he says “occupied an important writerly space of the in-between” alongside the “romantic editor [who] embodied a larger negotiation with historical, linguistic, generic and medial alterity” (87). This interstitial status of “the writerly space of the in-between” is an apt description of William Wells Brown’s work. Brown wrote *Clotel* while quite literally unable to occupy the “writerly space” of America—the Fugitive Slave Act made return for him to the United States too dangerous—while at the same time British financial support for abolition made the British lecture circuit important territory for Brown. Writing in London about American subjects, incorporating friendly and hostile periodical pieces, addressing British and American audiences--Brown’s balancing act necessitated his occupation of a liminal writerly space. Piper writes about the ballads, song-cycles and epics of early nineteenth-century European folk culture on his way to a detailed analysis of Sir Walter Scott’s ballad collecting. He mentions: “Joseph Ritson’s *Scottish Songs* (1794), Friedrich von der Hagen’s *Der Nibelungen Lied* (1807), or Francois-Juste-Marie Raynouard’s six volume collection of French troubadours, *Choix des poesies* (1816-

1821)” (84-5). Each of these texts features editors whose act of collection worked towards national unity. Piper says that “in their rising fascination with a vernacular literary past, early-nineteenth-century editors played an integral role in producing the creative heritage upon which the imagined communities of emerging European nation states were to be based” (85). Citing Benedict Anderson’s famous term for the work of literature in building the “imagined communities” necessary to the modern nation state, Piper is interested in the ways that national formation always involves various forms of translation and up-dating: decoding older forms of language, introducing new genres or expanding the very notion of the literary.

Contrast this description of the purpose and effects of collecting and editing vernacular folk culture with what John Ernest describes as William Wells Brown’s goals in compiling *Clotel*:

In his role as cultural editor, Brown gathers the documents that reveal the national disunity—not the meaninglessness of the national text but rather its meaningful incoherence—and he constructs or reshapes his various narrative lines to instruct his readers to read beyond the text to a moral realm presented not as the ideals of the left column but rather as the interpretive tools one needs to read one’s world (34).

For Anderson and Piper, collection of historical folk culture reifies the naturalness of a nation’s history and future. For Ernest, slavery requires that Brown expose the impossibility of that national unity. It should be noted that *Clotel*’s presentation of disunity is achieved through juxtaposition rather than simple accretion of slavery’s ills.

The point is not simply to demonstrate that slavery breeds factions, promotes the likelihood of rebellion, and degrades white as well as black lives: Brown always keeps before his readers the idea that the ideals that make Americans and Christians most proud are falsehoods as long as slavery exists. The gap between American revolutionary political rhetoric or religious doctrine and its practice should shame each free American when they remember “one-sixth of the people of this land are in chains and slavery” and cannot exercise the free will of citizens or Christians (212). In ways not dissimilar to Irving’s demands on the reader or his insistence that simple historical narratives of American nationalism are dangerous, Brown works to provide what Ernest calls “the interpretive tools one needs to read one’s world.” Ernest’s description of *Clotel* as a “gather[ing] of documents” is accurate in the sense that few novels are as multiform in their generic citation. Yet Brown had already been an editor in the very sense that Piper and Ernest discuss. His prior experience, then, makes his citation of and his divergence from that practice in *Clotel* all the more telling.

In 1848, the same year that Irving chose to edit his *A History of New York* so that it presented him as an author for the very first time and thereby de-emphasized his editorial role, Brown published the *Anti-Slavery Harp: A Collection of Songs for Anti-Slavery Meetings*. The epitextual newspaper advertisements that promoted *A History of New York* in 1809 caused readers to experience that text’s promotion haphazardly, socially, and diachronically: haphazardly because one reader might not see each of the successive newspaper pieces; socially because through rumor and hearsay one might put together the whole story of Knickerbocker’s announced disappearance and re-emergence;

and diachronically because the six-week gap between the initial “Distressing” missing person ad to the publication date elongated the publication process. The conversion of those epitextual newspaper advertisements into peritextual prefatory material for the 1848 edition transformed that work from a multi-media event into a single volume that was intended to be purchased as part of a collected edition of Irving’s work. The initially unknown author (missing/lost as the doddering, “not in his right mind” Knickerbocker) was equally transformed by his re-location and re-discovery forty years later as Washington Irving, father of American literature, no longer wandering upstate but now static and snugly ensconced “by the fireside” in Tarrytown. In that same year that Irving added nostalgic prefaces to the “Author’s Revised Edition” of *A History of New York*, William Wells Brown published *The Anti-Slavery Harp: A Collection of Songs for Anti-Slavery Meetings*.

Unlike Walter Scott’s collections, in which extensive notes allow him to demonstrate erudition and scope, or Irving’s 1848 edition which concentrates authorial presence, Brown’s collection is entirely devoid of paratextual gloss beyond brief notes about the location or circumstances of composition of a few of the poems and a very brief preface in which Brown distances himself from the kind of editorial project that Scott conducts. Brown says that it was “The demand of the public for a cheap Anti-Slavery Song-Book, containing Songs of a more recent composition” that led him to compile the *Anti-Slavery Harp*. These are not poems that demonstrate an ancient heritage recovered—they are published precisely because they are current “of a recent composition” and the goal is not to elevate their stature but to keep them “cheap” and better circulating. This is

not to say that Brown discounted the poems as literature—rather that he did not view himself as an inventive compiler promoting himself in the *Anti-Slavery Harp*. The epigraph that opens *Clotel*, however, quotes the first two couplets of a poem from the *Anti-Slavery Harp* called “The Slave-Auction—A Fact” (81). If in the *Anti-Slavery Harp* Brown resisted creative compilation and juxtaposition, in *Clotel* it is his primary mode.

The 1853 *Narrative* ends with Price’s price for Brown. *Clotel* begins with verses about the sale of slaves. At the end of a disturbing chapter in which “the bones, muscles, sinews, blood, and nerves of young lady of sixteen were sold for five hundred dollars; her moral character for two hundred. . .her Christianity for three hundred, and her chastity and virtue for four hundred dollars more” Brown concludes with the final stanzas of “The Slave-Auction” poem. “Blush, Christian, blush! For e’en the dark, / Untutored heathen see / Thy inconsistency; and lo! They scorn thy God, and thee!” (88). Brown bridges the “Memoir of the Author” to *Clotel* by connecting Enoch Price’s valuation to the fictional character Clotel’s sale. He bridges his prior publication *The Anti-Slavery Harp* to his current work by quoting it in his new novel. These juxtapositions, finally, connect the Preface that Brown wrote to precede both the Memoir and the novel, in which he rails against the “professed Christians” who continue to support the institution of slavery by referencing their “inconsistency” and the hypocrisy of abolitionists or “professed Christians” who do not devote every effort to “lay bare the institution” (46). “Blush, Christian, blush,” Brown commands, invoking the imperative tense to encourage action (46). Inside the boards of the book that contain that preface, verse quotation, memoir and novel, Brown assumes the liminal “writerly space” of the paratexts and makes use of

their permeable borders, connecting various kinds of discourse (prefatory, autobiographical, narrative, poetic) to emphasize that abolition must occupy every lingual territory available.

Brown's endless recycling of his own biography, his extensive borrowing of Lydia Maria Childs' story "The Quadroon" in *Clotel*, and his liberal reprinting of periodical anecdotes throughout *Clotel* lead Lara Cohen to declare "citation and iteration" to be the "literary mode" of *Clotel* (1).⁹⁹ Cohen writes that *Clotel* "demands fresh forms of analysis that would recognize citation as an important technique of African American print culture, theorizing modes of textual production that exceed origination to encompass reading, maneuvering, and rearrangement" (5). When we focus on the heavy citation from his other published writings in periodicals, from letters about his lecture performances and prior versions of his autobiography, Brown's recycling appears properly as a strategy that resists the roles traditionally available to black writers. Noting that "measuring literary achievement by the production of selfhood reproduces the logic of slavery," Cohen argues that Brown may have avoided striving for "originality and authenticity" in *Clotel* as one further means to break from molds established for black authorship (5,1). To this I add only that because Brown was interested in resisting dominant or expected modes *and* in explicitly drawing attention to the way that he challenges those modes, it is no surprise that he was such an active paratextualist and that

⁹⁹ Lara Cohen and Jordan Stein organized the excellent March 2010 conference *Early African American Print Culture in Theory and Practice*. Essays presented at the conference are now being collected for a collection under review at the University of Pennsylvania Press. I thank Lara Cohen for sharing a pre-publication draft of her chapter with me.

he made such a point of acknowledging his citation and re-iteration of his prior publications.

In thinking through *Clotel's* edition history, Christopher Mulvey writes that “*Miralda* shows how *Clotel* became *Clotelle*.” *Clotel*, a novel that incorporated American periodical work for a British audience next became *Miralda*, published serially in the New York *Weekly Anglo-African*. I agree with Mulvey’s important reminder that this switch of venue would have substantively changed a reader’s experience even if the text was not also significantly altered. Mulvey notes that *Miralda's* serialization in an abolitionist periodical has the effect of:

reversing the construction of *Clotel* which embedded abolitionist material in the fiction. At the top of its seven-column page, each installment of *Miralda* has a banner declaring “Man must be free!—if not through the Law, why then above the Law.” Read in the *Anglo-African*, *Miralda* reads like the 1853 version because it is surrounded by the political, social, and moral contexts which the 1853 version had to carry within its covers. (Online Critical Introduction).

Again, Brown’s revision for each new venue assured constant circulation in whatever medium availed itself; that Brown consciously adapted each version to react to shifts in print culture opportunities makes clear that he recognized that each medium’s new audiences would require new forms of address.

William Wells Brown revised and republished *Clotel* five times, mostly in codex but also as periodical; few libraries are lucky enough to contain each edition or generous enough to allow a scholar to place so many fragile and valuable books on the same table.

Now a new digital archive, curated by Christopher Mulvey, presents all of those editions on an innovative website that allows readers to comparison-shop three editions at once, scrolling three separate columns to see each textual variation. There is no question that digital databases ought to transform literary scholarship and undergraduate pedagogy in the next decade. As I hope my first three chapters have shown, combining the detailed archival work of critical bibliography and literary history with structuralist theory and the anecdotal close-reading associated with new historicism has two kinds of value. First, it can show students that the labor-intensive work of edition and reception history or genetic criticism can lead them towards deeper readings of textual content. Second, it can encourage the best scholars of print history and the history of the book to recognize that their work tells a story as interesting as the plot or poetics of the texts they study.

Incomplete bibliographic information can also require that scholars move away from making arguments about individual contributions to a print culture and redirect analysis onto the parameters of the culture itself. No one disputes that trips to archives lead us to find texts we are not seeking as well as those we are. The great advantage of the digital is the ready availability of so many more texts than even the most comprehensive rare book rooms can offer, but we learn much less about how those objects were collected. For thinking about a designation like “early” or “print culture,” the question of how these texts circulated and ended up in a shoebox in an attic is a subject for study in its own right. Meredith McGill, at the March 2010 Early African American Print Culture Conference, talked about her own interest in a single poem, Francis Harper’s “The Slave Mother.” McGill noted that she came to the poem first

through a modern compilation by Francis Smith Foster, *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*, and that aggregating Harper's work into a collected volume, some of which was formerly available only in disparate rare book reading rooms across the country, has been an invaluable tool for scholars. What a newly typeset volume like that obscures, however, is material evidence about original typefaces, page size and white space, and gives an impression of the author as a unified whole rather than an individual whose print record was scattered throughout periodicals and books. McGill explained that an initial interest in Harper's poem led her to research and discover at least seventy-five other anonymously published slave mother poems. With optical character recognition software now correctly interpreting even sloppy and worn nineteenth-century type, keyword-searchable databases are gradually allowing scholars to offer quantitative analysis of print culture and to move away from what McGill warns have too long been "author-centered literary nationalisms" (*American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* 20).

McGill and others at the conference showed how digitization can alter the future of print culture scholarship; these databases should offer not just scholarly but pedagogic utility. With little technical know-how, one can now easily create a website that lists, in hyper-link form, each "slave mother" poem, without presenting any of them. Such a website would function like a card catalog directing students out towards the stacks, but one where just a few clicks away, they can find each instance of slave mother poems in the digital archives where they are hosted. This would allow students to do comparative work regarding the poems and to have some virtual sense of the archive or context from

which they were scanned and digitized. The promise of the web is that texts can appear both as they did in their original contexts (that is, not re-arranged in readers but merely hyper-linked from site to site). Rather than lump the African, American, national, regional, and local under the category of the African American, we can offer analysis (and teach our students) not just about individual authorial production but about how those authors were positioned within their original publication venues and how those publishing circles were part of larger communities of reading.

We should also acknowledge that this kind of groundbreaking digital scholarship is nothing new—that it has in fact always been practiced by paratextualists. John Neal created scrapbooks of his own reviews, pasting them into an empty book and adding manuscript notes throughout that comment on his era’s publication norms. Peter Stallybrass, commenting on Daniel Pastorius’ *Alphabetical Hive of More Than Two Thousand Honey-combs*, argues that commonplace compilation has always been a form of database. Whether we organize with the digits of our fingers or the digital technology of optical character recognition, scholars also need to edit, compile, and preface.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Commonplacing was also about access: readers copied, longhand, excerpts from texts they did not own but wanted to consult after they returned a borrowed text. The digital era has not, alas, created universal access even to books long out of copyright. Mulvey’s electronic *Clotel* is a wonderful resource, but it is also expensive enough that few libraries make it available to their researchers. Brown, who worked so hard to cross generic and media boundaries to reach British and American readers and both white and black audiences, is now available once more—but only with database privileges. Happily, many of Brown’s texts are freely available at UNC’s “Documenting the South” website., but not *Miralda* or *Clotelle*. See <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>. This dissertation has also been made possible by the proliferation of digital archives including Shaw-Shoemaker, American Historical Newspapers, British Periodicals I, APS, and Google Books. The great promise of the technophile’s dream of “database” is the possibility of discarding categorizations like those structuralism so usefully provides. That is to say—the promise of database is that infinitely malleable querying makes it possible to dismiss pre-established categories: one does not need collected anthologies of prefaces if the metadata of an archival database correctly tags those sections. Yet how should “The Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown” be marked and tagged in metadata? How should the verse section of a *Clotel* chapter be marked to note that it is both epigraph for

Stallybrass writes that the “major way of inventing knowledge in the Renaissance grew out of new forms of databases” and that to “rediscover the power of inventory is also to rediscover the forms of pedagogy that precede the regime of originality” (1582). Brown should be considered one of the authors who show that Romantic culture did not value the “regime of originality” exclusively above compilation, connection, or juxtaposition.

For so many of the authors in this dissertation, however, and especially for William Wells Brown, juxtaposition made it possible to offer a creative and a political metacommentary on the state of American fiction. Ezra Tawil writes that *Benito Cereno* was the product of an author and a moment—a “moment when Anglo-American literature looked at itself, so to speak, in order to wage a metafictional critique of race” (25). I hope that these chapters have shown that we should not be surprised that Melville’s most intertextual and paratextually diverse novella, with its included depositions and multiple accounts of the narrative, would be the site that Melville chose for what Tawil calls a “radical critique of contemporary racial discourse” (207). Authors like Melville and William Wells Brown turned to paratexts because paratexts demand reader self-evaluation and encourage meta-discourse. Paratexts are by their nature self-referential and hyper-conscious of audience. We need to reiterate this more often; the political vitality of Brown’s *Clotel* is achieved *because* of its paratextual approach. It is

the chapter and preview of the chapter’s final lines? No bibliographer will be able to foresee the ways that scholars will want to classify and re-classify generic components of complex texts like *Clotel*. Hence projects like Google Books that emphasize optical character recognition over careful metadata collection, classification and authentication (to a fault, arguably) are gaining popularity and scholarly attention. See Jerome McGann, Ed Folsom, but especially Siva Vaidhyanathan, and Franco Moretti for the “Stanford Literary Lab,” and the new quasi-discipline of “culturomics” that relies on Google Books as archive for the “application of high-throughput data collection and analysis to the study of human culture” (<http://www.culturomics.org/>)

not enough to say that Brown wrote across genres because no one genre sufficiently refuted slavery's apologists. Brown does not just combine genres or subvert expectations; he highlights his subversion by calling our attention to the normal function of the authorizing preface or the innocuous epigraph, then subverting it, and then showing us how that formal subversion should also have a non-literary analogue. Readers should not expect or take comfort in white authorizing prefaces once they know how closely they resemble the language of slavery. Nor should abolitionists take any comfort in living in Massachusetts and promoting the cause only locally; until there is a complete revolution (which comes, eventually, with the Civil War), subversion is just a literary tool.

Greenspan notes that Brown seems "like a writer as well suited to the dynamics of Internet textuality as to that of nineteenth-century printed literature" (xxi). It is more accurate to say that Brown was exactly living in his moment, a moment in which asserting the vitality of periodical print culture for thumbing one's nose at a former slave master can function in both the genre of the periodical where it first appeared and as supplement or complication to the novel genre it precedes in *Clotel* (xxi). At work here also is the notion that even in a periodicals-dominant literary culture, no one genre replaces another. Harold Love makes the macro version of this argument when he states that "instead of a new communicative technology wholly obliterating old ones, what more commonly happens is an overall expansion of communication in which all kinds are carried forward, though there will inevitably be interactions and reallocations of cultural responsibilities" (51). The success of the periodical does not obliterate the novel; it does

mean that novelistic discourse can be carried into periodicals and that some of the features of periodicals will be exported into the novel.

Similarly, but within the same “communicative technology” and even the same major genre, Mikhail Bakhtin writes that Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel does not supplant the monologic novel: “no new genre ever nullifies or replaces old ones. But at the same time each fundamentally and significantly new genre, once it arrives, exerts influence on the entire circle of old genres: the new genre makes the old ones, so to speak, more conscious; it forces them to better perceive their own possibilities and boundaries, that is, to overcome their own *naïveté*” (271). Brown’s project with a paratextually rich novel is not the obliteration or supplanting of traditional novelistic discourse, but he does want readers to think about the value placed on African American authentication rather than story-telling or literary merit as the most important factor in assessing the worth of literature about black experience. William Andrews writes that this is what led authors including Frederick Douglass in his novella *The Heroic Slave* and Brown in *Clotel* to allow their work to “occupy a special marginal position between authenticatable history on the one hand and unverifiable fiction on the other” (26). Paratextualists, as I have asserted throughout this dissertation, relish the marginal position precisely because this ambiguity requires special attention from readers. Andrews writes that for Brown, “authority in *Clotel* becomes a *function* of discourse, facilitated” (31). In this case, it forces white readers to consider why they value white authentication so highly, or whether black autobiography should trump white or black fiction as an abolitionist discourse. Like the other paratextualists and paratexts, Brown

does not answer that question, but he does use the “special marginal position” of the paratext to dramatize it.

Coda: Hawthorne

“Seized by the Button” or the “Paradise of Gentle Readers”: Hawthorne’s Prefaces and the American Romance

“Reader! You will be disappointed....No matter what you expect....you will be disappointed.” This line, including the ellipses, appears by itself, facing the copyright page (where a Dedication often appears) in John Neal’s novel *Errata*. In “P’s Correspondence” Hawthorne quipped that “John Neal had almost turned my boyish brain with his romances” (300). Hawthorne could of course always claim that P should not be considered a proxy for himself, but Jonathan Cilley’s letter to Hawthorne chiding him regarding his prior fetish for Neal’s “damned ranting stuff” makes it likely that the boyish brain was Hawthorne’s (Lang 295). That is the younger version of the same brain that Hawthorne denies readers in the opening essay of *Mosses from an Old Manse*, where Hawthorne declares that he is not one of these “supremely hospitable” authors willing to “serve up their own hearts, delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public” (29). Hawthorne sets himself up in his prefaces as a very different kind of author from Neal—*his* romances are not like Neal’s—and neither are his romance-defining prefaces. The ways that Hawthorne distinguishes his literary production from Neal, however, bear more attention.

John Neal attacks readers—his blatant “you will be disappointed” nicely encapsulates the approach of an author always determined to both unsettle readers and to

suggest that the assumptions they bring will hinder the appreciation they feel for the text or the edification it provides. As a nineteenth-century version of the idea that writers work against convention and brush against the boundaries of genre to effect the “frustration of readerly expectations,” Neal’s phrase is provocative, risky, and integral to his project of surprising readers so that he can explain that their expectations are built on outmoded or retrograde conventions. Contrarily Hawthorne’s prefaces constantly invoke the ideal of propriety rather than frankness. He values preserving distance between author and audience where Neal worked to erase it; he does not often footnote himself or settle personal grievances in his paratexts.¹⁰¹ Hawthorne appears, at first glance, more than any of the authors in this study, to aim for Genette’s definition of the paratext that exists to facilitate “a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (*Paratexts* 2). The sentence that precedes the one about the “hearts, delicately fried” even invokes the idea of the introductory essay, “The Old Manse,” as a paratext that functions like a liminal verge, a “green sward, but just within the cavern’s mouth”:

Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being, and have we groped together into all its chambers, and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so. We have been standing on the green sward, but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come.... So far as I am a man of really individual attributes, I veil my face (29).

¹⁰¹ “Rappaccini’s Daughter” is a notable exception, but as I will discuss, that is Hawthorne’s paratext that most hearkens back to the joking models of Irving and Neal.

Here Hawthorne worries about exposing himself too much, and proclaims that he has in fact not revealed his “individual attributes,” keeping the reader at bay. In the famous preface to *The Marble Faun*, however, he worries that perhaps he has not kept enough in the public eye to still have favor with his reader, asking: “In these many years, since he last heard from me, may he not have deemed his earthly task accomplished, and have withdrawn to the paradise of gentle readers...?” (vi-vii) These two stances are at constant tension in Hawthorne’s paratexts—what kind of relationship he felt comfortable offering to a reader, and what he felt he could expect those readers to accept.

In *Keep Cool*, Neal’s title page pun, “Anguillam caude tenes” Latinized Neal’s name (you catch an eel by the tail). Benjamin Lease sees Neal’s influence in the “sexual psychopathology” of Hawthorne’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” but I think a clearer debt is in the preface to that story (156). Presented as the work of “Aubépine,” the French name for the hawthorn tree, Hawthorne is giving a similar paratextual clue to readers that Neal was offering with his pun. He then offers a comic description of his career in which he even allows himself Neal’s kind of fun in describing the titles of other stories he had actually published, but with French titles (L’Artiste du Beau”) and translating *The Democratic Review*, the magazine where “Rappaccini’s Daughter” was first published, as “La Revue Anti-Aristocratique” (607). Neal was constantly complaining that he was misunderstood and underappreciated because his style was unique; Aubépine has the same trouble since he “seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists... and the great body of pen-and-ink men,” such that he can find neither elite nor mass public and “find[s] himself without an audience” (606-7).

“Rappaccini’s Daughter” was an early sketch, but Neal’s allure continued. Noting how much the mature Hawthorne continued to engage Neal’s prefaces in his own points towards a re-evaluation of the way that Hawthorne distinguishes his project in the genre of the romance from what he saw as the problems and advantages of other long-form fiction. Consider these parallels between *Errata’s* paratexts and Hawthorne’s. Hawthorne’s conception of romance as articulated from his prefaces comes not just from Neal but from a shared obsession as paratextualists. It should not surprise us that the most cited prefaces of the era came from a paratextual experimenter who admired (and rebelled against) an earlier paratextualist. What Hawthorne achieves with his prefaces was a more measured and polite version of Irving’s jokes and Neal’s puns. In the introduction to this dissertation I quoted Hawthorne’s wariness regarding autobiography. A fuller quotation is pertinent in this coda as a demonstration of Hawthorne’s task in distinguishing himself from peer authorial-revelation while engaging in that very discourse:

Some authors, indeed, do far more than this, and indulge themselves in such confidential depths of revelation as could fittingly be addressed only and exclusively to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy; as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer’s own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him into communion with it. It is scarcely decorous, however, to speak all, even where we speak impersonally. But, as thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience, it may be pardonable to

imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness, we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil. To this extent, and within these limits, an author, methinks, may be autobiographical, without violating either the reader's rights or his own.

It will be seen, likewise, that this Custom-House sketch has a certain propriety, of a kind always recognised in literature, as explaining how a large portion of the following pages came into my possession, and as offering proofs of the authenticity of a narrative therein contained. This, in fact—a desire to put myself in my true position as editor, or very little more, of the most prolix among the tales that make up my volume—this, and no other, is my true reason for assuming a personal relation with the public. (7-8)

First, given the already-mentioned quotation from Jonathan Cilley about Hawthorne having “highly relished” Neal’s work, and Hawthorne’s own admission in a sketch in 1845 that Neal “almost turned my boyish brain with his romances,” Hawthorne could still be thinking of Neal’s over-sharing prefaces in 1850. Neal’s novel *Rachel Dyer*, with its two prefaces and its body-text on Puritan Salem and American law make it even more likely that Hawthorne wanted to distinguish himself from Neal.¹⁰² Hawthorne’s

¹⁰² While not pertinent to the primary argument here, there are significant parallels between *The Scarlet Letter* and *Rachel Dyer* beyond Neal and Hawthorne’s interest in moonlight and natural speech—primarily *Rachel Dyer*’s bitter critique of Puritan hypocrisy and allusion to its continuance in nineteenth-century America. I think Hawthorne’s disgust at the idea of publishing a book that “could fittingly be addressed only and exclusively to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy” may also be a commentary

preference for a process whereby gradually a “kind and apprehensive” friend’s “native reserve [is] thawed by this genial consciousness” is more in line with the approach employed by Irving’s Knickerbocker, as he gradually warms to his reader in later books of *A History of New York*. At the same time, Hawthorne plays with the notion that readers desire a clearer view of the author-as-celebrity, and by planning to “keep the inmost Me behind its veil,” Hawthorne plays autobiographical “violation” both ways: he will give the reader a little but reserve the rest—while all the same suggesting that careful readers might deduce deeper truths about that “inmost Me” by careful reading.

I have also quoted at length and in full to show that Hawthorne gives the briefest of pauses (a paragraph break) before connecting the prior paragraph’s idea of autobiographical honesty to the next paragraph about historical authenticity. If readers have missed the connection, he makes it very clear that the whole reason for an author so “disinclined to talk overmuch of myself” to write the “Custom-House sketch” is his “desire to put myself in my true position as editor” (7, 8). Like earlier authors, Hawthorne presents himself as the editor of a found document. Bryce Traister reads this passage as evidence that Hawthorne is connecting the “nature of literary authorship in terms commensurate with the idea of bureaucratic neutrality,” by “drawing on the very old novelistic tradition of authorial self-effacement” associated with texts that present themselves as lightly edited versions of found documents. Traister writes that Hawthorne is therefore “denying the romantic account of authorship that would consider him an inventor rather than an arranger,” opting to view Hawthorne as author “hiding behind the

on Neal’s *Randolph* preface addressed to “some people, and two in particular,” with whom Neal clearly had an intimate relationship he airs in a public preface.

cherished mantra of the modern bureaucrat put on the defensive: ‘Hey, I only work here!’” (85-6) Because editing remained an appealing model of Romantic authorship rather than its antithesis, as Andrew Piper has also emphasized in *Dreaming in Books*, Traister misreads Hawthorne’s goal. Traister also ignores the end of that paragraph, where Hawthorne calls attention to his own fictional contribution as built upon a mere scaffold of historical fact—that “authenticity of outline” that the found document offered.

Joseph Rezek reads this same paragraph as evidence that Hawthorne wants to “make the issue of authenticity a game. But its playfulness is belied by the construction of a natural intimacy between Hawthorne and his subject matter, an intimacy that his first critics accepted entirely and that proved central to the novel’s enduring reputation” (250). In particular, Rezek connects “The Custom House” to *Waverley*’s introduction and to Scott’s popularization of antiquarian editorship (225). In Rezek’s careful reading of Hawthorne as an author intensely aware of his regional heritage and his transatlantic audience, *The Scarlet Letter* does not concretize the nation as much as it does New England’s position in transatlantic discourse—with Hawthorne’s Salem ancestry giving him the authority his playful joke about the found manuscript does not. Hawthorne limited the details about his life that he offers to readers partially for “propriety” and partially because he recognized that withholding—keeping a little of the “inmost Me behind its veil”—increased the interest in that authorial persona. He gives enough details to grant himself the authority to possess an “authentic” perspective on the Puritans and gives himself the permission to adhere only to the “outline.”

Hawthorne recognized this adherence to authenticity as double-edged. For this reason Hawthorne makes clear that he deserves acclaim for his own “invention.” In “The Custom House” Hawthorne wants to emphasize that “in dressing up the tale” he has “allowed [him]self” “as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention. What I contend for is the authenticity of the outline” (33). Hawthorne’s autobiographical preface gives him the space to award himself authority and authenticity, but in calling attention to that connection to factuality, Hawthorne then decides that he must also emphasize his literary intervention that brings the tale alive. Having raised these ideas in “The Custom House,” Hawthorne can then retreat again. As the sketch ends, Hawthorne encourages readers to stop thinking of him-as-person, and to shift towards thinking of him-as-deceased author: a “Decapitated Surveyor...a gentleman who writes from beyond the grave” (42). Directing readers away from him and winking (from behind the veil) at a mid-century reading culture clamoring for details about its celebrated authors, Hawthorne herds his readers back into the Puritan era as he declares himself dead: “Peace be with all the world! My blessing on my friends! My forgiveness to my enemies! For I am in the realm of quiet!” (42). Even this assertion bears Neal’s influence—as I have already mentioned, Neal was always announcing his retirement from the literary field. Even when Hawthorne chooses very different tone and stance towards readers, the realm of the paratext necessitates that he appeal to readers—just as more aggressive authors like Irving and Neal do.

Neal in *Errata*’s paratexts and Hawthorne in “The Custom House” are both fascinated by fiction’s potential to represent reality. We have too readily accepted

Hawthorne's defense of the romance and ignored what he himself writes in "The Custom House" about representing nature, reality, and dialogue. Hawthorne's famous lines about the romance as a product of coal-fire and "cold spirituality of the moonbeams" might also be traced to Neal's preface in *Errata*, where Neal asks, "Reader—have you ever stood, with your hat in your hand, to look at a little dreamy light made by the moonshine, where it fell through the green leaves; and 'fermented' in the wet turf?" (11).¹⁰³ The mere mention of moonbeams is insufficient to connect the two prefaces. But both prefaces consider the idea of being in the presence of "Nature," with that word capitalized by both men.¹⁰⁴ Neal follows his question about fermenting moonlight with the lament that too many people do not have a proper

love of Nature. Men go by her blossoming places, every hour, and never see them; her singing places, while there is a wedding in the grass; and trample upon them, without one thought of their beauty; and just so with the delicate beauties of conversation. . . . I have attempted, in this novel, that kind of colloquial manner,

¹⁰³ Reader---have you ever stood, with your hat in your hand, to look at a little dreamy light made by the moonshine, where it fell through the green leaves; and 'fermented' in the wet turf?---or the starlight and water bubbles dancing together, under the willow trees?---If you have, then you may form some notion of what I mean, by my love of Nature. Men go by her blossoming places, every hour, and never see them; her singing places, while there is a wedding in the grass; and trample upon them, without one thought of their beauty; and just so with the delicate beauties of conversation. They see nothing, hear nothing, until their attention be called to it. But they go out, where it is the fashion to be sentimental; and persuade themselves that their artificial rapture is the natural offspring, of a warm heart, and a pure taste. Pshaw!---people that do not love fine conversation, and fine reading, beyond fine speaking and fine singing, have neither understanding nor taste. I have attempted, in this novel, that kind of colloquial manner, which is natural to the impassioned and adventurous; fervid; varied; and abrupt. I mention this, that however, you may condemn my judgment, you shall not charge me with failing in my design" (11).

¹⁰⁴ In one of the only essays to compare Hawthorne's prefaces Jesse Bier argues that Hawthorne has Samuel T. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* in mind, since he also references the "truth of Nature" and the "sudden charm... which moonlight or sunset diffused" (21).

which is natural to the impassioned and adventurous; fervid; varied; and abrupt.

(11)

Here Neal makes a quick transition; too few readers notice the “fermenting” of moonlight or other natural beauties—and they also fail to observe the beauty of natural, colloquial speech. Making this claim about colloquial language a central part of his preface, Neal is building on the paratext that preceded it in *Errata*, the “Advertisement by the Compiler” that features the editor of the found manuscript transcribing details of the conversations he had with Will Adams that do indeed portray a conversationalist whose style is “fervid, varied and abrupt,” and the novel (along with the rest of Neal’s oeuvre) certainly should be considered one of the earliest attempts in American literature to represent colloquial dialogue accurately, with phonetic spellings, triple m-dash breaks for pauses and interruptions, and frequent oaths. Indeed, Neal went so far as to claim that in *Errata* he wrote “to tell a story, as much as possible, after his own manner of talking” (v).

Hawthorne’s passage about moonlight also begins with a lament that a side-effect of his Custom House job is a new inability to harness “that invigorating charm of Nature” to “picture forth imaginary scenes” (36). Hawthorne solves this problem by leaving the Custom House, but he admits there was an alternative that he might have been able to pursue while still supported by “public gold,” and it is an alternative strikingly similar to the one Neal claims to have pursued. Hawthorne says that he “might, for instance, have contented myself with writing out the narratives of a veteran shipmaster, one of the Inspectors.... Could I have preserved the picturesque force of his style, and the humorous coloring which nature taught him how to throw over his descriptions, the result, I

honestly believe, would have been something new in literature” (36). Unable to transcribe, record, or preserve the colloquial “force” of the shipmaster, Hawthorne instead wrote the romances that made him famous and have shaped criticism of the American novel ever since. “A better book than I shall ever write was there, leaf after leaf presenting itself to me, just as it was written out by the reality of the flitting hour,” says Hawthorne with what appears to be genuine regret that he can only write romances that lack the “reality of the flitting hour” and the originality of dialogue well-presented, which would truly be “something new in literature.” Hawthorne voices this lament about being unable to present reality mimetically, and so he turned instead to the un-reality of the romance. Dan McCall, in “Hawthorne’s ‘Familiar Kind of Preface’” asserts that Hawthorne’s prefaces “are too often taken simply as elaborate definitions of a genre specializing in mellowed light” (438). McCall goes further, encouraging us to take Hawthorne at his word. The prefaces’ “real subject is not aesthetic theory; rather, it is Hawthorne’s attempt to borrow a commonplace of literary theory in the mid-nineteenth century, the distinction between Romance and Novel, in order to mitigate his sense of failing his materials and the best in his own talent” (438). Like each of the paratextualists in this study, Hawthorne used paratexts to dramatize his personal frustrations with contemporary literary culture, and his anxieties about his own literary ability and standing. In this context, more than definitions about the best means to construct fictional representations of America, what stands out in Hawthorne’s prefaces is his anxiety about proper reader address. Hawthorne was constantly trying to decide if he should seize his readers “by the button” with an aggressive style like Irving’s or Neal’s, or whether his

personal style demanded that he remain at a distance, letting readers rest in the peace of the “paradise of gentle readers.”

Paratexts by their nature are sites of heightened reader address; this is why Hawthorne and others so regularly dramatize the distance or proximity they make possible. Hence it merits more attention that Hawthorne presents himself both as a gentleman, perhaps a bit stand-offishly polite, and as the aggressive street-prophet who grabs you by the lapel to warn of, say, Earth’s impending holocaust. In “The Old Manse,” Hawthorne emphasizes his “inhospitality,” conducting a reader to a chair to consult his works alone, rather than carrying on an oral conversation. In “The Custom House,” Hawthorne begins by returning to that scene of authorial distance and his life of “deep quietude.” Popularity, however, means that he did indeed find “a listener or two.” Even the choice of “listener” rather than the “reader” of the Old Manse, who is at last “ushered into [his] study” and “entreat[ed]” to give his attention to the tales (“The Old Manse” 32). Popularity allows Hawthorne to think of himself as having actual listeners, readers who are flesh-and-blood and of whom he can make more aggressive demands than he allowed himself, or permitted himself, in “The Old Manse.” “I again seize the public by the button,” says Hawthorne in “The Custom House,” and then he “prate[s] of the circumstances that lie around us” for a full fifty pages. Whether that is dialogue, digression or dissertation the “listener” must conclude, and Hawthorne at last unclenches his hold on the button and allows the reader/listener to decide if he wants the body-text or the paratext to be the production of the man who has been bending his ear for the last fifty pages or the less threatening “decapitated surveyor.” That, ultimately, is what

paratextualists do; badger when they can, backpedal when they must, and then retreat to the “realm of quiet” while hoping that their paratexts stick with their “listeners,” their “public,” their “American fair” as they make their way through the disembodied author’s body-texts.

Irving juxtaposed the periodical and the book worlds in the promotion of his text. Inside the book, he takes juxtaposition further, demanding that readers simultaneously imagine themselves in the position of Native Americans and as pea-green aliens—a thought experiment that contributes to his overall goal of reminding readers that the ability to read skeptically has benefits that far exceed the temporary delight of recognizing the gap between historical fact and fictional parody. For Charles Jared Ingersoll and other authors writing in the midst of real war and paper skirmishes, American authors countered the asymmetry of Anglo-American literary relations by writing books that acknowledged and resisted British periodical strength. For John Neal and Nathaniel Hawthorne, the competing goals of editorship and romantic authorship were never more clearly expressed than in their paratexts where they reflected on the subject. Finally, for black authors including William Grimes and William Wells Brown, paratexts offered a liminal space in which to juxtapose the injustice of American law with the conventions of copyright and authorship. Excessive and exuberant, playfully mischievous and plaintively earnest, these paratexts exhibit the anxieties and ambitions of Antebellum American authors and editors.

Once prefaces and footnotes become ideal territory for the dramatization of authorial anxiety or editorial expertise and comic flippancy, the paratexts that follow—

the conventional and the radical ones—possess a consciousness of the effect of the paratextual innovations that preceded them. Looking back on the wind-battered bird’s eye prospect of his 1809 *A History of New York* from the snug fire-side of his 1848 “Apology,” Irving must have known that the wildness of the first edition’s paratexts made possible the measured care and politesse of the later edition’s “Apology.” An author like William Wells Brown, for whom paratextualization was such an integral strategy that paratexts constitute a significant portion of his body-texts, fully understands how effectively paratexts could shift readers out of their comfort zones. John Neal can declare in prefaces, over and over, that he will never write again, and Hawthorne can proclaim his plan to step away from the maddening crowd and back into the “realm of the quiet,” but their paratextual expressions assure that readers will have their paratextual interjections, demands, and laments in mind. Indeed, for each of these paratextualists, whether they aimed for a “more pertinent reading” of the text or worked explicitly to counter such easy reading, they wrote so that readers themselves would begin to think of themselves paratextually—that is, that they would think of themselves as playing a crucial liminal role in the transmission of texts circulating amongst other readers, other texts, and other authors in an ever-expanding transatlantic print culture.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Opening Paratexts in Successive Editions of A History of New York

Information about edition variations summarized from: Michael Black's "Bibliographical Problems in Washington Irving's Early Works" (153-54); Michael Black's "A History of New York: Significant Revision in 1848" (40-47). Additional data culled from the "Explanatory Notes" from Nancy and Michael Black's 1984 Twayne edition of *A History of New York* and comparison of digital editions on Google Books, Archive.org and the Shaw-Shoemaker databases.

1809 FIRST EDITION

- December 6, *A History of New York* published by Inskeep and Bradford, Philadelphia
 - Frontispiece centerfold Justus Danckers etching of New Amsterdam
 - Title page lists author as Diedrich Knickerbocker
 - Copyright, simple: "As Secured by Law"
 - Dedication to New York Historical Society (NYHS)
 - Account of the Author
 - To the Public
 - Book I Summary "Being, like all introductions to American histories..."
 - Chapter I

Note: Book I Summary gets its own page

1812 SECOND EDITION

- 1812 December 30 Inskeep and Bradford, but printed by their New York shop
 - Title page adds: *The Second Edition -with Alterations.*
 - Copyright page complete, lists Inskeep and Bradford
 - Dedication to NYHS
 - Account of the Author
 - Obituary separate from Account of Author
 - To the Public
 - Book I Summary, Chapter I. Changes "Being, like all..." to "Containing divers ingenious theories" Book I, Chapter I combined onto one page.

Note: copyright acknowledged for Inskeep and Bradford, separate obituary, change in Book I summary and pagination.

1819 THIRD EDITION

- M. Thomas, Philadelphia

- Different Frontispiece illustration and appears on title page verso; Washington Allston and Charles Leslie illustrate
- Title page lists author as Diedrich Knickerbocker, “Third Edition”
- Copyright shifts to Moses Thomas
- Account of the Author
 - Obituary separate from Account of Author
- To the Public
- Book I Summary, Chapter I.

Note: dedication to NYHS disappears, new frontispiece illustration and copyright shifts to Moses Thomas for Inskcep and Bradford

1820 FIRST ENGLISH EDITION

- John Murray, London
 - “A New Edition”
 - Title page names Knickerbocker author with accretive “(Author of the Sketchbook)”. Never mind that someone else (Geoffrey Crayon) wrote that.
 - Account of the Author
 - Obituary separate from Account of Author
 - To the Public
 - Table of Contents
 - Book I Summary, Chapter I now share the same page

Note: Accretive author, Knickerbocker trumps Crayon

1824 PARIS EDITION: Printed by Jules Didot for A. and W. Galignani, 1824
(American 1824 Edition is based on Parisian edition, but I have not seen this edition.)

1824 FOURTH AMERICAN EDITION

- Nov 21, 1824 New York, C.S. Van Winkle
 - Title page: Maintains “Knickerbocker” as author, non-accretive (no mention of *Sketchbook*)
 - Copyright
 - Table of contents
 - Account of the Author; merged with obituary
 - Book I Summary, Chapter I.

Note: adds considerable historical information throughout. Knickerbocker returns as non-accretive author (no mention of Sketchbook).

FIFTH EDITION: *There was certainly no authorized fifth edition, or any authorized changes until the 1829 Carey edition. There was a new Van Winkle print in 1826 based on the 1819 Van Winkle edition.*

1829 SIXTH AMERICAN EDITION

- Carey and Lea, Philadelphia
 - Title page: Knickerbocker, non-accretive.
 - Copyright page still C.S. Winkle’s from 1824.
 - Table of Contents
 - Account of the Author
 - **Obituary again separated out.**
 - To the Public

Book I Summary, Chapter I.

Note: Obituary again separate from Account of Author

1831 SEVENTH AMERICAN EDITION (No variation from 1829; there were additional editions published by Carey between 1830-1840, but no authorial changes.)

1848 AUTHOR’S REVISED EDITION

- George P. Putnam, New York
 - Two Title pages:
 - “The Works of Washington Irving / New Edition, Revised. / Vol. I / ----- Knickerbocker’s New-York -----
 - Second Title page returns Knickerbocker to by-line but adds “Author’s revised edition / Complete in One Volume”
 - Copyright Page acknowledges Washington Irving, for first time.
 - Table of Contents
 - New “Author’s Apology,” signed W.I., Sunnyside 1848
 - New “Notices: Which appeared in the newspapers previous to the publication of this work”
 - Notices are the October 26, November 6, November 16, November 28 in *Evening Post* and separate entry noting that *American Citizen* published that last note with same content on Dec. 6, to announce publication.
 - Account of the Author
 - Obituary separated out.
 - To the Public
 - Book I Summary, Chapter I

Note: Part of the “Collected Works” edition. Almost certainly influenced by Scott’s Magnum Opus editions, with their additional commentary, paratextual apparatuses

extensive new prefaces. Significant revisions include widespread revision, addition of Van Rensselaer, trimming of anti-Jeffersonian humor, entire text in one volume, first edition with Irving on copyright and title page.

1849: AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION: Putnam again, with addition of at least one paragraph omitted in the 1848 edition.

Appendix 2: Pre- and Post-Publication Promotion and Response Chronology for A History of New York

1808-09 Pre-publication

- **1808** Peter Irving, Washington Irving begin work; by 1809, Washington Irving assumes total responsibility, James Kirke Paulding edits.
- **1809, October 26:** “Distressing” note in *Evening Post* (also reprinted Oct 27, 28)
 - Responses: (Reprints)
 - October 27: *American Citizen* (“Distressing”)
 - October 31: *Republican Watch Tower* (“Distressing”) (country edition of *American Citizen*)
- **November 6** *Evening Post*: “A Traveller” responds, claiming to have seen Knickerbocker, “very much fatigued and exhausted” on the side of the road.
 - Reprinted in *New York Herald, American Citizen*
- **November 16** *Evening Post*: Seth Handaside announces publication plans for “*A very curious kind of a written book*”.
 - Reprinted in other *American Citizen* and other New York papers.
- **December 6**, *Evening Post*: Publication of *A History of New York* announced
 - Actually announced first, December 4, in *Commercial Advertiser*, but Black says that was a mistake (since each date, including December 6 of the hoax and publication had significance in the history of NY).

1809-10: Publication and Fan Fiction Responses

- *A History of New York* published by Inskeep and Bradford
 - Responses:
 - Several notices of publication, but without commentary (including curious one in which *Federal Republican* gets it wrong, says Coale and Thomas are publishing the book, not Inskeep and Bradford, Dec. 16)
 - **December 14** *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette* [Baltimore]: Ludwick von Bynkerfeldt, “most tried and faithful of Diedrich’s friends,” saw the MS in Knickerbocker’s hands shortly before he disappeared.

- December 27 *Evening Post* reprints Bynkerfeldt letter. Michael Black, the best scholar of *History of New York* revisions, evidently is unaware that this was not first, but second. Since it appeared in a Baltimore and I find no evidence that Irving had any Maryland connections, the Baltimore Bynkerfeldt appears to be an actual fan unrelated to Irving or his friends, rather than a co-conspirator.
- **December 23** *Republican Watch Tower* Review by “Literatus,” who finds the book “calculated to delight and instruct every class of readers,” and who believes the book “a proud refutation of the hackneyed charge against our country of a want of talents—and as the public can only be the patrons of genius, he confidently hopes that the most liberal generosity will be extended in order to encourage the author to farther and successful efforts of his abilities.”
- **December 30** *American Citizen* Christian Brinkersnuff sends Handaside letter,
- **January 23, 1810:** *American Citizen* prints letter from Knickerbocker to Handaside
 - **January 26, 1810** Reprinted in *Republican Watch-Tower*

1812-1848 Editions

- 1812: Knickerbocker’s letter included in second edition “Account of the Author” by Seth Handaside, and then Knickerbocker’s obituary.
- 1848: New Author’s Apology recounts the hoax for the first time and reprints the first set of letters from *American Citizen*.

Appendix 3: Onymity and traceability to John Neal's person, 1817-1825

Anonymous Or No Name on Title Page:

Logan; Brother Jonathan

Accretive Anonymous:

Seventy-Six By the Author of *Logan*

Randolph By the Author of *Logan* and *Seventy-Six*

Errata By the Author of *Logan*, *Seventy-Six* and *Randolph*

Pseudonymous:

Keep Cool, Somebody M.D.C.

Battle of Niagara, 1st ed. Jehu O'Catarract, (Neal's "clubicular" nickname as part of the Delphian Club). Since it references *Keep Cool* on title page, this links Jehu to Somebody MDC.)

Named

John Neal: *Battle of Niagara* 2nd Edition (links Neal to Jehu and Somebody MDC)

Accretive John Neal *Otho: A Tragedy*: By the Author of *Battle of Niagara*, &c.

Neal Title pages, 1817-1825

1817: *Keep Cool*, A Novel, Written in Hot Weather By Somebody, M.D.C. &c. &c. &c. / Author of sundry works of great merit---never published, or read, from his-story / reviewed / By-Himself-"Esquire." / Anguillam cauda tenes. / "How dy'e do?—Milton / "Rats and gentlemen," "Catch'd and waited on.--Solomon Gun-dy / In two Volumes / Baltimore: Published by Joseph Cushing, WM Woody, printer, 1817 [includes faux-review, preface, dedication]

1818: *Battle of Niagara*: a poem, without notes; and Goldau, or, The Maniac Harper ; "Eagles! and Stars! and Rainbows" by Jehu O'Catarract, Author of *Keep Cool* &c. Published by M.G. Maxwell From the Portico Press Geo. W. Grater, printer, 1818 [short preface]

1819: *The Battle of Niagara* Second Edition--Enlarged: with Other Poems / Where the sun travels low in his chariot of light; / And the stars and the hills are together at night / / By John Neal 2nd Edition by John Neal. / Baltimore Published by N.G. Maxwell, B. Edes, Printer 1819 [adds 60 page preface.]

1819: *Otho: A Tragedy*, By John Neal, Author of the *Battle of Niagara*, &c.//--- / Boston

/ Published by West, Richardson and Lord. / John H. A. Frost, Printer, / Congress-Street.
1819 [18-page preface, acknowledging that in his last preface in *The Battle of Niagara* he renounced authorship, but, well, this drama had already been written at that point, so...]

1822: *Logan: A Family History* / Hear me, for I *will* speak. *Brutus*. / Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I Lea--Chesnut St. 1822 [no name on title page.]

1823: *Seventy-Six*, By the Author of Logan. [advertisement warning against gratitude towards readers, instructs publisher to extend none on his behalf]

1823: *Randolph: A Novel* / By the Author of Logan and Seventy-Six. / "Had heaven but tongues to speak, as well / "As starry eyes to see; / "O, think, what tales they'd have to tell, / "Of wandering youths like me." --TOM. MOORE / By the author of Logan---and Seventy-six. / IN TWO VOLUMES. / VOL. I. / PUBLISHED / FOR WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. /1823.

1823: *Errata, Or the Works of Will. Adams.* /
A TALE BY THE AUTHOR / OF / Logan, Seventy-six, and Randolph. / "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven---A WOMAN." / Revelations 12, 1. / IN TWO VOLUMES.---VOL. I. /New-York: /PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS; AND FOR SALE AT THE PRINCIPAL /BOOKSTORES IN THE UNITED STATES. /

1825: *Brother Jonathan: / Or; / THE NEW ENGLANDERS* / in Three Volumes (Vol. I), William Blackwood / Edinburgh: And T. Cadell, Strand, London. / MDCCCXXV

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