

1993

Mann Thinking Across Antebellum Culture—Mann Satterwhite Valentine's Literary Aspirations

Deborah Lynn Owen
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [American Literature Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Owen, Deborah Lynn, "Mann Thinking Across Antebellum Culture—Mann Satterwhite Valentine's Literary Aspirations" (1993). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539625791.
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-sncr-7420>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

MANN THINKING ACROSS ANTEBELLUM CULTURE --
MANN SATTERWHITE VALENTINE'S LITERARY
ASPIRATIONS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of American Studies
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Deborah Lynn Owen

1993

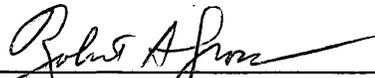
This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

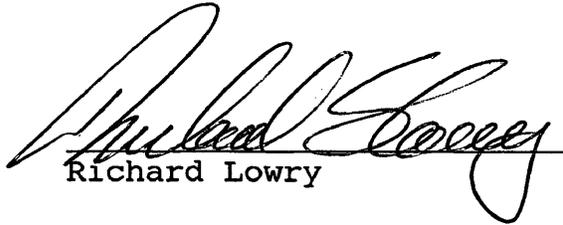


Author

Approved, November 1993



Robert A. Gross



Richard Lowry



Esther Lanigan
Department of English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER I	9
CHAPTER II	27
CHAPTER III	53
CHAPTER IV	78
CHAPTER V	87
CHAPTER VI	107
APPENDIX A	124
APPENDIX B	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	135

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Robert Gross, without whom this thesis would never have emerged as a finished product. Professor Gross was magnanimous in his efforts to provide me with intellectual guidance; his insightful comments led me to see things which I had allowed to remain invisible. I would also like to express my appreciation to Professor Esther Lanigan; she offered the friendship and support that was much needed during the process of completing the manuscript. And of course, my friends (both those in the program and those in Washington, DC) deserve a final pat on the back--thanks . . . for bearing with me.

ABSTRACT

Mann Satterwhite Valentine, Junior, an antebellum merchant in Richmond, Virginia, was ambitious to be recognized as a genius. Eager for authorship, he penned two novels--the first in 1849 and the second in 1852. Manuscripts in hand he confronted a changing publishing world, and was sorely rebuffed. Neither New York nor Boston publishing circles offered him financial support. His texts--romantic in tone but laced with the ideals of a conservative eighteenth-century man of letters--did not suit contemporary audiences. And although he was familiar with the processes of publishing and editing--and willing to make a few compromises for the sake of marketing and sales strategy--he refused to change his works to suit public taste. Sales were sluggish and even friends to whom he sent his works were largely negative.

By the 1860s, Valentine had turned from literature to concentrate more fully on politics. Blaming Northern intellectuals for his personal publishing difficulties as well as for broader social unrest (and increasingly defensive about the status of Southern conservative intellectuals) Valentine put forth one final work: a satire on John Brown. This epic poem fared no better than its predecessors.

Valentine provides us with an interesting glimpse of the culture of Southern intellectuals before the Civil War: his ideals and efforts and his reactions to Northern control of the printed word reveal an interesting moment in what was a dynamic literary world. Valentine equated his personal crisis of authorship with the crisis of the nation.

MANN THINKING ACROSS ANTEBELLUM CULTURE --
MANN SATTERWHITE VALENTINE'S LITERARY
ASPIRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In a large brick house that faced the main avenue of Richmond, Mann Satterwhite Valentine celebrated the birth of his first son. He made a big fuss over the infant. Two years previous his wife had given birth to their first child, a daughter. But now in 1824, he could state proudly that he had a son to carry on the family name, to man the family store and to maintain Valentine involvement in Richmond civic leadership.¹

Mann Satterwhite Valentine, Junior, would indeed carry the family name into the future--although probably not in the way his merchant father intended. His father could not have predicted how his son would make his fortune--in Meat Juice--nor what he would do over the course of a few decades with his name. Valentine did not follow an even path from privileged youth to civic-minded businessman. He chose a few circuitous routes along the way, namely writing and publishing. For two decades, between the 1840s and the 1860s, Valentine pursued ambitions of authorship.

Valentine's timing is intriguing and ironic. He styled

¹ Short fictionalized sketches front every chapter of this analysis. They are based loosely on documentary evidence; I embroider details in order to suggest a way to imagine Mann Valentine's surroundings. This sketch, for example, originates from Valentine's retelling of the story of his birth, having heard from his "Mammy" how his jubilant father insisted that the name was "no small affair to carry." Autobiography of 1889, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum: 17.

himself a man of letters, writing novels in moments of leisure snatched from his merchant-in-training duties, and attempted to enter the literary marketplace in its heady period of professionalization. He made a bid for national recognition and had published three works by the time the Civil War broke out. All three books were, however, failures. His inability to penetrate the dynamic literary culture of antebellum America is the puzzle that occupies this analysis.

Valentine identified himself as a Virginian but he participated in a national dialogue, sharing language and ideals with similarly minded intellectuals from the North and South. Like Emerson, Thoreau, or even Carlyle in England, Valentine perceived popular democracy, mass markets, and the democratization of knowledge as a potential threat to the moral character of the nation and a direct challenge to gentlemen of letters. Eighteenth-century ideals regarding the role of heroic men of letters were attractive to Valentine and influenced him in the early years of his career. The romantic genius became as his personal model a way for him to solicit the respect he imagined had been granted writers of an earlier period. His literary politics, however, grew increasingly parochial--a movement influenced by his experience with northern publishers but fueled as well by unfortunate timing and coincident heightening of sectional conflict. Although he did not at first perceive his Southern origins as a

handicap, he did by 1860.

Valentine published *Desultoria--The Recovered MSS. of an Eccentric* in 1849, *Amadeus--Or, A Night with the Spirits* in 1853, and *The Mock Auction* in 1860. In the first two works he framed his personal experience as an artist aspirant pushed into a business career in a wider context, painfully aware of his image as self-styled gentleman of letters. With these novels he twice attempted to introduce his ideas to what he hoped would be an appreciative public, and he twice failed to maneuver gracefully through the antebellum publishing world of New York, attracting neither an audience of cultivated readers nor, as he called them, the "humbug" masses. For his last work, a lengthy poem, he did not even attempt to approach the modern literary marketplace as represented by northern publishing houses and instead used a local Richmond firm to print what was a bitter satire on John Brown's raid.

The narrative of events that comprise Mann Valentine's curious literary career speaks to two bodies of scholarship: first, William Taylor's literary analysis of antebellum authors--how and why a distinction between 'Cavaliers' and 'Yankees' emerged at the hands of anxious artists from North and South; and second, the more recent intellectual/cultural history of the book. The two meet in Valentine.

Taylor's mid-twentieth century study poses the problematic of the nature of perceived differences between North and South; he disputes the idea of a divided culture

in antebellum America and suggests the need to reexamine how and why myths of regional types were perpetuated, and in particular why Southerners persisted in imagining themselves as different and distinctive. In Taylor's view, authors of North and South shared in creating the myths as a response to the realities of the literary market--instabilities due to democratization and new opportunistic methods of business were of foremost concern. Valentine aids in splicing Taylor's analysis to a cultural history of the book in antebellum America, updating it both to consider in greater detail interactions between author and publisher or publisher and mass market and to analyze changes in readership, standards, models and influences.²

Valentine's history also fits in a broader frame of scholarship, allowing me to examine more recent works by scholars who consider the history of authorship in America. Both R. Jackson Wilson's **Figures of Speech** (1987) and Jane Tompkins' **Sentimental Designs** (1985) are suggestive of numerous ways in which to approach Valentine. Their works assist in grounding Valentine's story within narratives of

² Taylor's text, **Cavalier and Yankee** (1957), despite its age, is of extreme importance in tracing the literary psyche of America--the anxieties, the contradictory motivations, the sentimental posturing--at a crucial moment in our culture. I was particularly heartened by his justification for employing literature of the imagination as a way to study responses to cultural change: "Fiction, even bad or indifferent fiction, often taps levels of the imagination which are not reached in conceptual writing and turns up reservations and contradictions which do not appear in polemics" (129).

contemporary writers' careers. How and why did popular authors emerge while others receded from view? What strategies did authors use to develop a reputation as a man of letters? And how have texts produced at the time affected our current understanding of antebellum culture?

Raymond Williams (Culture and Society 1958) reminds one that "culture" itself is not a static notion. Williams focuses on shifting definitions of genius, artist and culture, providing detailed analyses that are integral to fitting Valentine into Taylor's study. Williams is of assistance in unraveling Valentine's use of the concept of neglected genius: how such a concept served his needs and mitigated against his discomfort with the processes of modernization.

Drew Gilpin Faust (A Sacred Circle 1977) expands upon Williams' arguments concerning the changing social environment of art; this analysis plays out some of the same ideas she raises.³ Faust analyzes five Southern men of letters: William Gilmore Simms, James Henry Hammond, Edmund Ruffin, Nathaniel Beverley Tucker and George Frederick Holmes. These thinkers sought to understand and conceptualize for others the alienation that arose from the processes of modernization: "social democratization, new methods of industrial production, and the emerging primacy of the marketplace" (21). Faust claims that their common

³ Faust's complete title is A Sacred Circle--The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-60.

purpose was to reform the South in order to make a place for their particular talents; "genius" worked as their mode of social explanation (ix-x).

Faust's graceful structural move--to focus upon the five thinkers as united in a tight circle of intellectual communication--ends up exaggerating a sense of seclusion and exile that she claims Southern thinkers experienced due to their geographic remove from centers of print culture. Valentine's story proves that distance was not the main difficulty, nor was Southern isolation automatic. He was able to communicate with Charles Scribner as if he lived around the corner. The main publishing houses of the period were far from the Southern states and editorial encouragement may have been somewhat limited as Faust argues. However, these factors alone did not mitigate against a writer's success. What happened when the publisher's behavior was based on the assumption that an author was of a certain type **not** traditional to Southern gentlemen of letters? Was this perhaps a greater problem than geography?

From Faust's study emerges a view of the painful self-consciousness of artists in antebellum culture. Self-imposed pressure to perceive art as **the** instrument with which to measure the quality of society--national or local--exacted a price. If artistic products indicated the standard of health of a civilization, what happened when a narrowly defined civilization like the Confederacy came

under siege? Its members may have turned backwards to cling to the best products of their threatened culture by creating literature that eulogized a romantic past and by focusing upon parochial concerns in order to disprove northern indictments of sickness and disorder in the Southern house.⁴

⁴ For an extended treatment of how southern novelists wrestled with inconsistencies regarding the glorious southern past see Taylor's "Whistling in the Dark," and "Rage for Order." The timing of Valentine's first novels (1849 and 1853) next to Stowe's of 1852 is of particular importance. He had drafted his second novel when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared in bookstores and he was in the midst of attempting to publish it.

CHAPTER I. VALENTINE BACKGROUND

The rising sun lifted slowly above the James River, turning the dark and slumbering mansions on hilly Broad Street a faintly brackish yellow and causing them to cast a shadow over the dirt streets and humbler dwellings on the slopes of lower Richmond. Valentine, Junior glanced out of his window into his neighbor's neatly fenced yard and caught a glimpse of the James over the trimmed hedges and marble cornerstone of his own home. He pondered the previous day: his first full day of work--a momentous occasion for any twenty year old but particularly significant for Valentine. Until yesterday, he had hoped to dodge taking over his father's store. And then he sat down at his desk and wrote the following lines: "I went into the store on the 17th day of Octo'r." Resolved to his fate but committed to continuing his studies, he next began to carefully list the world's greatest thinkers; he categorized them by discipline, marking each one's age at death as well. On the end of this nine page list he added five more pages of contemporary writers, their places of birth duly noted alongside their names. Nine a.m. and his two hours of scheduled intellectual activity were over; Valentine signed his name to his journal entry and prepared to begin his second day under the watchful eye of his father. He had inherited not only his father's full name, Mann Satterwhite Valentine, but his dry-goods business as well.¹

Richmond greeted Mann Valentine as he stepped out his front door--noisy and dirty, at times it excited him by its movement and activity; at times it distressed him by its

¹ See Journal of 1844, MSV papers, Valentine Museum for Valentine's note regarding entering the store as well as his lists of thinkers and contemporary writers. Also, in Appendix A. I give an explication of the lists, summarizing their contents.

very familiarity. The antebellum city was a crossroads of North and South; the most visible symbol of its active participation in the national marketplace was the railroad. Since the 1830s the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac line had run precisely through the heart of the city. The tracks stretched across the upper expanse of Richmond, flowing down from the North and depositing individuals, ideas, and merchandise at the exact rim of Valentine's territory. The Valentine store stood at Broad and 9th--only one short block from the end of the rail line. And the Valentine house was just three blocks away on the other side of Broad. If one drew a diagonal line from the store to the house, the rail terminal linked neatly into Mann Valentine's daily sphere of interest. As he meandered from home to store, the railroad cars pulsed by him, their energy and movement providing a needling sense of contrast to the permanence and stability of his routine.

Born in the city, at age twenty-five Valentine was tired of his surroundings. His nightly reading and writing was what interested him, and his recently completed manuscript--a novel--occupied his thoughts. Contemplating how his life would change if his novel "took," Valentine's feet carried him by habit across the city. He had trod the same path for five years, but he hoped that this particular year, 1849, would bring a change of fortunes.

Valentine had followed his father into the merchant business without a great deal of resistance. His prospects

as a merchant were good; the store had the advantage of a lengthy tenure and enjoyed a large clientele. Why then in 1849 did he give so much energy not only to his journal-- which he filled with essays, poetry and notes on reading-- but also to his novel? He gave the following reason, one ripe with his profound sense of alienation:

Time + thoughts + feeling above all calculation--scarce to be returned by the greatest success. This is the only compensation for me--the sometime pleasure of expressing my secret thoughts, and venting on the world my bitter scorn. The end for which this work was composed.²

How did he reach this point and why did he think that a novel in print would enable him to fulfill his goals and satisfy his drive to critique contemporary society? Timing was of course everything. Valentine was not content to style himself a merchant but sought instead a way to carve out a reputation as a man of letters. His goal to be a literary man--his conception of this type and the models he drew upon--and the use he made of his family and education

² MSV notes to self, Nov. 14, 1849 (penciled on the back of a letter from Baker and Scribner to MSV, Nov. 7, 1849). Valentine scratched out a rough calculation of the costs of printing, binding, postage and writing paper he expected to incur with his first novel, *Desultoria*. After concluding that no profit was possible, he jotted this note, reminding himself that he was above calculations of success that used money as a measure.

had much to do with the disposition of America's literary culture in the 1840s.

The Valentine family had deep roots in Virginia's history. Valentine, Senior moved to the city from King William County in 1806; son of a planter family, he had completed his education at a private academy and at age twenty intended to study law. He could not, however, sustain the pursuit of his profession because of financial difficulties and drifted into the merchant business instead. He was supposedly one of the first native Virginians to successfully challenge the British-owned enterprises that dominated Richmond's economy in the early 1800s.³

Well into his merchant career Valentine married, fathering nine children over the course of a decade; he and his wife, Elizabeth, saw six of their offspring reach adulthood. All of the children attended private academies and were encouraged by their parents to cultivate a "taste" for art, literature, and music. Like Mann, Junior, most of them went beyond a "taste." His youngest sister became a poet (of arguable skill), his middle brother an expert in modern languages, and his youngest brother a sculptor.

The Valentine patriarch was prominent in the city's politics--serving as a member of the City Council--visible

³ Valentine served as keeper of the Penitentiary store (appointed due to the personal contacts between his law office and Governor Cabell) and finding the general merchandise business suited him, he opened his own store in approximately 1810. See *Pleasants Papers*, 2328-2331.

in the church, and known for his perspicacity in business.⁴ Mann, Junior believed that his father was responsible for building up the business of a large portion of Richmond and for cementing the success of what was by the 1830s the thoroughfare of the retail trade--the Shockoe Bottom area. Further, he stated that his father was "connected to the best people of Virginia," and "held in universal esteem."⁵ In short, as a father figure, the senior Valentine provided his son with a model of gentlemanly learning. He was self-conscious regarding his reputation and concerned with upholding his status within Richmond by evincing good taste, learning, and education while pursuing a pragmatic business career. His son's aspirations grew out of this milieu, but he sought eventually to supersede its manners and pretenses. Mann, Junior, coming of age in the 1840s, sensed the expanding opportunities of heeding art and literature as more than just badges of status. He wanted to produce art, not just admire it.

Early in adolescence Valentine vowed never to marry, hoping instead to be able to pursue art, literature, and science unencumbered by family responsibilities.⁶ He was

⁴ Mann Valentine, Senior never became a member of a church but was a consistent fund-raiser for the Episcopal congregation. *Pleasants Papers*, 2329.

⁵ For Mann, Junior's comments on his father, see *Autobiography of 1889*, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum, 12-13.

⁶ Mann eventually did marry, and a good thing for historians. Most of his letters to publishers were drafted on scrap paper and copied over in fine script by his wife.

an avid reader, had language, science and history training, and had attended a private primary school, a preparatory academy and William and Mary (for one year only). We could say he was a well-educated and cultivated merchant-in-training in 1844, but not a very satisfied one. Single (at least for awhile), a prolific scribbler, idealistic, melodramatic and opinionated: the combination resulted in stacks of unpublished material, scrapbooks bulging with essays, poetry, fiction and drawings. He kept a journal throughout most of his life and drafted an autobiography in 1846 and later in 1889.

For the first five years of his new profession, Valentine used his journals to establish and rehearse the intellectual agenda that culminated in his writing a novel. Valentine's journal of 1844 is of particular importance; in it he marked his transition from youth of widespread interests to merchant. Valentine early felt the weight of the "advantages" his family presented him with. He also sensed the inherent contradictions such advantages implied. He had been raised to expect that proper schooling and a planter ancestry practically guaranteed superiority in society and respect among peers. He intended no less for himself. But in 1844, were there any such guarantees?

Valentine trained himself to see his life as in accord with the sensibility of romantic genius. His journal from

He notes at the top of such drafts, "copied by wife," or "wife to copy."

1846 (two years into his store role) is labeled in large and noble script, "Recollections of the past of Mann S. Valentine, Jr. Richmond," and contains a series of sketches, all selected in order to trace the roots of his natural genius. He drafted the following scene a number of times with slight variations but consistent intent:

My sorrows commenced early at the age of five.

Prometheus-like chained to a [desk] a poor little child sighing for liberty, sorrowing over the badness of his fate.⁷

Using a Shelley-esque version of his childhood as a frame, Valentine presented himself as part of a population of romantic geniuses, burdened from birth with a superior mind.⁸

Valentine's journals likewise suggest that he was intent on analyzing the tension he felt between his father and himself; he framed it as a battle between materialism

⁷ Journal of 1846, MSV papers, Valentine Museum.

⁸ Shelley used the Prometheus myth to formulate his drama, "Prometheus Unbound," defining the nobility of the burden to which Prometheus (the titan who separated mankind from the Gods and atoned for his sin by stealing fire from heaven) was tied. The stolen fire became his burden of consciousness, or, in the English Romantic's eyes, the symbolic fire of creation for poetical imagination. Harold Bloom has written a number of explanatory essays concerning Shelley and English Romanticism in general. See Bloom's *The Visionary Company* 306-23. Michael O'Brien's work too offers explanations for the impact of romanticism upon southern thinkers.

and intellectualism. As a youth, Valentine had secretly taken art classes against his father's wishes: "paying my pocket money for an art education that my father, fearing I might be an artist, would have disapproved."⁹ Valentine recalled that his father caught him red-handed with a fairly well-executed water-color, and nevertheless punished him accordingly. Such incidents suggested to him the implicit contradictions in his father's principles: "that a man may love art as a matter of taste and refinement of his home, and yet not as a profession for his child."¹⁰

The Valentine home was filled with paintings and contained an extensive private library. But, Valentine's father desired to instill a "taste" for art and literature, not the passion Mann, Junior developed:

He who had placed at our service a valuable library and had us taught everything requisite for cultivated men and women--now began to apprehend in me something more than a taste for literature,--a desire to write myself.¹¹

⁹ See Autobiography of 1889 for two versions of the story that surrounds his "art education." This autobiography, a set of half-sketched narratives in journal entry form, retells the same story he had earlier recorded.

¹⁰ Autobiography of 1889, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum: 10.

¹¹ Autobiography of 1889: 11.

The library books were far more than interior decoration for Valentine. He aspired to involve them as active tools in his career.¹²

Characteristically attentive to the influence of books on his life, Valentine named books as his earliest and best companions. However, he also ascribed blame to them for causing the frustration he experienced as a young man:

I ought to despise books . . . with me and books I have often cursed them but like a parent with his spoiled child I alternately curse and bless . . . now I would not live without them through habit or what I know not just as Voltaire says about friendship it is but habit so is my love of books I believe at times I think I can discard them but when I try it for three days only unless I am traveling I begin to find wrong the most ordinary circumstances.¹³

Where did Valentine get these ideas and why and how did he learn to conceive of his "predicament" as the fate of genius? Suggesting that he had been born to a different

¹² For the complete inventory of the Valentine family library see Appendix B. In general, the library contained many works from the eighteenth century--from biographies to philosophy, history to travel literature. Some of the books were German or French imprints. There were very few modern works, and even fewer novels.

¹³ Journal of 1846, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum. (Most of the journals are not numbered by page.)

role than that of merchant, Valentine experimented with how to prove this. Most importantly, he conceived of his reading and writing as the necessary cultural activities for this agenda.

Through his attention to self-study Valentine attempted to create and sustain an affinity between himself and a pantheon of past intellectuals, developing a notion of what the literary man ought to be able to do in society by following closely what were out-dated ideals. He adhered to a set of behaviors reminiscent of eighteenth-century patrician pursuit of belles lettres. As his assiduously copied lists of great thinkers indicate, he augmented his merchant activities with rigorous self-directed reading and writing, prioritizing emulation and disciplined scrutiny of style and form of previous writers. His early journals (and scrapbooks) contain many half-completed essays--on "natural" style, the importance of biography, or the aesthetics of sculpture--none of which indict him as a romantic genius, yearning for new and creative means of expressing his ideas. Valentine instead clung to a classical pattern of learning.

Valentine met the commercial world with a curious profile, shaped in part by his habits of gentlemanly learning but in part by the useful rhetoric and images of Romanticism. He attempted to espouse a certain purity of art, careful to indicate to all who cared to listen that he did not seek to profit by his craft. And he purported to feel responsibility as a scholar and a duty to use his

natural talents. This fusion, however, resulted in heavy-handed attempts to balance new with old, to navigate a fairly competitive profit-driven arena with the mannerisms of an old-style gentleman. Valentine's particular problem, even before he attempted to encounter the publishing industry, had to do with how much his notions of the literary life contradicted contemporary realities. He faced the dilemma of how to pursue his goals--directing his life to suit his conception of a gentleman of letters' responsibility--and meet the challenge of the insidious changes he witnessed in his own city's social milieu. The answer to his problem was Romanticism.

Valentine found reinforcement for his ideals in the tenets of European Romanticism that reached antebellum Richmond. Michael O'Brien presents a plausible argument for why the work of Schlegel, Byron or Wordsworth had such a prevalent impact in the American South; he suggests how to fit Romanticism in a study of the processes of social and political change in antebellum culture; O'Brien found that romantic doctrine was not only an integral part of the college education of antebellum Southerners (178-9) but that its texts stuck, proving useful to a generation of intellectuals.¹⁴ Romanticism appealed to provincial Southerners for whom traditions of alienation were deeply

¹⁴ See O'Brien's "Lineaments of Antebellum Southern Romanticism." Or, his introduction to *Rethinking the South*.

ingrained (170).

With an emphasis on the imagination, experience and sensibility of the artist figure, Romanticism offered intellectuals the tools with which to confront commercialization and democratization. How better to retain literature as the unquestionable territory of genius--requiring a distinctive sensibility--and protect it from becoming merely an article of commerce? For someone like Valentine, such notions reinforced inherited notions of the privilege of knowledge and helped negotiate what was an increasingly complex literary culture in antebellum America. To adopt the rhetoric of Romanticism was a way to present one's self as inherently at odds with the language of markets, money and price.

In 1849 when Valentine decided to offer his novel to the public, what type of "markets" did he face? And what about the business of publishing suggested to him that his fusion of gentlemanly taste and romantic sensibility would best encounter it? Upon what did he base his expectations of success as a gentleman of letters, publishing in the midst of modern literary culture? William Charvat's work on the condition of authorship in America is of invaluable assistance to answering these queries.¹⁵

Charvat lays out a chronology of publishing and

¹⁵ See Charvat, The Profession of Authorship--all page citations in this chapter for Charvat are from this text unless noted.

authorship, analyzing the repercussions of shifts from old-style norms--authors publishing on a small-scale local basis, selecting publishers and shaping their own audiences--to the dynamics of the mid-nineteenth century national publishing machine. As Charvat notes, authorship in early nineteenth-century America was influenced by changes in England. The respect that English audiences accorded Byron for example, and the increasing profits possible from writing coupled fortuitously with improvements in technology--from printing to transportation. Beginning in the 1820s America experienced a slow emergence of authors whose works were saleable (and thus profitable) and whose attentions publishers wooed (30-31). These changes that Charvat discusses do not have a seamless history--there were somewhat shaky beginnings to the business of modern publishing. Washington Irving may have realized profits in the 1820s, but he had to risk his own money on his ventures and grapple with problems of poor distribution. Publishing was uneven and "primitive" up to mid-century in some areas (34-5).

The South had its own peculiar brand of publishing problems: a traditional system of peddlers and subscription-book canvassers (Parson Weems is the most well-known example--he plied the coastal South markets from the 1790s into the 1830s with great success) that relied on complex credit arrangements and was unstable by nature. Charvat claims that this system had "fallen into disrepute" by the

1840s; he quotes one participant who stated that selling books to Southern markets by 1848 required "an organized band of Yankees" (39). But the North was not faring much better; limited audiences and local reputations sustained the business. And as yet the concept of promoting authors lay dormant. Publishers sent out review copies, but did little or no author-specific advertising.

In Charvat's estimation, the new era in publishing began in full force in the late 1840s. As publishing learned how to become a big business, intellectuals had to deal with pressure to meet the increasingly vocal demands of the general public; publishers began to encourage writers to cater to public tastes and to "behave like producers of a commodity" (55-56). Such demands pushed writers to become completely dependent on the businessmen of publishing houses. Those who faced particular pressures were authors who desired to remain gentleman scholars, independent of the marketplace and at a distance from new wealth:

the real class animus was not between the 'haves' and 'have-nots.' So far as the writers and intellectuals were concerned, the struggle was between their own homogeneous patrician society and a rising materialistic middle class without education and tradition, who were winning cultural and economic power and changing the tone of American life. (64)

Authors who clung to old-style ideals perceived a class threat in the changing nature of publishing.

R. Jackson Wilson's work, *Figures of Speech*, illuminates a number of strategies followed by authors during this period of strain upon older modes of cultural authority. He suggests that authors like Irving faced a paradoxical moment in American culture:

the very historical period in which it became possible for the men and women who produced the art to make money off their efforts . . . and the more highly developed became the markets for the objects of Culture . . . the more insistent became the distinction between the works of persons of 'genius' driven by the love of truth and beauty, and the sordid productions of hackney artists driven only by the love of profit and tawdry celebrity that might come with it. (Wilson 5)

Increasingly self-conscious of their image and aware of the need to define themselves as geniuses, skilled authors presented themselves as explicitly **not** interested in profits. Washington Irving's construction of Geoffrey Crayon--idle gentleman of letters--is perhaps the most cogent example.

Irving used the figure of Geoffrey Crayon to mediate between artist and market and to control the reception of his work. Wilson untangles Irving's complicated process,

allowing one to see that the guise of amateurism functioned as a marketing device. Writers like Irving presented an image to the public that promoted their role as man of letters while avoiding acknowledgement of their entrance into the modern literary marketplace. Emerson was equally adept at this strategy, shielding himself from visible signs of ambition for profit and distancing his poet-self from the contemporary community.

Valentine, as a Southerner, felt in the 1840s perhaps an even greater sense of intellectual aridity than did Emerson. He was witness to the slow disintegration of Richmond's stable hierarchies, originally rooted in planter class gentry families. As a member of a family with considerable community visibility and with a tradition of self-conscious "cultivation" he was averse to the inroads Jacksonian democracy made into the territory of culture. Valentine's idea regarding the responsibility of genius--"a man of genius may make a grand and instantaneous stride through an unknown realm of thought . . .but needs to study, search for source of thought, analyze, synthesize, back and forth"--which he mulled over in countless journal entries, extends Jeffersonian principles of an aristocracy of intellect.¹⁶ Valentine for at least the first decade of his life as merchant/writer adhered to these principles: maintain the order of society by keeping an aristocracy of

¹⁶ Quotation from scrap of paper contained in folder, Unpublished Writings, Valentine Museum.

educated, cultivated intellectuals at the top. He engaged the image of neglected artist in his work, romanticizing over the plight of genius, but he fully expected the attention he believed the due of superior intellect.

Edgar A. Poe remarked upon similar ideals. Poe, loosely Valentine's contemporary and present in Richmond a number of times both during Valentine's youth and during his first years as merchant, also hoped for an aristocracy of intellect.¹⁷ When he proposed to one Helen Whitman in the late 1840s, he wrote,

Am I right, dearest Helen, in the impression that you are ambitious? If so, and if you will have faith in me . . . it would be a glorious triumph for us . . . to establish in America the sole unquestionable aristocracy--that of the intellect; to secure its supremacy, to lead and control it. All this I can do.¹⁸

The sole aristocracy would select its own audience, controlling influence and preserving exclusivity in the same breath.

¹⁷ A definitive connection between Poe and Valentine is difficult to establish--Valentine only mentioned Poe once, and only briefly. He did find himself compared to Poe and he did allude to Poe's influence upon him, particularly Poe's *Eureka*.

¹⁸ See Weiss' [Talley] biography of Poe for information on his presence in Richmond. Quotation from page 170.

Valentine came of age at a time when the image of the artist--author or other--in general was changing.¹⁹ He knew he could be an author and he was able easily to imagine pursuing an artistic career. But the same improvements and modernization that made authorship appear attractive spelled a threat to the exclusivity of genius to which he was likewise attracted. In 1849, Valentine hoped to testify to the problems of modern society as well as follow his own agenda of literary fame. The printed word served as his crutch--his inclinations led him to write a novel as a way to admit himself to literary culture.

¹⁹ See Harris' *Artist and Society*, in particular his introduction and chapter on artist types (218-251).

CHAPTER II. DESULTORIA

Mann Valentine slid out of his bed, careful not to waken his parents and siblings, sat down at his desk and opened his journal. He turned to the page where the evening before he had attempted to write an essay on "Natural Style." He soon found himself adrift in frustration. He had hoped the morning air and pleasant view would inspire him to noble thoughts. Why could he not turn his inspired ideas into graceful prose? He gave up. Only one hour until he had to leave for the store--he wondered how he had ever found time to finish writing the manuscript that was teetering on the edge of his desk, waiting for him to decide what to do with it. Burn it? Try his luck with a Richmond publisher? Giving the manuscript a shove that nearly toppled it, he tucked his journal away.

In *Desultoria--The Recovered Mss. of an Eccentric*, issued anonymously in 1849, Valentine's first literary hero is a study in disappointment:

He was ambitious . . . he was careless of gain. He was heedless of fate. . . . When he left society, he was forgotten by it, and persons knew him afterwards as only the eccentric man. (*Desultoria* 5-6)

The hero is a sensitive poet and writer, his spirit broken by a world unable to appreciate his genius; he attempts to survive in a society of frivolity and fashion but ultimately conceives of suicide as the only option commensurate with

his romantic sensibility. This is the figure in whom Mann Valentine, Junior invested so much--the unnamed hero-genius of *Desultoria*--and with whom he tested his ideas regarding authorship on a less than welcoming public.¹

For his first literary effort Valentine withdrew into a narrator who claims an editorial role. The narrator professes the story to rest upon credible, historical documents: the recently recovered journal of this suicidal eccentric author. There is no mystery in this tale: the introductory section reveals that the genius is dead from suicide. The interest, however, lies in his motive. Why was he so alienated from his family and city, and why did he resort to suicide once he established that his gift of intellect would never be properly appreciated by his contemporaries?

Desultoria illuminates what Valentine criticized most fervently in antebellum society, underscoring where Valentine's history intersected with the criticism. In 1849, Valentine was as yet unmarried and as yet unpublished. Like his hero, he had recently embarked upon the profession chosen for him by

¹ Valentine altered his original title for the text, *The Detached Thoughts of an Eccentric Man*. His agent suggested locating a single word--easy to read and easy to remember--that would grab a potential reader's attention. Valentine did insist upon preserving "eccentric." His notes for the rough draft of *Desultoria*, a rough draft manuscript, as well as a number of copies of the first (and only) printing are housed at the Valentine Museum.

his father but pondered the feasibility of an artistic career. The fictional journal entries that compose the narrative introduce the eccentric in his late teens and carry him into young adulthood. Throughout the narrative he remains single, drifting in and about an urban center strikingly similar to Richmond: his home city perches on the edge of a river; class-stratified neighborhoods rise from the flats of the factory area to the heights of wealth and prestige. And just as Valentine recorded in his journal the appeal of the surrounding countryside of Richmond--remarking often upon crossing the river to seek rocky hills, clear pools, and well-worn paths--so the eccentric seek solace in the wild "suburbs." Valentine's key concern was in investigating the status of a man of letters in a community fixated on material wealth and fashion. The fate of genius in such surroundings hinged on the acceptance of his work. Valentine was drawn to the plight of this solitary intellectual; however, he was unable to recognize in his neglected hero the seeds of his own eventual failure in the literary world.

Valentine chose a novel as the tool with which both to express his own sense of alienation and to follow his personal agenda--building a reputation as man of letters. In doing so he deviated from forms normally associated with old school literary gentlemen. However, political essays, poetry, or biography would not have allowed him the flexibility he sought; only with a novel was he able to fuse

his attraction to romanticism with his ideals regarding the gentility of pursuing letters and learning. And only by constructing a fictional romantic hero was he able to express with relative safety his own desire to be recognized as such a type. Not surprisingly, he offered this work to the public anonymously.

Valentine, perhaps recognizing the suspicions fiction aroused among an audience sensitive to the moral ambiguity of imaginative works, did not present *Desultoria* as a novel. He pressed readers to approach it as a history. In the preface to the book, the anonymous author immediately asks the reader to believe the authenticity of the recovered manuscript. And in the introduction to the book, the narrator-as-editor frames the eccentric's first sentences as declarations of the credibility of the journal: the journal contains,

whatever has occurred of interest in my intercourse with men in society, or in the world--whatever I have gathered from the conversation of men--or have become acquainted with in my observation of their manners, and their actions. (11)

No "nonsense" and no "follies" fill the pages, instead only candid truths.

Both the preface and introduction instruct how to read the novel as implicitly not-fiction and how to relate the

author/editor to the journal writer. Valentine's strategy is similar to that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (as explained by Robert Darnton in his study of French cultural history). Darnton analyzes Rousseau's skills, arguing that Rousseau shifted the burden of how to approach fiction from the author to reader: "He asked the reader to suspend his disbelief and to cast aside the old way of reading in order to enter into the letters as if they really were the effusion of innocent hearts" (232-3). A number of Rousseau's eighteenth-century novels--presented as collections of letters using an author as editor guise--were acknowledged attempts to elicit new responses from readers; his strategy, like Valentine's later, detached the novel form from popular assumptions of its morally corruptive nature.²

Using a novel, Valentine was able to fabricate a sense of distinction; the genre was effective at signaling romantic sensibility while voicing a set of very real anxieties. *Desultoria* was as much a way to scorn society as it was a way to present himself as different from and superior to the machinations of fashionable, antebellum Richmond.

In his preliminary outline for *Desultoria* Valentine

² See Robert Darnton's *The Great Cat Massacre* (1984). The chapter of interest to my analysis is "Readers respond to Rousseau." The best example of Rousseau's methods is *La Nouvelle Heloise*.

establishes the four themes of the text. The outline, bearing his original title, "The Detached Thoughts of an Eccentric Man," dictates how "we" the readers will encounter and respond to the eccentric:

The first stage at which we find him putting down his thoughts, we shall call, that of ambition. Because we observe that he is indifferent to the accumulation of wealth, he is shocked at the idea of a man devoting a life to "filthy lucre." He has notion of the retirement of a man to devote his whole soul to letters he thinks it perhaps the sole happiness of this world surely for him. He writes a book meets with neglect from the world resolves to abandon literature since his talents are not appreciated.³

Of utmost importance is the eccentric hero's alienation from his urban society. This first stage consumed Valentine's energies; in the final novel, it dominates all other stages in length and in detail.

For the full first third of the book, Valentine seeks to explicate the nature of this alienation, attempting many different ways of explaining the genius' thought process as he decides to forsake contemporary culture. The hero

³ Desultoria Draft Outline, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum: 1. Valentine's punctuation and spelling are left as is in the document.

considers living a simple life:

that I could leave the world entirely . . . I would wish no friend in man . . . no companion in woman . . . no friend in a dog, for he would devour my rustic pets, and he, to, is treacherous, I would as the hermit, gather me fruits and herbs . . . I would be so simple in my life. (25-6)

Like a version of Thoreau at Walden Pond, the eccentric seeks to locate himself in a simple cell of nature to which a gentleman sensitive to natural landscapes and cognizant of poetry in natural forms can retreat.

In this first stage of the text Valentine establishes the moral superiority of genius, contrasting laudatory preference for nature with vulgar attraction to material goods. Valentine emphasizes as well the burden of intellectual gifts:

The great, the terrible world, bugbear to the poor literary man, thinks that going off alone and burying one's self in thought, frequently for a length of time, is idleness. But it is a very great error--idle men never go off alone in this way; and it is painful, to a genuinely idle man, to be alone, and compelled to think. (17)

He continues,

The student's life, of course, is attended with many disadvantages, and, indeed, pains--from which others are free. . . . He exists an isolated being. He is dependent on himself for employment of every kind. . . . As to the remuneration attached to the duties of these thinkers: it is to be deplored, that they have none, except in self-gratulation. (19)

These meditations delineate the eccentric's state before he fails at publishing--before experiencing for himself the lack of remuneration and impossibility of receiving adequate recognition for enduring the burden of genius.

Many of the details and tensions that attend the hero-genius at this point emerge out of Valentine's own journals. He employed the novel as a means of dramatizing the long-standing battle between his father's expectations and his own motivations:

Alas! it is my father's fondest hope, to see his son the richest man in the community in which he lives; if he thought he would not be so, he must die unhappy.⁴

Valentine perceived himself as pushed into the merchant

⁴ From *Desultoria* 19; Valentine Autobiography of 1846.

position, the eccentric into the law profession; both preferred artistic careers. Just as Valentine found his ambitions dampened by his duties at the store, so the eccentric found that the law offices provided a symbolically contracted view, offering a hostile set of books unlike those in his personal library.⁵

The semi-climactic end of stage one occurs when the eccentric adumbrates his tale of publishing woes. Valentine emphasizes in his preliminary outline his desire logically to connect the successive stages of the narrative, striving for causality; all action is thus a direct result of the publishing business' rejection of the eccentric's work. But strangely enough, as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, the exact incident is never explained.

In stage two the eccentric, "disappointed in his ambitious notions . . . needs some object on which to fix himself--just then he sees a beautiful woman he loves at first sight; pursues the passion . . . giving up the pursuits of ambition for those of love."⁶ To this stage Valentine paid the least attention. In the final novel, the love interest is one incident in a series of mishaps and is quickly over. The eccentric is attracted by a beautiful woman--never learns her name--but throws himself after her and away from his studies. After exploding with a string of

⁵ From *Desultoria* 25, 27, 34; Valentine Autobiography of 1846.

⁶ *Desultoria* Draft Outline: 2.

philosophic essays on love, the eccentric turns back to nature as the preferred companion to woman: "give me the sea, so well suited to, and productive of the quiet, dispassionate thought . . . And give me the sight of the mountains that vary as you gaze on them (102-3).

The love affair, coupled with the publishing disaster, sets off the next set of incidents: "The third stage comes on gradually from the second from love, and the dismiss of letters and ambition, he slowly but surely falls into an Epicurean.⁷ In this section of the text Valentine unleashes his distaste for fashionable society--for those who conform to current styles in clothes and books without intellectual reason. In a series of biting entries, the eccentric offers descriptions of his city's fashionable set:

I passed my eye around the semicircle of boxes, where the followers of fashion, the possessors of wealth, and the self-sufficient children of pride were vieing [sic] with each other in extravagance and excess of worldliness. . . . Here I saw the vulgar-minded women and upstart men. (69)

The eccentric had earlier feigned interest in "learning" how to "plunge deep into frivolity" (66). He now attempts to do so with vengeance but ultimately fails; he can not reshape

⁷ Desultoria Draft Outline: 2.

his genius to accommodate the ridiculous rules and manners of the public.

The eccentric's pathetic attempts to make a career out of aping the manners of such a crowd are viciously highlighted by a figure who illuminates an alternative vocation: an impoverished "unfortunate man with literary tastes" with whom the eccentric begins an episodic friendship. This man has **not** sold out to the common masses. He is likewise a publishing failure because his writing was not in the "light spirit and airy style" of the day (95), but he has not become a epicurean. Far from complacent about his faintly immoral decision to forsake literature-- "Preserve me, O! my good genius, from the perfumed glove, the powdered face, and the oiled locks" (120)--the eccentric remains haunted by his friend's bleak image.

As he marches through what his humbug public considers the new cultivated class, the eccentric's musings flush out a full portrait of the rising bourgeoisie:

In this grand place, society, you must falsify, you must stoop, you must give attention to those you do not like, those who do not like; you must yield up your feelings, renounce all honor and truth, and be a slave and a sycophant to every fool who has wealth, or power, or influence . . . be informed on subjects not earned, for persons in society have a horror of learned persons. (124)

In particular, his thoughts locate for us Valentine's imagined reactions to this group from the perspective of the learned and quieter aristocracy of intellectuals.

Although providing an interesting moment in the novel, the third stage passes rapidly into the fourth:

the eccentric renounces the follies, the friendships of the world . . . he would turn back to letters, but his spirit is broken and what is the mind when the spirit is broken. Suicide terminates the fourth stage and makes the close.*

One final struggle with his father directly precedes the suicide. His father burns his books ("my father, in despair of my ever becoming fond of the law, has, by fire, destroyed all my books--poisoned, as he says, with literature" 166), and kicks him out of the house.

He said that I make him unhappy by my not pursuing his profession . . . I insisted, as I had done, I know not how often before, that the profession [of law] was unsuited to my taste, and for it I had no talent; that to me literary pursuits afforded not only more pleasure, but possessed more genuine utility; that he had often said himself, that a man should consult his

* Desultoria draft outline: 3.

capacity. (185)

Valentine engaged in a bit of fantasy here. He never confronted his father over his misfit to the merchant's calling although he contemplated doing so in his journals.⁹

Breaking from his father, the hero refuses to associate himself with any and all desires for money:

My father bade me leave him--and forever. I would not hesitate to obey, but pause to tell him that I had one last favor to ask. He told me he possessed no money he wished thrown away upon an ingrate. . . . I told him I desired not money, . . . since I had none of the foolish and idle ostentation. (187)

Destitute, Valentine's neglected genius wanders the city. Upon learning that his friend is in prison--the unfortunate literary man--he pays him a final visit. This writer, the eccentric's alter-ego of sorts, has reached the end of his own wayward path through antebellum society. His choices have not brought him recognition; as a final blow to his aspirations, he is thrown in prison for murdering a man who tried to wrest ownership of his anonymous novels away from

⁹ See Autobiography of 1846 or 1889, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum. In 1889, Valentine remembered that he had earlier contemplated what would have happened if his father had burned his books.

him.

With such an example in mind, the hero decides that suicide is the only way for a neglected author to completely and forcefully express disdain for contemporary society and join with intellectuals of previous ages. His last journal entry, written on the morning of the suicide illuminates the poignancy of his plaintive condition:

I am going to visit and converse with Socrates and Plato--with the immortal Bacon. I shall be honored, I will tell them of the discoveries in matter, and of mind, since they have left this life-land. I will hold communion of spirit with them . . . Even to the last I cling to a book. (219)

Suicide allows the genius to enact his fantasy of associating with the great thinkers of the past. What better example could there be of Valentine's curious fusion between classical ideas and romantic sentiment?

The preliminary outline--Valentine's concerted attempt to orchestrate what were abstract notions of authorship and his own random journal entries into a logical whole--reveals where his priorities lay in terms of the plot as well as how impractical and uninformed were his notions of a literary career. He generated the text before contacting an agent or a publisher, and before discovering what the publishing world would demand of him. The story he created inherently

spurns the literary marketplace before he attempted to negotiate his way into it, condemning the humbug public and elevating neglected geniuses.

Although the eccentric's publishing rout serves as the heart of the text, Valentine provides few details of the incident. The reader is not told what type of writing he tried to publish. Nor is the reader privy to the publisher's comments. Valentine perhaps could not imagine exactly what would occur when a young author presented his work to a publisher or an agent, so he omitted the details of such interactions. Rather than give an account of the actual incident, a set of entries offers meditations on the problems of presenting oneself as a gentleman of letters to readers unable to appreciate elevated thoughts. All journal entries before the incident set the stage for failure, describing the hero's philosophy, his anachronistic location within a materialistic society, and his goals--goals that inevitably remain unfulfilled. The journal entries that follow recapitulate a series of incidents all with the same root cause--the publishing failure. The fate of the author--the very course of his life--is ineluctably bound up in the reception of his work.

The eccentric desired the feelings of an author; and until he placed his work before the public he eagerly anticipated the rewards. But he admits his naivete:

A few months ago, and my heart throbbed for excitement,

and I wished to have the feelings of an author, whose work was before the people, the great, the humbug people. . . . How altered are our feelings, and how changed is our knowledge and opinion of men; after we have written a book, and made ourselves thence a subject of remark--of expressions of odium and of ridicule. (64)

Scorning the common public for their unenlightened reactions to works of intellectuals, he explains how their uninformed reading spelled failure and neglect for a genius:

Ah! they will take up your book--scan the title first, and if it be an unfortunate one, or one they may be prejudiced to, cast it down; to take it up no more. If a good title, and the binding does not please them they will not give it a moment's attention--since you know the outside of things in this world indicates what is within, i.e. a frog's head contains a jewel. (65)

Valentine here prefigured the negative reception of his own work. He ironically prefigured as well his obsession with the appearance of his published texts--he criticizes this behavior in his projected audience behavior but clings to it as a gentleman author concerned with the reflection of handsome print and binding on his self-image.

The eccentric at this point speaks out to other

sympathetic geniuses:

Fellow author! do you wish to succeed. I have told you how I have failed. I see my error now, and I can point, too, to the right path. Write a Song Book, or you will neither meet nor deserve success--for this rare and remarkably philosophic style of writing suits all tastes. (65-66)

Having failed at publishing, the genius is (supposedly) ready to sacrifice his principles, renounce his intellectual gifts and condescend to satisfy popular demands. Valentine here resorts to bitter sarcasm regarding the public's tastes. He was drawn to imagine that neglect from the "humbug" people would not affect his ability to get his work in print. And he seemed to give little weight to the power of public tastes in a competitive national market. The prolonged emphasis on the lonely burden of genius in these meditations and the weighty treatment of his dissatisfaction with the public suggests Valentine anticipated encountering a complex set of problems as an author, but that he nonetheless expected to be able to progress unimpeded with his ambitions.

Valentine was obsessed with understanding and explicating the natural burden of genius. In common with writers such as Emerson, he portrayed intellectuals as charged with upholding the social fabric of the nation.

Emerson, most notably in his "American Scholar" address of 1837, argued for intellectuals to meet the challenge of changes in American society by rising above public opinion; he asked geniuses to exercise "the highest functions of human nature," raise themselves "from private considerations" and "defer never to the popular cry" (56). Emerson's ending paragraph to this address is suggestive of the same danger Valentine predicted, should all genius be neglected by modern society:

The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. . . . Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides.
(63)

Emerson provided Valentine an ending for *Desultoria*.

Valentine experimented with how best to present his ideas, taking into consideration the distasteful nature and low aims of the "mind of the country." Always at issue was how his presentation reflected upon his reputation. He exaggerated the seriousness of purpose with which he approached the responsibility of his intellectual gifts.

But he also downplayed his burden by creating an "eccentric" who from the title alone is marked as peculiar in the minds of the common reader. Are unschooled readers supposed to avoid a narrative written by an eccentric? Or, did Valentine use such a construction in order to frame the book as the product of a "mere" scribbling social oddity, and thus purport to amuse his readers?

On one hand Valentine emphasized that a thinking man's pursuits should not be termed idleness. On the other hand, he participated in the misnomer, titling his work in what could be construed as a derogatory manner. The term, desultory, was frequently used in The Southern Literary Messenger either as a heading for a column or within essays on the state of letters in American society--most notably in "Desultory Notes on Desultory Readings," a regular editorial section from 1844 to 1846. The label flagged the organization of this section--a jumble of unrelated criticisms and queries--but belied its serious tone. "Desultory" might have been a pose like that of Irving's Crayon, a deliberate selection that conveyed the writer's supposedly modest purposes and appealed to readers seeking instruction and amusement.¹⁰ Most importantly though, such a term could have implied that the writer adopting it existed apart from the antithetical business world of mechanical, precise, and calculated thought.

¹⁰ Again, see R. J. Wilson's chapter on Irving, particularly pages 80-85.

Valentine's deliberate choice of title, genre, and subject matter--the eccentric man--was made in an effort to fabricate a degree of distance from the literary marketplace and confirm his distinguished location in the company of heroic geniuses. To this end as well, Valentine clung to a literary model who he believed would further this agenda: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Fascinated with Goethe, a German Romantic of the eighteenth-century, Valentine imitated his methods of presentation, his plots and his characters. There are in particular many similarities between *Desultoria* and Goethe's *Sufferings of Young Werther* (1774), which sketched a story of a social eccentric alienated from society (some connections exist to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* 1795). Like Goethe's *Werther*, to be misunderstood is *Desultoria's* genius' fate as well as his key claim to status. And in both texts, the genius' suicide is the measurement for his heroic nature; he yearns for expression but can find no satisfactory outlet in contemporary society.

Valentine adopted Goethe's method of using a narrator to lead readers through the so-called historical documents that serve as the text's backbone; the narrators make sense of confessional letters (in *Werther*) or journal entries (in *Desultoria*). Valentine's narrator, in the same manner as Goethe's, asks the reader to believe the historical reliability of the manuscripts and to trust the didactic

intent of the text; his prefatory statement, "I consider his [the eccentric's] writings the best history. . . I consider I am fulfilling a portion of my duty to him in having it published," (9) has the same effect as Goethe's in the preface to *Werther*. In *Wilhelm Meister* the audience is also asked to treat the fiction as history.

Both *Desultoria* and *Werther* are mosaics of a life. In each, the portrait of the hero emerges in fragments and is as much sketched out by his musings on emotions as by chronological incidents in his life. The eccentrics are above all alienated and move through the world in solitude, experimenting with emotions and with describing them to themselves. In the plot pattern *Valentine lifted*, Goethe's hero is first drawn to a modest rural landscape to test his sensibility, seeking intensified reactions to nature not found in the constrained environment of an over-built city (21); he then criticizes the pretensions of wealthy, vulgar aristocrats (64, 67); and his honest friend, "fated to be misunderstood," becomes a prisoner (92). Like *Desultoria*, *Werther's* plot was supposedly based upon the artist's own experiences.¹¹ Both *Desultoria* and *Werther* could be considered public confessionals, performing a cleansing function for the authors. Either *Valentine* and Goethe led oddly similar lives, or, *Valentine* chose to imagine that his

¹¹ Thomas Mann's foreword to *Werther* (given as an address to Princeton students in 1940): 1-13 in the 1990 Continuum Publishing edition.

life conformed to that outlined by Goethe's portrait of an alienated artist.

In imitating many of the key elements of *Werther*, Valentine signaled not only his knowledge of and affinity to Goethe's style--finding self-fulfillment in Goethe's expressions of intense emotion--but he demonstrated his ability to capitalize on the warm reception of Goethe created in Thomas Carlyle's wake. Goethe's availability and appeal to antebellum society was fostered by Carlyle. Thomas Carlyle in the early 1840s attempted to explicate Goethe to the English public, and by extension to American readers; he defined and framed Goethe's work--clarifying what he saw as its significance--and attempted to build Goethe's reputation.

Carlyle's lecture series on heroes, and in particular on the "hero as man of letters"--emerging out of his attraction to Goethe--allowed him to address questions he had raised as early as 1837: "should there be any such thing as a literary man," and how can there be when "bookwriting is a ruined state for all men except quacks"?¹² To Carlyle, Goethe was the best example of a modern man of

¹² Carlyle as cited by Goldberg xlvi-1. Carlyle's lecture on the hero as man of letters was given in May of 1840 to a British audience. It was later reprinted in an 1841 volume which included this presentation as well as a number of others on heroes. See Goldberg's newly issued reprint. Even though Carlyle began his lecture with a discussion of Goethe, he suggested that it would be useless to explain him to his uninformed audience. He chose instead to laud Rousseau, Johnson, and Burns.

letters as hero:

by far the most notable of all Literary Men is Fichte's countryman, Goethe. . . heroic in what he said and did, and perhaps still more in what he did not say and did not do . . . a noble spectacle . . . in the guise of a most modern, high-bred, high-cultivated Man of Letters.

(Goldberg 136)

Carlyle used Goethe to frame his lecture on men of letters in which he lobbied for the support of the "art" of writing and the exclusivity of literature, and, in which he instilled the notion of the valor, courage, and struggle necessary to be an artist among ordinary men. Goethe's work assisted Carlyle in answering the conundrum of what a learned man, desiring to express his sensibility and distinction, could do in an increasingly hostile society.

By refining perceptions of literary men and making their struggle seem heroic, Carlyle enforced the singularity of genius. His efforts gave figures like Valentine an appealing model--an artist who voiced romantic sentiments and could be held up as an advocate for preserving the nobility and exclusivity of literature. Valentine quite handily picked up on the use-value of such a model; in the first pages of his journal, the eccentric dreams "of the time,--when the young man of buoyant hope, and love of nature, and dear, winning literature, shall become the great

man, and be classed with the fathers . . . and be borne down, with a revered name, to posterity" (15).

For the antebellum South, as noted in the previous chapter, Romanticism played a major role in shaping the thoughts and behaviors of intellectuals. Michael O'Brien's work highlights the issues at stake:

In the South the grievances of politics, slavery and trade, the flux which preconditioned Romanticism, created the case for provincial self-justification. (Lineaments 183)

According to O'Brien, German thinkers in particular were attractive to intellectuals concerned with dignifying the local.

Anxious for legitimacy, defensive Southerners who felt on the periphery of national culture could use Romanticism as a way to protect themselves from threats exterior to their culture of gentility.

O'Brien's suggestion of the dual value of Romanticism to Southern thinkers is for the study of Valentine a potent concept: Romanticism gave an intellectual simultaneously the dignity of alienation and the reward of belonging, conceding the necessity of alienation but also insisting that superior genius could transcend alienation and find a higher level of meaning (Endeavor; 66, 76). Such a notion pinpoints the central tension in Valentine's work. He was drawn to

imagine alienation, signaling his status as a natural genius to others of like distinction, but at the same time he cultivated selected behaviors of old-style thinkers in order to appear under siege by modernity. Attempting to balance this tension, Valentine created a narrative of failure and of neglected genius as his first step in finding recognition as an author. He was well aware of the pressures on contemporary authors, but sought to join what was a growing cadre of successful writers.

In anticipation of submitting his work to modern audiences, Valentine used the trope of neglected genius to promote himself as a certain type of intellectual--one not interested in profits nor sales--and to flag himself as part of a select community of like solitary geniuses. He seemed to expect that automatic rewards would accrue by naming himself as such a type, crafting his novel so as to reflect this identity. In the next chapter we see how Valentine's expectations shaped his behavior once he introduced himself to the publishing world.

Why so much effort to get out of being a merchant? As is apparent in his journals, Valentine believed that he had been born to a better role:

[father] supposed that I might--as himself, have his tastes and be a merchant, -- but, I am not as he was--a merchant. (Journal of 1844 12)

He was confident that his superiority would enable him to submit his voice to antebellum literary culture. His talents were wasting away in the store and in 1849 a novel was potential salvation.

CHAPTER III. FIRST PUBLISHING ENCOUNTER -- NEW YORK

Ten p.m. already and Mann Valentine, Junior was anxious to finish the essay on "Natural Style" he had begun in the early morning hours of the same day. He excused himself from his sister's poetry recitation and dashed up the servant stairway to his back-corner bed chamber. Only two hours to sculpt his thoughts into orderly prose. His attention, however, was soon diverted by an old issue of the *Literary World*. After perusing the first essay in the issue, Valentine turned to the back pages in order to read the reviews of new works. He intended to visit the Cary Street booksellers at the end of the week and wished to know what was considered worth purchasing. An adjacent advertisement alerted his interest: Park Benjamin, "literary agent," promises to dispose of manuscripts for writers and connect them to publishers of New York. Valentine glanced from the advertisement to the stack of paper on the edge of his desk and back to the advertisement. He had completed the novel, why not do something with it? He'd rather trust it to someone whose name he recognized, and Benjamin was a known author and editor. Valentine seized his pen and drafted a note to Benjamin.

Valentine, oddly enough given the text of *Desultoria*, was idealistic about his chances in the literary marketplace. Attempting confidence, he submitted his ideas to what he conceived of as an arena of gentlemanly letters and learning. The lure of the romance of authorship was strong.¹

¹ The Valentine Museum collection includes a full set of letters between Benjamin and Valentine, beginning with Valentine's first inquiry as to Benjamin's services as

One can follow Valentine's first contact with national publishing--his curious and contradictory responses to it--by using the extensive letters from author to agent and author to publisher that exist in the Valentine archives. Eager to publish his manuscript and desperate to know of the public's critical opinion, he was nonetheless careful to present himself as a detached artist. Valentine exhibits a pathological drive to assert his superiority to the marketplace and to control his imminent reputation as a gentleman of letters. He was, however, willing to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the literary marketplace and prepared to work with agents of the Northern publishing world.

The timing of Valentine's bid for authorial fame is important. In 1849, publishing was in the process of becoming a large and profitable business. Publishing houses like Baker and Scribner in New York were at this time still very small. They were, however, beginning to increase the number of works published and the number of authors they would take a risk on--those whose works promised to sell

literary agent, dated April 1849, and ending with a January, 1850 letter of introduction which Benjamin wrote to assist Valentine in meeting Longfellow. Since Valentine frequently penned his responses on the back of letters he received from Benjamin, Scribner, or even Longfellow (or at least drafted out a version on a scrap of paper) before copying them into final form (a task his wife often shouldered), it is possible to trace complete conversations.

well and upon whom they could count to produce steadily.²

Accelerated competition, expanding markets, and new attention to sales techniques exacted a toll from publishers and authors; both groups felt pressure to find ways to attract national audiences.³ To get his or her work into print, an author could either approach a publisher directly or use a fairly new phenomenon--a literary agent like Benjamin. If the author managed to attract the notice of a publishing house, he or she relied on that house for continued support, for advertising attention and for sales profits.⁴

Publishers may have been aggressive and potentially difficult to deal with, but profits for an author were no

² Baker and Scribner began in 1846 as purely a publishing house without printing or binding equipment. According to basic reference sources on the history of publishing houses (see for example *History of Publishing in America*) because they had no presses, Scribner's was more flexible and free to seek new talent. They began business with the publication of religious titles, and sought to augment their selection with likewise scholarly, moral, popular titles.

³ William Charvat's work is again invaluable for providing a basic chronology and analysis of the publishing "revolution" and its implications. Important to keep in mind too are more recent arguments that clarify the meaning of this revolution. Ronald Zboray, for example, argues that the so-called revolution did not automatically cause a democratized audience; more books and more authors did not necessitate open access to the privileges of print. See Zboray's essay, "The Ironies of Technological Innovation," in Davidson, *Reading in America*: 180-200.

⁴ Charvat is careful to note the downside of this growing dependence, offering as an example the exploitative nature of the relationship between Hawthorne and his publisher, James T. Fields. Charvat, *Literary Publishing* 56-58.

doubt possible; high stakes thus existed on all sides of the equation. As the publishing business expanded from 1820 to 1850 roughly, publishers had increasing risk capital with which to work. Previously, smaller-scale publishing houses went in and out of business with rapidity and authors had to finance their own imprints. Improvements in publishing technologies and distribution networks as well as changes in copyright laws meant books that met with popular approval had the chance to realize significant sales. Retailers, too, exhibited a growing awareness of native literature's profit potential.⁵ In the complex national print culture emerging by the late 1840s, authors no longer had to rely on local technologies and resources. The change was not universal across the country, but it is safe to say that an author seeking to publish a work at this time, like it or not, had to face some aspect of the rapidly modernizing book trade.

Part of the drama of this period was played out in the pages of magazines. By mid-century the number of magazines entering the industry was at an unheard of high, with an especial proliferation of magazines directed at specific readerships and promising the latest fiction, current events and social news. Such developments in the magazine industry

⁵ See Charvat's early study, *Literary Publishing in America 1790-1850*, 38-43. In this short work, Charvat lays out the arguments that appear in greater detail in the chapters of *The Profession of Authorship*. I find the briefer account a far more lucid text.

increased a writer's opportunities for compensation and increased the visibility both of literature and of the figure of the writer across a rapidly expanding range of consumers.⁶

Park Benjamin, literary agent, epitomized this revolution in the publishing world, performing a new role in literary culture and directing the drama of change. Benjamin represented the wealth of opportunities that the national literary marketplace created; he carved out a unique way for one well versed in literature to profit.

Benjamin was by 1849 well-known for his editorial successes, particularly for his role in founding **The New World** (1840)--a semi-literary weekly that he aggressively marketed as a vehicle to popularize good literature.⁷ In the early 1840s Benjamin, suspiciously regarded at first, began to market himself as an independent literary agent. He managed the new flux of authors, alerting men like James T. Fields to writers of promise or pushing works upon

⁶ See Tebbel and Zuckerman, **The Magazine in America**; their chapter, "Political and Cultural Influence," is particularly relevant.

⁷ Park Benjamin was joined in this venture by Nathaniel Parker Willis. The two were opportunistic and cognizant of popular taste both for colorful and flashy lay-out and for stories with a hint of spectacle. They raced to reprint the newest European and American texts, using creative modes of advertising--flyers, special folio issues--to further promote their periodical. See Hoover's biography for an extensive chronicle of Benjamin's career.

reluctant publishers.⁸ He was accustomed to serving as a link between publisher and public; as an editor he had for many years provided the indispensable service of generating favorable reviews.⁹ At the time Valentine contacted him, Benjamin had begun to conduct lectures and was only pursuing his agent role part-time.¹⁰

In April of 1849 Valentine contacted Benjamin for assistance in publishing *Desultoria*, responding to Benjamin's advertisement with the following self-conscious letter:

Dr Sir

⁸ One example concerns a collection of poems by Marguerite Loud--with a preface by Benjamin--published by Ticknor, Reed and Fields in 1851. The volume did not sell, and Ticknor et al. wrote to Loud stating that they had not wanted to publish the volume, had declined it several times, and finally printed it only because Mr. Benjamin was anxious to have a Boston imprint. The transaction is summarized by Tryon and Charvat in their analysis of Ticknor and Fields' Cost Books; this volume is only one of many that Benjamin was involved with, pushed through publication, and maintained an interest in long after his initial service as first reader was over. See Tryon and Charvat, 191.

⁹ Charvat discusses the nature of the biased "review" system in *The Profession of Authorship* 171-3.

¹⁰ Benjamin was not known to be patient, but was judged by Poe and Longfellow among others to be a just critic (if not too harsh at times). With Valentine, however, Benjamin was abrupt--and basically more interested in his planned lecture trip to the South than in sticking his neck out for an amateur author. Valentine noted that the advertisement he responded to was months old. Perhaps Benjamin in the time elapsed had lost some of his interest in serving as an agent. He was unflinchingly polite to Valentine, but gave him little encouragement and never even mentioned his opinion of the text.

In *The Literary World* you advertised some months ago that you would dispose of manuscripts for writers. You are conscious that we have no publishers in the South, or rather in our state and hence we are dependent on the North. Thus having finished the labors of a work which I was unwilling to place in the hands of a publisher unconditionally--for it had cost me much thought . . . I judged that the intervention of yourself being from your literary experience most capable of appreciating the efforts for its production.¹¹

Valentine's insecurity suggests reluctance to court a publisher and enter a relationship of dependence; his reluctance was heightened by his identity as a Southerner.

In this first letter too, Valentine was careful to voice his desire for anonymity:

As it is not my intention to attach my name to the work, I judge it is neither necessary or incumbent that any one save yourself be acquainted with the author--in

¹¹ MSV to Park Benjamin, New Bedford, April 9, 1849. As Valentine noted in the post script to this communication, it was tortuous for him to draft letters at this point: "I am not devoted to letter writing, excuse manner and the language in which I have disclosed myself." Valentine overcame these problems and would not have to write this type of post script again; he became very accustomed to letter-writing, sending at least one letter per week to his publishers once Benjamin secured him a contract of sorts.

fact, I desire secrecy _____ mention no other reason--
 there is a pleasure in sitting all at one's ease while
 one is being abused. . . . But do not understand me to
 shrink from its defence.¹²

Valentine suggested that anonymity would allow him to
 experience the luxury of detachment. Ironically, Valentine
 never attained this state.

In two nervous letters to Benjamin, sent before the
 publishing arrangements were final, Valentine presented
 himself as earnest and idealistic. His assessment of his
 venture into publishing was characteristically bold:

As I desire to unleash into literary life have the
 kindness to inform me when you shall write regarding my
 book [and] where I may launch or where I may probably
 be launched.¹³

Such optimism is curious given the pathetic narrative of a
 writer's career in the very manuscript he wanted to see in
 print, *Desultoria*; except when one remembers that Valentine

¹² MSV to Park Benjamin, April 9, 1849. Mann's
 suggestion of his willingness to defend his text, even if
 published anonymously, nicely illuminates just how self-
 conscious he was regarding upholding traditions of the Old
 Dominion--honor and defend one's work and home, class and
 status. He did not wish Benjamin to misread his intentions
 concerning anonymity. The underlining indicates an
 illegible word.

¹³ MSV to Park Benjamin, June 22, 1849.

largely exempted himself from the calculus of neglect, imagining that it was like a badge of honor and would not mitigate against his success but instead prove his deserved reputation. He was ready to scorn the opinions of the common reader.

Although Park Benjamin's reply to the budding author was favorable--he promised to market the manuscript, promoting himself as an expert on the business of publishing--he warned Valentine that the market was unpredictable:

It is a point of conscience with me . . . not to give the slightest encouragement to an author or to assume any responsibility beyond . . . maintaining and recommending a work: for it is utterly impossible to account for the whims of publishers. The merit of the book has little to do with . . . acceptance or rejection of it.¹⁴

The young author remitted the required sum of ten dollars despite the fact that Benjamin's warning smacked of the very aspects of the modern literary trade Valentine would have disliked. Not surprisingly, when Benjamin asked Valentine for a business favor in return, Valentine did not follow

¹⁴ Park Benjamin, New York to MSV, April 13, 1849.

through.¹⁵

When he accepted Benjamin's terms for marketing the manuscript, Valentine added a caveat,

if it has not that within it, to render it acceptable without my bearing any portion of the costs of publishing, let it return to my hands, and in my _____ I will build a fire to immolate my toil.¹⁶

He ignored the agent's refusal to judge the text, trusting Benjamin's critical skills more than his own. Valentine recognized that to resort to financing the book out of his own pocket was admitting failure of a sort. Had he been satisfied to be treated as an old-style gentleman of letters, he would not have framed "bearing a portion of the costs" as distasteful.

Benjamin attempted to promote the manuscript to a

¹⁵ Benjamin asked Valentine for help in organizing a lecture trip to Richmond--he asked the Richmond merchant to obtain subscribers. Ten days after the request, Mann responded: he assured Benjamin that he "had asked intelligent men" about the possibilities of a lecture, but stated that these men "always sing that old song 'here people do not like lectures.'" Warning him of Richmond's fondness for evenings of entertainment, Valentine suggested Benjamin contact the papers himself. Nor did Valentine offer to help with tickets; he supplied only advice, mentioning "the very good success in Richmond of Mr. Poe's metaphysical subject" and adding, "you have the advantage certainly in your being of a more popular character."

¹⁶ MSV to Park Benjamin, Spring 1849 (postdates April 13, predates June 22). The underlining indicates an illegible word.

number of publishers, but only Baker and Scribner (at the time a very small publishing enterprise) were willing to issue the novel. Assuring Valentine he had found a home for his work with publishers of "highest esteem," Benjamin unloaded all further responsibility on Valentine's shoulders:

I wish this for you, as the animal magnetizers say, en rapport with the publishers, and you can direct them what to do. . . . I should be glad to render you any aid in my power in getting the work before the public-- should you conclude, after hearing from Baker and Scribner, to publish on your own responsibility.¹⁷

The publisher did not intend to take a risk on Valentine's book without first exacting a commission and a substantial cash contribution from the author. Exactly the agreement Valentine sought to avoid.¹⁸

In the early fall of 1849, Baker and Scribner laid out the terms upon which they agreed to publish Valentine's

¹⁷ Baker and Scribner was not Benjamin's first choice of publishing houses, however. He had first attempted to contact among others, Wiley and Putnam--publishers of Poe's tales--but met with rejection. See Park Benjamin to MSV, Oct. 30, 1849, or MSV to Park Benjamin, June 22, 1849.

¹⁸ All the publisher letters dated 1849 are signed "Baker and Scribner." Baker died in 1850 and Charles Scribner took over control of the firm. The letters from mid 1850 on are signed Charles Scribner. The handwriting, however, does not change.

text. They first estimated the price Valentine would have to pay; \$421.00 for one thousand copies--paper, binding, and printing--or exactly half for five hundred, adding, "We should charge 20 percent in the retail price of the book for our commission for publishing and selling."¹⁹ Before agreeing to such terms Valentine voiced what was his priority: the appearance of the book. He made it clear to the publishers that the cost was not a significant issue, nor were the possible profits; he did not dispute the commission nor the advertising fees, only the look of the text upon completion. If he was to accept what was a second-class offer, he desired a handsome book--the better to reflect on his self-image as cultivated gentleman of letters. Valentine even suggested to Baker and Scribner that one similar to "[Nathaniel] Willis' Rural Letters" would be best--it was printed on higher quality paper than that Scribner had first proposed to use. For a few dollars more, Valentine obtained the finer paper of Willis' text and made out an optimistic contract for 1000 copies.²⁰

Along with his check, Valentine enclosed this query: "how long might [it] require to settle up the business of a

¹⁹ Baker and Scribner to MSV, Oct. 2, 1849.

²⁰ Valentine paid the extra cost--a small sum for what was supposedly a much higher quality imprint; Baker and Scribner hinted that they would make up the extra expense in the sales. Baker and Scribner to MSV, Nov. 7, 1849 and Nov. 10, 1849; MSV to Baker and Scribner, Nov. 10, 1849 and Nov. 14, 1849.

work after it issues, for I despise to be irritated with pecuniary transactions?"²¹ (And this only one month after agreeing to the initial publishing contract.) As becomes apparent in later letters, what Valentine desired was not only rapid disengagement from the commercial transaction (it sullied his image) but rapid critical feedback. He wanted immediate knowledge of sales and reviews; entangled with his assurances of distaste for matters of money were these somewhat contradictory desires.

Valentine bothered Baker and Scribner with countless requests for sales reports. In almost every letter he asked for criticism and he pleaded with them to send any and all reviews, notices, or editorials that they might have run across. His impatience led him to treat Baker and Scribner like a small-scale enterprise, instructing them as to how to sell his work:

As for the price of the book let it be sold as low as possible--that it may have a fair chance to become popular--I do not expect to make money but I wish it to take well or not to take [at] all as in a degree on it depends my future literary efforts.²²

Their responses to his constant badgering grew increasingly

²¹ MSV to Baker and Scribner, Nov. 14, 1849.

²² MSV to Baker and Scribner, Nov. 25, 1849.

antagonistic. The book was repeatedly delayed, from November through December and into January of 1850. Baker and Scribner promised no foul-play caused the slow progress, suggesting that the delay was actually a route to better sales: wait for the spring market. But Valentine resisted. As the above letter amply demonstrates, Valentine had completely identified his book's success with his own. And when it did not sell, he would not admit to its failure.

Valentine sent his publishers at least two letters per week for four months; one can understand Baker and Scribner's frustration by the spring of 1850:

Dear Sir

In our letter of the 27th, though inadvertent the notices were not enclosed. Enclosed you will find three we can just now lay our hands on. In the hurry of our business many of the papers containing notices have been lost and many of course we have never seen. . . . We regret however that the book does not sell as we would like to have it.²³

²³ Baker and Scribner to MSV, April 17, 1850. Baker and Scribner signed this letter "your obt sevts" (your obedient servants)--exactly the way they signed all of their notes to Valentine, until late in their correspondence. They dropped this civil gesture a half year later, once Valentine's account ended. I located one review of *Desultoria*; as I could not find any others in the major periodicals of 1849/1850 I doubt very many appeared. Even simple "notices" of availability were absent. Perhaps this is why Baker and Scribner claimed to have misplaced the ones that they had saved.

Constant tension over sales and criticism wore thin on the publishers, but Valentine hungered for responses; even as months of sluggish sales passed he persisted in ignoring negative reports.

In the fall of 1850, Baker and Scribner wrote to tell Valentine that due to the low sales, they had decided **not** to take their commission. They sent him an inventory: of the 1000 printed copies of *Desultoria* Valentine had given away 35, Baker and Scribner 52, and only 177 had been sold. A full 500 unbound and 236 bound copies sat in Baker and Scribner's storage-place. Valentine, clearly offended, immediately paid Baker and Scribner for all the costs they had incurred, estimating their commission himself. Such an action flabbergasted the publishers, and they in turn were offended that Mann mistook their kindness for an accusation of debt.²⁴ Valentine's decision to pay Baker and Scribner released him from dependence. This move also allowed him to continue to deny that the text had been a failure. It had brought him a set of small rewards that he wished to protect; he would do so by imagining its success.

There seem to have been two sides to every action Valentine took. Some of his behaviors marked him as within the culture of modern intellectuals, some marked him as performing a role suited to an eighteenth-century writer.

²⁴ Baker and Scribner to MSV, Aug. 20, 1850; Baker and Scribner to MSV, Oct. 2, 1850.

He was unwilling to be treated like an old-style gentleman of letters by the publishers and desired a modern contract so that he would have his chance at popular success.

However, he was equally unwilling to present himself in the mold of modern author--money-hungry and shaped by public tastes.

On one hand, Valentine showed that he was ready to be somewhat flexible. He went along with the self-financing and agreed to make selected changes--all superficial--in his work. He changed the title of his manuscript; Park Benjamin had suggested a single name by which it could be known and Mann obeyed:

I have thought but a single one out of a great many I would be willing to give it--and that is: "Desultoria" From the recovered manuscript of an Eccentric man. It is rather _____ sounding but I hope not entirely so. There is a deal of humbug in a name. I find and we must name our book as the negro his child--by the greatest name on the heavenly scale.²⁵

And in the same letter, he offered to write his own reviews:

I propose to myself and I think it better that I should

²⁵ The underlining indicates an illegible word. "I find and we must" are Mann's exact words. MSV to Park Benjamin, June 22, 1849.

during July if I have time previous to the publication give the work a review. For I fear the errors.²⁶

At least in this way he could shape criticism and thus control the emergence of his reputation. Valentine's flexibility even extended to a willingness to use the most modern of technologies in order to speed up the publishing process; he transmitted proofs by telegraph, regardless of cost.²⁷

On the other hand, Valentine clung stubbornly to his intention to publish anonymously and he refused any advice that implicated him as a profit-seeking author. The concern he displayed for the appearance of his book--stylish paper and cover--also marked him as looking to behavioral models from eighteenth-century literary culture. He was not willing to change his manuscript in order "to please the many," nor in order to wait for a better sales season. When Baker and Scribner attempted to correct his style, suggesting that he try to suit the popular taste and be a little less thoughtful or a little less bizarre, they

²⁶ MSV to Park Benjamin, June 22, 1849.

²⁷ A series of letters trace what was a lengthy conversation regarding this method, Baker and Scribner advising Mann, "With reference to sending on your corrections by telegraph we have only to say that we would like it very well but we hardly think that the difference in the time of publication will pay for telegraph expenses. . . . Indeed we think it would be for the interest of the book to delay its publication for a while until the spring business commences say March." Valentine, however, ignored the suggestions.

sparked his ire.²⁸

The most vitriolic of his letters to Baker and Scribner were in response to their suggestions that his book did not marry well to popular tastes. Late in March of 1850, still awaiting feedback, Valentine wrote,

I pray you, write me if the book be dead, if it is dead why write--what the d---l do I care. I am not Jno. Keats to be killed by neglect.²⁹

He resented the publishers' intrusion into his craft; to him, their suggestions sounded like an offense to his conception of self as artist. A stab at his book was a stab at his person. It is ironic too that Valentine pointedly displays his real sentiment about the romance of "neglect."

Valentine's demand for anonymity ends up being the most significant key to understanding his contradictory impulses. The practice, associated with an older style of publishing, was by 1849 anachronistic. Charvat reminds one that publishers by this time were developing a keen sense of how useful a recognizable writer's name could be to their business; they used authors' name as commodities, keeping the name before the public (and pressuring "their" authors to produce) in order to sell as many works as possible.

²⁸ See Baker and Scribner to MSV, March 29, 1850; or, Baker and Scribner to MSV, April 17, 1850.

²⁹ MSV to Baker and Scribner, March 20, 1850.

Anonymity, however, still served a number of worthwhile purposes from Valentine's perspective. He used it as a device to sustain the illusion of superiority to the marketplace; as an old-style author would have done (especially when working with a local press) Valentine purported to disdain publicity. One suspects that he just wanted to delay the publicity until his reputation was made. And until this time, anonymity would allow him to manipulate his readers.³⁰ He thus relied on anonymity as a safety device; even though confident of his genius--and the inevitability of his literary success--he preferred not to reveal his name, pretending detachment while weighing the public's reception.

As Charvat's work makes clear, such behavior ran contrary to publishers' needs; in 1849 a reputation could hardly be built in this manner. And curiously enough, Valentine revealed himself as fully cognizant of this. Pining for reviews and ignoring the first suggestions of *Desultoria's* demise, Valentine informed Baker and Scribner that he already had plans for a second book:

³⁰ When Valentine received a letter from a friend, Mrs. A. M. Read, who at his suggestion was searching for a copy of *Desultoria*, Valentine kept up his guise of ignorance regarding its authorship. He offered to send his friend a copy, provided they could discuss the text's merits at a future point. Valentine even inveighed against his own hero, calling him a bit too whiny for his satisfaction. See MSV to Mrs. A. M. Read, July 5, 1850. He did admit to Read that he could not loan her his personal copy as he inadvertently scribbled his comments all across the pages.

I believe a second book necessary to the success of a first and the one I am preparing is of a different, and a far higher character. But there is full time enough for that.³¹

But how would the second one help the first unless they were connected by a recognizable name? Baker and Scribner were quite blunt about their marketing strategies, but like Valentine they didn't discuss the contradiction between his insistence on anonymity and his future as an author: "Should you ever publish any thing more taking, it would start up this book."³²

Only when Valentine thought that his reputation was secure, and that he had received recognition enough, did he agree to allow his name to be attached to the book. The success, however, was largely imagined. One laudatory review in *The Southern Literary Messenger* and a coincidental offer of a diplomatic post abroad signaled to him confirmation of his literary reputation.

The *Messenger's* review of April 1850, although praising the skills of the author did not comment upon the merit of the text directly:

³¹ MSV to Baker and Scribner, March 20, 1850.

³² Baker and Scribner to MSV, April 17, 1850. Their advice in this letter offers fascinating insights to support recent arguments made by Jane Tompkins among others as to how reputations were made in the antebellum publishing world, and how canon formation occurred.

We hear it confidently stated in literary circles that this volume, which is modestly put forth without a name, is the production of a gentleman of Richmond. We have looked into it but cursorily, and are not therefore prepared to pass judgement on its character . . . merely saying that there are abundant evidences in the volume of the author's acquaintance with general and classical literature. . . . We have not the most distant idea who he is but finding the right stuff in him, we hope that this is not the last time we shall enjoy his company.³³

Baker and Scribner had leaked Valentine's Richmond location. Finding that he was familiarly spoken of as the author of *Desultoria*, Valentine decided to expose his name to the public: "for the good of the book, I give you leave to make full mention of me as author." In a sense he staked his literary future on the review. Valentine added to this note

³³ SLM 16 (April 1850): 256. The review was likely written by John Thompson, editor at the time. Interestingly, at about the same time, John Thompson was strongly criticized by James T. Fields for failing to provide laudatory reviews for authors Fields promoted. ("John R. Thompson shall receive in future what he so much desires, good books for very poor notices" James T. Fields to Henry W. Longfellow, Nov. 12, 1849, Houghton Library Collection.) Perhaps in this instance, Thompson's regional loyalties drove him to praise *Desultoria*, indirectly at least--avoiding any crucial comments on quality. Interestingly, Thompson's perception of the author of *Desultoria* as modest and talented was in complete agreement with the characteristics James T. Fields most often sought in authors; unfortunately for Mann, Fields did not think the Richmond author had the "right stuff."

what was becoming a characteristic post script of criticism, accusing Baker and Scribner of failure to advertise his book.

But most curious, he drafted his letter of release on the back of a letter offering him a job as Vice Consul to Lyons. He interpreted the offer as further proof of his growing stature in the literary world. Although there is little information on this coincidental incident it no doubt fueled Valentine's increasing sense of self-worth. Sometime in the early spring of 1850, Valentine received a letter from a M. Hudibert regarding the Vice-Consul position to Lyons.³⁴ Valentine declined the position, drafting his reply to Hudibert underneath his reply to Baker and Scribner. And next to this note, extending his desire to spread the news of authorship, he drafted a short letter to an old college friend. Elated by his notoriety he wrote "you may not have suspected me of ever being quietly of authorship--but nevertheless here is proof positive that I am an author. Write me a letter with your critique." The letter presumably was accompanied by a copy of **Desultoria.**³⁵

³⁴ The Edward Pleasants Valentine Papers mention that Valentine, in the first year after leaving College, intended to go abroad. He may have maintained contacts from this period, however, this letter dates from well after College and six years after his assumption of the store business.

³⁵ This set of drafts, all written on the same piece of paper is one of the most difficult to read in the Valentine collection. Valentine turned the original letter from Hudibert over, wrote a response, turned the paper sideways

How did Baker and Scribner react to Valentine, to his shifts in attitude and his pestering? As if confronted by an eccentric genius. Valentine not only hindered his own progress through the antebellum paths of publishing, but he confounded his publishers. He did not match their expectations regarding a modern man of letters. They misread his intentions, he misread their advice and their correspondence reflected increased misunderstandings and hostility.

Despite the tensions, in the spring of 1850 Valentine was buoyed by even the small rewards he had accrued during his first bid for literary fame. His book was in print--he had more copies than he knew what to do with--he had one favorable review, and he was "known." He could afford to continue to ignore the sales statistics and pursue his ideals. He had even managed to obtain from Park Benjamin a letter of introduction to the literary culture of Boston where he hoped to find a more welcoming public and publisher.

The letter of introduction may well have been the last thing Benjamin did for Valentine:

My dear Longfellow

Let this note introduce to the honor of your acquaintance Mr. Valentine of Virginia, a gentleman of

and scribbled a note to Baker and Scribner, and then in between the script of this note he drafted the third letter.

talent and accomplishments. I shall receive as a personal favor any little attentions that you may be able to pay him, during his future visit to your neighborhood.

Your friend and servant always

Park Benjamin

12 St. New York

January 9, 1850 ³⁶

Longfellow indeed bestowed upon Mann a number of "little" attentions in the following year, but never the big attentions Valentine hoped for.

Increasingly antagonistic toward his New York publishers, Valentine contacted Longfellow; he relayed to the New England poet his negative experiences and indicated that he would try *Desultoria* out on another publisher. Longfellow responded,

I am sorry to hear your arrangements with the Booksellers have proved unsatisfactory and that the whole business is to be done over again. Such things are so disagreeable!--but, Patience! and all will go right.

Meanwhile, I hope that you will work on steadily

³⁶ Valentine Museum, MSV Papers. Valentine did make a trip to Boston to meet Longfellow among others in the winter of 1851. He had begun corresponding with Longfellow well before this visit.

at the "Legends of the Old Dominion"; which cannot fail to make a most captivating and original book.³⁷

Longfellow counseled patience as had Baker and Scribner. But the advice did not stick. Valentine was ready to press on, first to Boston but eventually back to New York; he was in search of a warm welcome and for someone who would recognize him as a talented author.

³⁷ Longfellow to MSV, April 8, 1850. The "Legends" text was a project Mann had outlined--basically a narrative of Virginia folk legends--but had not yet completed. He set this project aside for the time, moving on to a second novel instead.

CHAPTER IV. SECOND PUBLISHING ENCOUNTER -- BOSTON

The boat rocked its way toward Fall River, imperceptible shifts in the position of the silver plate and the crystal wine decanters indicated that the waves were particularly rough. Mann Valentine was enjoying his exotic surroundings; the molded butter was almost as interesting as the sons of Erin who surrounded him in the dining quarters. He found himself to be the only Virginian traveling to Boston (he didn't count the negro servant who accompanied him). Retiring from the table, carefully negotiating his way back to his cabin, he settled in for an evening of reading. No sense being unprepared for his sightseeing. Valentine opened **Grimshaw's United States** to the page on Harvard. He looked forward to comparing such a school to William and Mary, but failed to see how it could surpass the Virginia institution's warmth and grandeur. From what he had observed thus far, most Bostonians on the ship had distinctly damp personalities and their blood seemed to run cold. No doubt their surroundings would be equally as placid and balanced.

In a brief interlude between publishing **Desultoria** and attempting to publish a second novel Valentine made a foray into the literary circle of Boston, encountering James T. Fields, Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Greenleaf Whittier among others. More ambitious than ever, he was, however, unsuccessful in his efforts to find the critical support and financial backing he sought. He had abandoned all thoughts about republishing **Desultoria** and was prepared instead to manipulate any Boston contacts he could garner. And in this episode of his ill-fated career the advance agent of the

publishing revolution against whom he tested his genius was James T. Fields. At the same time that Fields courted Herman Melville, Longfellow, Nathaniel Parker Willis, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, he was approached by Valentine--an anxious Virginia author impatient for assistance.

One year after *Desultoria* appeared on bookseller's shelves, Valentine traveled to Boston. He hoped to hand-pick a publishing house that would agree (in advance of receiving manuscripts) to take a risk with his work. He employed no literary agent this time, unless we wish to call Longfellow his agent by default. Valentine had already corresponded with Longfellow for at least a year and through him was introduced to James T. Fields. Immediately upon arrival in Boston, Valentine sought Fields' opinion of a manuscript he carried with him from Richmond.

James T. Fields was a skilled editor and poet, and fast becoming one of the most powerful businessmen in publishing. A one-time clerk in the William D. Ticknor publishing company of Boston, by 1850 Fields' name had a place in the company title. Fields steered the firm in the direction of literary publishing and then secured Holmes, Whittier, Longfellow and Hawthorne as regular authors.¹

Fields presented himself as a coequal among geniuses,

¹ See Tryon's biography of James T. Fields, especially pages 42-47. Or, see *The History of Publishing in America*, 461-463. Fields went on to purchase half ownership in the firm in 1854. He then secured Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), *Excursions* (1863), and *The Maine Woods* (1864) as well as Emerson's *The Conduct of Life* (1860).

cultivating intimate friendships with "his authors." He paid authors well, but as Charvat noted with Hawthorne, they paid a price in psychological pressure. Fields was competitive and exacting and he seized upon opportunities to promote New England's men and women of letters. In 1851, when Valentine arrived for a Boston visit, Fields was enjoying the considerable sales success of Hawthorne's 1850 *Scarlet Letter* imprint and preparing *The House of the Seven Gables* for release.² He was skilled at maintaining his extensive literary contacts. In letters to Rufus W. Griswold, Longfellow, and others he exchanged gossip, discussed books and was willing to extend his financial support in trade for the same treatment.³ Valentine, however, did not impress Fields as an author who could enter this intimate network. The Richmonder's impatience struck Fields as out of character for the type of author he sought to promote. Fields held a dinner in the winter of 1851, and

² The *Scarlet Letter* sold nearly 5,000 copies within the first six months of publication.

³ In almost every letter to an author, he mentions the name of another author. For example, Fields repeated an interesting tale of his 1850 Berkshire visit to Griswold and then to Longfellow: To Rufus W. Griswold in August of 1850 he wrote: "N.P.W. [Nathaniel Parker Willis] is 'down East'. . . Hawthorne I have some doubts about. A few days ago I rode with him all about the Berkshire hills in company with Holmes, and Melville the "Typee" man. . . . Whittier and I called on the Carey girls day before yesterday. They appear to belong to the right school, modest and talented." And to Longfellow: "Aug 8 or is it the 7th We have been tramping over the soil with Hawthorne: driving with Holmes, hunting of the mountains with Headey: and sitting in all manner of dangerous places with Melville, the author of 'Typee.' Both letters are in the Fields Collection, Houghton Library.

in a retelling of the dinner's success to Hawthorne he included a list of the guests: Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Whipple, Lowell, Rufus Choate, Charles Sumner, the guest of honor Dudley Field, and a young Mr. Valentine from Richmond: "a young author in search of a publisher [who] belongs evidently to the high pressure school."⁴ The publisher did not find Valentine to have the right stuff, eventually rejecting his work outright.

Fields avoided seeing Valentine again after the dinner, but he wrote a letter of apology: "as you were not to be found when our carriage came on the night of the ball I unfortunately missed seeing you. . . . My own time is so much occupied with business I get but little leisure to show the attention I wish to my friends."⁵ And one month later, with Valentine safely back in Richmond, Fields politely informed Valentine that his presses were at present too busy and his partner said he could take no new contracts: "otherwise I would be most happy to print and publish for you."⁶ Fields' apology was accompanied by the request for a small favor: "Pray do not forget to send me autograph

⁴ James T. Fields to Nathaniel Hawthorne, February 3, 1851. Collection of New York Public Library. As cited in Tryon, 138. Tryon mistakenly dates the dinner as the fall of 1850. The letters in the Valentine Collection from Fields to Valentine suggest February, 1851 is the correct date.

⁵ James T. Fields to MSV, February 17, 1851. Valentine Museum.

⁶ James T. Fields to MSV, March 18, 1851. Valentine Museum.

letters of P[atrick] Henry, W[illiam] Wirt and Judge Marshall. If you knew my admiration for yr. glorious men of the Old Dominion you wd. make extra exertion to procure them for me."⁷ Valentine did not procure the desired treasures for the self-interested publisher.

To Fields, Valentine was useful as a curiosity of the Old Dominion, but not as an author. He lacked qualities Fields sought in writers and thus the publisher was not willing to take any risks on him. Valentine had no successful books to evidence his genius; on the contrary he had one resounding failure (and Fields likely knew of *Desultoria*, at least he would have been privy to Longfellow's version of its story). And Valentine only carried an incomplete manuscript to Boston; he was not done drafting his second novel and he had not finished his projected *Legends* text. Fields sought authors who had the potential to produce successive works, or who could prove their sales capacity. With these writers Fields was magnanimous; witness his letter to Whittier:

Let me whisper to you, if at any time you find your pocket light it will give me great pleasure personally to shovel in a few rocks to be returned at any time when most convenient to you, or if they should never come back it would be better still. My hand is still

⁷ James T. Fields to MSV, March 18, 1851.

lame, but I can sign a check at any time if a friend needs it.⁸

Fields' entreaties to Whittier offer a pointed contrast to the response Valentine received. Valentine had better luck corresponding with Longfellow, probably not in small part due to the fact that the project he contemplated, **The Legends of the Old Dominion**, sounded faintly like a Southern version of Longfellow's own work.

Valentine's moment of contact in Boston brought him face to face with New England's conservative intellectual class. The individuals he met impressed him: "[Boston's] people are the equal of ourselves in past deeds," and similar in "pride and courtesy" to Richmond's best. He even claimed that the Bostonian and the Virginian emerged from the same mold.⁹ No doubt the people he met while traversing Cambridge and visiting the libraries and museums were drawn from a select population who shared his notion of an intellectual elite.

Boston more than other city in the States, if we are to believe Martin Green--whose 1966 reading on literary life in nineteenth-century America operates under the rather broad

⁸ James T. Fields to John Greenleaf Whittier, May 1, 1857, Houghton Library.

⁹ Valentine jotted down a rough sketch of his Boston trip, describing the sites he saw--Harvard, the Public Gardens--and commenting upon the people. MSV Papers, "Trip to Boston," Valentine Museum.

premise that the history of Boston alone enables us to get at an understanding of the American mind--provided its authors prestige and money, especially in the first third of the century (Green 71-73). The city's literary magazines and lecture-series system meant that,

the social life available to an author in Boston, like the opportunities for publication there, the money he could earn, and the intercourse with other writers, were only signs of something more important, the seriousness with which the literary profession was taken there. (Green 79)

Such an environment Valentine might have proposed for Richmond.

Boston intellectuals by mid-century were, however, in no way shielded from the disruptions Valentine noted in his journals and in *Desultoria*--the pressures of popular taste and new wealth. Their social and political power was waning. George Frederickson's study of Northern intellectuals (*The Inner Civil War*) provides a counter-balance to Green's largely optimistic views, suggesting the nature of the crisis of intellectuals in 1850s Boston and naming the players and their agendas (Frederickson 28-29, 36-38). In often conflicting voices, figures like Charles Russell Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton and Francis Parkman struggled to find a way to continue in leadership roles.

Frederickson proposes that the crisis over slavery offered them a solution of sorts--a way to unify their ambition to regain class control (see Frederickson 28-30, 31-35). In describing the "crisis atmosphere" in Boston, Frederickson illuminates the wide-ranging set of pressures that Boston's thinking elite faced--what stance to take on slavery, how to marry traditions of anti-institutionalism with new demands for action and moral fortitude--all spawned by the Compromise of 1850. Sectional loyalties were aroused in even the most "cloistered" of intellectuals (36-7).

Although Valentine would have shared with a figure like Charles Eliot Norton the notion that "the cultivated class must seize control of society and give it practical direction"--what Frederickson termed an "elitist doctrine" and seemingly "heretical" in America in the 1850s but rooted in New England traditions-- he would have diverged from the conversation at the mention of slavery (32). Valentine was in a curious situation, and not just because of his Southern home, but because he was detached from politics at this point. There is little mention in his journals of his political opinions; he does not comment on the nature of the reception in Boston regarding his black servant, and he did not record the political beliefs of the figures he met.

So concerned was Valentine with his fate as an author that he was able to ignore sectional discontent in the early 1850s. He would later be taken by surprise at the fervor and far-reaching doctrine of abolitionists in the 1860s. He

paid the sectional battle little attention until it grew too loud to dismiss. Unmarried and still in the merchant business with his father, Valentine continued his search for a publisher, turning his gaze once more upon New York.

CHAPTER V. AMADEUS

Oh! the tedium of dealing with a publisher who failed to recognize his talents. Mann Valentine mused over his latest letter from Charles Scribner:

I [am] afraid that your book is too purely imaginative and artistic and too far removed from tangible practical every day life to sell much, while a scholar and particularly one versed in German Literature will be delighted with it a plain common sense man will be puzzled to know what you are driving at.¹

Too artistic? Valentine pondered this. He felt that if he could just get the book to the right people--readers who never would think *Amadeus* too artistic--he would be recognized for his skill at expressing what he felt were the most elegant of emotions and feelings. No use allowing Scribner to sway him from his purpose. Hunkering down over his desk, Valentine started a list--he would distribute his novel by hand once he received imprints from New York.

Mann Valentine's second novel, *Amadeus; or a Night with the Spirits* (1852/3), was "Karl Valmann's" first product, and his last.² Set in Germany, *Amadeus* traces the life

¹ Charles Scribner to MSV, November 24, 1852. All letters concerning *Amadeus* are addressed from Charles Scribner, as opposed to from Baker and Scribner. The Valentine Museum's collection begins with a letter from Scribner to Valentine, date of Dec. 10, 1851 and ends with one similarly addressed, date of April 26, 1852. The Museum has Valentine's rough draft manuscript of *Amadeus* as well as a copy of the text.

² The date of publication is noted as 1852/3 because the first imprints were finished on Dec. 31 of 1852 and the remainder in the first month of 1853.

events of an ill-fated musician, one destined to protect his remarkable genius from those would misuse his talents.³

Manuscript in hand, in 1852 Valentine had scoured New York's publishing houses for a publisher who would recognize his talents, share his vision for a handsomely illustrated text, and take a risk on its salability. With no agent to assist him he secured Charles Scribner, but on the same terms as with *Desultoria*--he would pay his own costs. Valentine thus repeated his 1849 experience almost to the letter. Even though he aggressively pursued the marketing of the book, not relying on Scribner to advertise and distribute it, *Amadeus* was a greater disappointment than *Desultoria*. It failed to sell and it elicited no editorial interest; even friends to whom Valentine presented gift copies responded in a unified negative voice. One could have predicted its disastrous reception; the novel played out Valentine's increasingly hostile view of the businessmen of book publishing--portraying publishers as devils. Did he expect that this would attract publishers and/or the antebellum public? Especially when he mired his symbolism in dense prose, fragmentary images and hallucinatory settings?

Between 1850 and 1852 Valentine failed to find

³ Mann's use of the name, *Amadeus*, suggests his intent to highlight Mozart as a model. The hero, *Amadeus*, communicates best through music, composing original and astounding arrangements in order to express his emotions.

acceptance in Boston literary circles. But at the same time that he courted the New England literati, Valentine attempted to nurture his contacts with Charles Scribner. One imagines their interchange was awkward--Valentine attempting to compensate for the hostility of his last letters regarding *Desultoria*, Scribner offering cold and distant replies, too busy to worry about the young Richmond author. In March of 1851 Valentine sent Charles Scribner an unsolicited set of illustrations (done by his artist friend, James Hubard, of Richmond). He intended that Scribner use the illustrations for a work rumored to be en route to the Scribner presses. Scribner, however, returned the illustrations; he feared that Valentine would take unnecessary offense but admitted that he did not like the drawings and chided Valentine for supposing that unsolicited material would be accepted automatically.⁴ The chilly letter that accompanied the drawings did not bode well for Valentine's chances with *Amadeus*.

Regardless of his shaky history with the New York publishing world, Valentine traveled north to re-contact Scribner as well as a number of alternative publishers; he carried with him both the manuscript for his second novel and a set of illustrations he hoped to publish with it.⁵

⁴ Charles Scribner to MSV, March 1?, 1851; Charles Scribner to MSV, March 28, 1851. Valentine Museum.

⁵ These illustrations, also by Hubard, are housed in the Valentine Museum collection. Valentine journeyed to New York in the fall of 1852.

He continued to follow an agenda that would allow him to distinguish himself and his work (even superficially) from common writers and "cheaper" products. Valentine wrote a memo to himself upon his return from New York, listing the names of people he met:

Parton--lit. partner of Redfield
 Fletcher Harper--H. Bros.
 Ripley--Tribune, Harper's critic
 Geo. H. Hite--left two copies of D w/him
 lithographer--plates for A.

He added two notes to the list: "Harper suggested Appleton and Putnam as suitable publishers," and "met with Harper re: stereotyping."⁶ Unfortunately, no publishers agreed to handle the oddly sized illustrations; Valentine's insistence on personally overseeing their inclusion may have disturbed some of them.

Only Scribner stepped forth with an offer; he would publish *Amadeus* at Valentine's expense. In October of 1852 he wrote to Valentine, asking for the terms "on which you propose that I publish the work."⁷ Valentine was again faced with the disappointment of having to finance his own

⁶ Memo, Valentine Scrapbook 1844/52, MSV Papers, Valentine Museum.

⁷ Charles Scribner to MSV, Oct. 6, 1852. The correspondence between Scribner and Valentine is slightly less comprehensive than that generated for *Desultoria*.

imprints. He accepted Scribner's offer but resisted ceding all control to him. Rather than trust the publisher to expedite efficiently the process, Valentine hounded Scribner by mail. He again chose to treat Scribner as if he were a small-scale local publisher, expecting immediate response, attention and assistance.

The *Amadeus* publishing debacle unraveled in exactly the same manner as *Desultoria's*. Valentine, impatient, responded defensively to all of Scribner's advice. Delays in printing intensified his efforts to speed up the operation. Scribner informed him a number of times: "I regret exceedingly that there has been so much delay and consequently disappointment to you."⁸ Valentine received many such apologies as well as advice to wait for the spring sales season--he had once again selected the busiest time of the year in which to vent his ideas as Christmas books clogged the presses. Valentine brooked no delay; he was anxious to get the book to readers so that he could begin to gauge his reputation. Finally, on December 31st Scribner informed him, "I have this day forwarded to you per Dodge's Express 100 copies of your book--the first that have come in."⁹

Scribner soon confirmed anticipated problems with sales and readership. In responding to Valentine's self-

⁸ Scribner to MSV, Nov. 24, 1852 or Dec. 31, 1852.

⁹ Scribner to MSV, Dec. 31, 1852.

congratulatory attitude, Scribner disputed any success Valentine might have imagined was his due:

I am pleased to hear that your work is so well received in your region. I looked before this to receive orders from the Richmond Booksellers--I forwarded early copies to them but have not yet received a second order . . . I will cheerfully send all the booksellers of your place a good supply if they will in any way intimate to me their wants. The sale of the book elsewhere has not been brisk.¹⁰

Scribner was kind, but his message was unmistakable. He had spent four months in close contact with Valentine and was accustomed to the author's desire for sales reports. Even in April however, he was not able to comply with requests for any notices and reviews; none had yet appeared--no editors had noticed the text, much less offered any words of

¹⁰ Charles Scribner to MSV, April 7, 1853. This communication was one of the last letters Valentine received from Scribner. Over one year later, Scribner sent Valentine a statement of account. Ironically, Scribner used his pamphlet of new publications to write to Valentine; on the front popular authors are heralded, N. P. Willis included, and on the back Scribner detailed the substantial number of copies of *Desultoria* and *Amadeus* he still had in storage. Cordial, but no longer Valentine's "obedient servant," Scribner ended this note with "[I] will be glad to see you when you come to our city. Very truly, Chas. Scribner." Pamphlet of Charles Scribner's New Publications for September, 1854; hand-written note on the back of pamphlet to MSV.

criticism or promise.¹¹

The most obvious problem with *Amadeus* was its puzzling content; Scribner's early criticism that it was "too purely imaginative" was merely his euphemistic way of insinuating how unreadable a narrative Valentine had produced. Valentine begins this novel with no author/editor narrative feints and no recourse to historical documents. An ambiguous observer recites Amadeus' background facts. Of German descent, he is a gifted musician and foster-son to a "decayed" nobleman in Munich. Amadeus' real parents died in an unexplained political skirmish. Secure from misfortune (at least temporarily) thanks to the beneficence of his new father, he luxuriates in the romantic river-side environment of his home and falls deeply in love with his foster-sister. They separate, however, when he is mysteriously taken prisoner by Bavarian interlopers. After four years they release him but he dares not return to Munich. In a confusing set of plot sequences, the reader learns that Amadeus must protect his musical talents, hide his genius and move about in disguise under cover of the night. The need for secrecy remains unexplained. A dark stranger unfairly reveals Amadeus' skills; he appears at a restaurant, wins the hero's trust, leads him to a decadent gathering of geniuses--a club of elite intellectuals--and

¹¹ I found no reviews nor notices for *Amadeus*. Valentine did not mention drafting his own review this time either. I do not know upon what he based his statement to Scribner--that the text "had taken well" in Richmond.

then drugs him.

With an abrupt shift, the narrative control moves to "Karl Valmann;" the young author lives in the same city as Amadeus. Karl enters his own drug-induced state and a second dark stranger leads him to the elite club. His new companion, none other than the Devil, enables him to observe the subject that will become his best text; the Devil spars with the young intellect in order to test his genius. For the remainder of the text the reader joins Karl on a fantastical journey--into and out of tombs, past skeletons playing guitars--all the while observing Amadeus. Karl follows Amadeus and Amadeus follows an ever-beckoning female spirit. As Amadeus' visions blend into Karl's, it becomes difficult for a reader to distinguish ownership of the hallucinations. The book ends suddenly; Amadeus finds his foster-sister at a theater and they fade out over the horizon. *Amadeus* is obviously a difficult text to summarize; a large part of it consists of odd reveries and sequences that have little logical connection and no discernible relation to either Karl or Amadeus.¹²

¹² Valentine's imagination ran wild with this manuscript--he either attempted (and succeeded) to convey the sense of drug-induced hallucinations, or, he used drugs himself to stimulate such prose. When Karl begins his chapters, mid-way through the text, he states "From my pale goblet, the skull of a once beautiful woman, I had taken a deep draught, and resisted not the mysterious influence that streamed into my soul . . . I by degrees fell into a reverie" (27). Before deciding upon a title, Mann even toyed with the idea of naming his text "Melodia; or the Opium-dreams" (see rough draft mss. of *Amadeus*). At the end, Karl Valmann confesses that his observations of

Valentine again turned to Goethe as a model, drawing upon both **Faust** and **Wilhelm Meister** in an attempt to insert his work into the prestigious literary family to which Goethe's texts belonged. And again Valentine broke Goethe into usable pieces, imitating his language and lifting selected facets of Goethe's plots and characters for his own use.

A crucial indicator of Goethe's influence on Valentine is the Mephistopheles figure in **Amadeus**. The young author, Karl Valmann--perhaps in Valentine's opinion modern society's closest parallel to an alchemist--is aided in his artistic development by Mephistopheles. In Goethe's **Faust**, Mephistopheles likewise enters the narrative as companion to the hero, representing the poet's second side; he promises intensification of pleasures should Faust agree to accompany him.¹³

Valentine's debt to Goethe is even more transparent in the similarity between **Wilhelm Meister** (1795) and **Amadeus**; the texts share a common theme and the hero figures closely resemble one another. **Wilhelm Meister** is Goethe's prototype bildungsroman--Valentine fabricated his own version of it. At the center of both **Amadeus** and **Meister** is an emotional

Amadeus' behaviors might have all been a dream--his view of Amadeus' drug-induced hallucinations a hallucination itself.

¹³ Goethe adopted the traditional German legend of Faust for his poem--in the legend Faust is a magician and alchemist who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for power and worldly experience.

and enthusiastic young man who develops from a sensitive romantic naif--with ambiguous ambitions but natural genius--to a mature intellectual. Curiously, in *Meister America* is a symbol of intellectual freedom to which the hero turns in adulthood, seeking a place to pursue an active and pragmatic life. Perhaps Valentine by setting his second novel in Germany (after showing so disturbing a view of the American intellectual landscape in *Desultoria*) used *Amadeus* to dispute this notion.

In general, Goethe's descriptions of artists struggling to meet their ambitious goals proved useful to Valentine, allowing him to imagine the larger meanings to which he could attach his personal story. Goethe's intellectual hero figures attracted him; he evidently found in them a focus for his own ideals regarding the search for higher purpose and greater knowledge. With Goethe's agenda in mind (as well as Carlyle's commendation of Goethe) Valentine could conceive of his writing as part of his quest for knowledge, struggling against the contrary pressures of his contemporary environment.

Did Valentine's nod towards Goethe make his novel difficult for "plain" readers to understand? It did point the text toward those who would be if not familiar with German Romanticism at least attracted by its style and language. Equally a factor contributing to the complexity of the text, however, was Valentine's inclusion of lecture-like meditations on metaphysics. These segments make

Amadeus a challenging text. Did Valentine aim to dazzle by confusing his audience? Was it unimportant to him that his narrative sometimes made little sense and more significant to him that it signaled his distinctive sensibility and learning? ¹⁴

The plot of **Amadeus**, if it can be called one, indicates a change in Valentine's stance regarding the plight of genius. Whereas in **Desultoria** the genius meets neglect from the public, in **Amadeus** he meets abuse at the hands of devil types. Such a shift seems driven by Valentine's experiences in publishing. In this second novel, drafted one year after his first encounter with publishers, he rehearses his

¹⁴ Edgar Allan Poe gave a lecture on metaphysics, **Eureka: a prose poem** (later published in 1848), when he visited Richmond. Perhaps Valentine was attempting to capitalize on the cachet Poe lent to metaphysics and was cognizant of the fame one could gain even by confusing the audience. Poe's essay supposedly mystified many of its listeners--people who were impressed regardless of the fragmentation of the arguments according to Nathaniel Parker Willis. (Willis and Rufus W. Griswold wrote a memoir of Poe and edited the 1858 collection of his works.)

The slight connection between Poe and Valentine was missing until I perused Mann's scrapbook of letters from Susan Archer Talley (Weiss). Talley told Valentine to measure his work against Poe's. She fantasized that he would in the future be as well thought of as Poe--and would take his place among the few real geniuses of the century, surpassing Willis, Irving, and Emerson!

Talley relates in her "domestic" biography of Poe that the poet received a warm welcome in Richmond upon his visit in 1848: "he became the fashion; and was feted in society and discussed in the papers" (180). He gave one public lecture (the one Valentine spoke of to Park Benjamin), attended by the "very elite of the city." She claims to have at this time helped Poe re-edit "The Raven" and suggests that two other Richmond writers were asked to do so as well--perhaps Valentine was one of them (185-7). See Scrapbook of letters between Talley and MSV, Valentine Museum; and Talley's 1907 biography, **The Home Life of Poe**.

difficulties with the commercial nature of antebellum literary culture through a series of encounters between the hero-geniuses of the text (one of whom is Karl Valmann) and a set of parasitical middlemen.

Valentine stresses the need to protect figures of superior intellect not just from an anomalous public, but from a set of well-defined figures: types who trade ideas and art for personal profit. Amadeus is the first to be led astray:

His [Moritz'] frank and insinuating manner soon won the confidence of our hero . . . He was also induced to become a member of a noted club of musicians and poets; but although he received the full confidence and love of all, he persevered in keeping his secret, and in concealing his wonderful powers. Yet, relying too much on his self-control, he was at any moment liable to betray his genius to the subtle art of the sagacious Moritz. (24-5)

The extortionist stranger eventually drugs Amadeus in order to unveil his musical talents.¹⁵

Karl Valmann discovers Amadeus' story by the grace of

¹⁵ And the reader soon finds out that the club is composed of spirits only--hence the subtitle of the novel. The implications of Valentine imagining a supportive artistic community of dead intellects are interesting; his pessimism rearing itself again?

his own middleman, Mephistopheles:

He was seated in an easy and lounging attitude . . . and his feet, about which I observed a slight malformation, stretched carelessly toward the fire, the genial warmth of which he appeared to enjoy--rubbing his hands softly, while he turned his gaze upon me with a furtive leer. . . . [his head] was covered with grey hair, and ornamented with two singular horny excrescences, one on each side. (28-9)

This part of Valentine's description matches exactly his description of an unnamed publisher whose similarly despicable nature he satirized in a sketch titled, "Interview between a Young Author and a Publisher." In this sketch Mr. Noodlehead, the wealthy publisher, lords his power over a poor author; vulgar, dog-like, stretching his shins out toward his anthracite fire, the publisher proposes that the author change his style and forsake his ideals. The sketch is not dated and was never published; however, it is plausible that Valentine drafted it before this novel and then lifted the publisher description to suit his depiction of the Devil as symbolic middleman, advising Karl Valmann. Was then the Devil the agent of text production in commercial antebellum literary culture? Valentine chose to imagine so. Both the musician and the author in the end triumph over the middlemen, the one finding his lost love

and the other bringing his literary product to print--no tragic suicides are forthcoming.

The narrative proposes that geniuses are vulnerable and have to outwit those who would pursue them for their talents. No one had yet pursued Valentine for his skills, however. Either the tale spun out a fantasy of his--to be so hungrily pursued--or, such a construction of genius provided him with a good excuse and a way to cover up his previous failure: if anyone asked why he had yet to realize literary success he could say that he had chosen to hide his genius.

Amadeus only unmask his talents to an exclusive audience--the club of intellectual spirits Valentine named "Ames D'Elite." The saving grace of Amadeus' isolation in the otherwise dreary German city is the presence of this community of artistic souls.

"Ames D'Elite" represents Valentine's idealized network of aristocratic intellects who combine cultivation--music and art--with rigorous intellectual debate in an environment of luxurious surroundings. The apartment where the artist souls gather bulges with art and musical instruments, as well as with full tables of food:

It is a fine, spacious apartment. . . . in the centre of the room, and beneath a glittering chandelier, is spread a table, set forth with a rich banquet. The aroma of the smoking viands diffuses itself throughout

the room, and amidst them choice wines stand as yet untouched. (41)

They combine food, wine and art with study, engaging in debates over rapture, beauty and the meaning of the universe. The dual irony, however, is in the after-life nature of Valentine's otherwise ideal community and in the fact that only in a hallucination can this community be imagined by either Amadeus or by Karl.

The dead poets, musicians, and philosophers gorge themselves, although in truth they can digest nothing--their food and wine is symbolic aliment, quelling their lasting hungers and quenching their thirst for intellectual fodder. The metaphor is not lost on Karl:

The luxurious dishes and rich wines give life and vivacity to their spirits, and spice to the ebullitions of their free fancies . . . enjoying the sensual gratification of appetite. (43)

Epicurean delights and extravagant luxury--the reward for intellectuals who paid their dues as poor artists and in life struggled against the less gifted among their contemporaries. The club of geniuses thwarts the effect of popular democracy and preserves connections between old money, knowledge, and power. And Valentine's sympathetic depiction of it intimates his desire to find a similarly

exclusive coterie of critics and friends.

Valentine chose to issue his second novel under a transparent pseudonym, one that indicates he expected it to be decoded by a select audience. He was no doubt flirting with public authorship. He even went back to his copy of *Desultoria* and penciled this new pen-name on the cover page and practiced signing his new autograph on the first pages of the book. Seen in this light, one could argue that the pseudonym allowed Valentine to identify himself to an "ames d'elite." However, looking back at statements he made about *Desultoria*, and considering that at the time Scribner's most popular work was *The Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) by magazine writer Donald G. Mitchell who wrote under the catchy pseudonym "Ik Marvel," perhaps a second interpretation is needed. "Karl Valmann" may have been Valentine's attempt to find an equally memorable name, willingly going along with the "humbug" necessary to gain popular attention as he had done when he changed the title of *Desultoria*. This would indict him as very much a modern intellectual who was struggling to find a suitable marriage between his outdated models of gentlemanly conduct and his astute knowledge of the nature of modern literary culture.

Valentine attempted to garner acceptance from a self-selected population of hopefully sympathetic readers; his pseudonym played a small role in this agenda, but his distribution strategy played a larger one. Valentine sent *Amadeus* to a four-page list of names (well over the thirty-

five to whom he had sent *Desultoria*) and he also provided Scribner with a gift recipient list.¹⁶ Valentine even made sure that James T. Fields received a copy of the Scribner imprint. His scheme, however, did not work. Valentine secured no reviews and no repeat orders from booksellers were forthcoming. Friends who did receive the book and wrote back to Valentine were not pleased.¹⁷

The letter Valentine received from a M. Sparks must have been particularly devastating. Sparks had lately received his gift copy of *Amadeus*; he felt, however, that he had to speak out as soon as possible, stating that nothing but the earnest desire to see Valentine's genius appreciated drove him to adopt a role as critic. This South Carolinian characterized the nature of *Amadeus*' mismatch with contemporary audiences:

The mystical, the metaphysical suits not the James.
This is an age of practical not abstract science; an
age of actualities, of steam and iron. And even **The**

¹⁶ Scribner to MSV Dec. 31, 1852 and Jan. 19, 1853. Valentine promised the list to Scribner a number of times before finally sending it after the publisher's repeated reminders.

¹⁷ As he saved letters that were brutally honest, I have no reason to believe that I'm dealing with a selectivity problem. He certainly was not likely to have thrown away positive letters, so that does not explain their absence. And if he were likely to discard any, Sparks' letter might have been the first to go.

literature partakes of the same.¹⁸

Sparks insinuated that Valentine had failed to capture the essence of the period. He went on to offer his solutions: Valentine should write "stories of life's realities like Willis or Irving," or, stories of "early days;" and, he should make an attempt to "please the many." Valentine did **not** want to please the many, but neither had he located the sympathetic few he endeavored to attract.

Sparks not only reiterated the same opportunistic advice Valentine had heard from his publishers, but he also fingered the Richmonder's most sensitive spot--the problem of public authorship. Sparks wrote, "You acted rightly in publishing your work under a 'nom-de-plume.' It is a precaution every young author ought to use." Sparks congratulated Valentine on his perspicacity and his ability to recognize his weaknesses and shield himself until success was more certain. What Sparks did not realize was that Valentine, from 1850 on, had allowed Scribner and others to make his name known as the author of **Desultoria**; and his clever pseudonym did little to shield his identity from readers to whom he sent copies of **Amadeus**.¹⁹

¹⁸ M. Sparks, South Carolina to Mann S. Valentine, Jr. Richmond, February 22, 1853. Sparks referred to the James River.

¹⁹ M. Sparks, South Carolina to MSV, Feb. 22, 1853. I have attempted to locate more information on Sparks, but this is his only letter to Valentine.

Two weeks after Sparks' letter arrived, in March of 1853 Valentine drafted an essay on his "business life." He was poised to abandon his publishing ambitions. In the essay, Valentine reexamined his commitment to train his mind while employed as a merchant and detailed the honorable and respectable labor a merchant performed. Valentine first recorded his nightly schedule: return from work, exercise the mind in a "self-examination period" until ten p.m., and then read from ten until midnight. Early to bed and early to rise so as to preserve his youth, generous health and flight of an active mind. He praised himself for never being idle during the day, using his mind to store ideas even while performing the most rudimentary of tasks. But he was particularly proud of his ability to remain above thoughts of profit, money, and sales:

I have not spent an idle moment . . . I have been permitted to think a thought beyond, above, without my business, and thus have almost forgotten money an unpleasant thing over which I had imagined I should brood on rising.²⁰

In idealizing the old-style merchant, Valentine found a way to justify his career status and pat himself on the back for at least sticking to the principles of an amateur gentleman

²⁰ Essay on business, March 8, 1853. MSV papers, Valentine Museum.

scholar.²¹

Four years of close contact with the publishing industry, at least two trips to Boston and New York, and approximately forty-plus letters between author and publisher (at times numbering two to three per week) brought Valentine by 1853 no closer to literary success than he had been in 1849. By the time *Amadeus* had been sent to editors and friends alike, Valentine must have had to admit that sales failures were **not** his only problem. He had paid cash for the pleasure of seeing his work put into print, only to be harshly criticized.

From 1853 to 1860 Valentine published no books and contacted Scribner only to receive discouraging sales reports. He had been intent on disseminating his ideas, but at this point (not even thirty years old in 1853) Valentine retreated. He recoiled from the antebellum literary marketplace and from Northern centers of print control.

²¹ Two other essays on merchants are included in Valentine's scrapbook. Neither are dated, but it would be convenient to suppose that they were written at the same time. In both, Mann finds in the merchant career much resonance regarding eighteenth century ideals, and equates the merchant's tasks with those of writer. Like the writer, the merchant was friend to artist as well as to tiller of the soil. To Valentine, the merchant provided goods and services without the assistance of advanced methods of sales, and without the dark shadow of a profit-seeking middle-man. See "Occupation," and "Working Man." MSV papers. Valentine Museum.

CHAPTER VI. BEFORE THE WAR -- THE LAST STAND

On New Year's eve of 1859 Mann Valentine's wife, Ann Maria, tread softly through the back hall of the house, attempting to not awaken her two slumbering children and aware of her husband's propensity to nap in his study. Valentine was, however, fully awake. He had spent the day picking out a suitable gift for Ann Maria; she had informed just that morning that they could expect another child in the summer. Such a year it had been. His father had recently granted him full control of the store and he liked his new independence, although he had less time than ever to write. He shuffled half-heartedly through the miscellaneous sheets of paper on his desk, searching for what he had written the previous evening. Something regarding the slave quarters at Uncle Job's plantation, wasn't it? He had scribbled it on the back of an envelope--if he could locate it perhaps he'd revise it. Too tired to pursue his **Legends of the Old Dominion** project, Mann pushed back from his desk in impatience.

In Mann Valentine's curious literary career the most promising product is missing. What might have been his most significant contribution to American letters is but a ghost text and never went further than a rough outline: **The Legends of the Old Dominion**. Such a text would have fulfilled his desire to rely on Virginia traditions and mine Southern resources--avoiding the dependence on the north he feared--and it would have allowed him to capitalize on contemporary fervor over American history. James T. Fields, considering his autograph request and his evident interest in Virginia characters, might even have taken a risk on such

a manuscript. And **Legends** was the only project of Valentine's to receive support from Longfellow and Charles Scribner. Scribner indicated his feelings in 1850:

I should think the "Legends of the Old Dominion" would make a popular work. Indeed I am surprised that some one has not before taken up the subject.¹

Scribner noted that a significant niche existed--no one had yet done for the South what Longfellow had done for the North--and he was willing to back the author who filled it. Longfellow himself had offered Valentine his accolades regarding the idea. Why then did Valentine pass this opportunity by?

Valentine considered writing **Legends** before **Amadeus**. In 1850 and 1851 with two projects going at the same time he chose the novel over the historical text; his impatience to see his work in print and to be recognized as an author may have led him to what was likely the easier manuscript of the

¹ Charles Scribner to MSV, April 26, 1850. This letter was written in response to Valentine's mention of planning a second book in order that **Desultoria** might sell better. Scribner was ready to support Valentine in this venture and even offered an advance of funds necessary to cover printing and binding costs (to later deduct them from the anticipated sales profits). Valentine, however, did not have the manuscript ready. It's ironic that the one time he received a publisher's confident backing--and a contract satisfactory to his high expectations--the publisher made the decision without seeing the actual work.

two. The **Legends** text involved more work: organization of what were a loose set of personal memories, a number of trips to revisit certain important sites and a significant shift in style and focus from **Desultoria**. Perhaps too he was strongly attracted to laying out another narrative on the predicament of genius--the **Legends** text certainly would not have allowed him this indulgence.

What sort of text would **Legends** have been? In Valentine's words, a new measurement for the South's intellects drawn from their own past instead of the past which the "Yankee thermometer" regulated.² Valentine's plans included the use of native materials to relate an epic history; he was concerned both with Virginia's landscapes and individuals. His first partial list of subject headings included the "natural bridge, Eagles Nest at Harper's Ferry, Blowing Cove, and Ice Mountain."³ Valentine's list looks like an attempt to offer a new **Notes on the State of Virginia**. However, the folklore aspects of the natural features intrigued him more than the scientific. In his preliminary outline he concentrated upon defining a legend thus: a "fiction of place" embracing "poetical definitions of historical circumstances." According to the notes he wrote to himself in the margins of his outline, his goal was

² "The Principle on which I think and write, as exhibited in the first labors of the **Legends of VA**," MSV Papers, Valentine Museum.

³ MSV Papers, 1852 notes for "**Legends**."

to retouch and restore the memory of Virginia in readers' minds using these legends.

Valentine's plan involved using Virginia's gentry class as a model around which Southern life organized itself in a logical, friendly manner. He wanted to incorporate "folk" aspects to contrast the aristocracy of the gentry. A second list of his headings reads this way:

The Parish Rector and Families

Aunt Sally Ann's Household and Kitchen Furniture

My Uncle Job's Plantations

The country gentry and cabin poor

The peddler

The Laborers, their wives, and the Pickaninnies

Old Negro Yorktown

Runaway Negroes

Wife-selling for Tobacco

Gloucester Indian Settlement ⁴

The "reasonable and measured" narrator would convey through these stories "a moral understood but not expressed" directly.⁵ And the moral had to be linked to preserving these perceptions of the gentry: "The strong-mindedness and

⁴ "The principle on which I think and write, as exhibited in the first labors of the Legends of VA," MSV papers.

⁵ Legends of VA, preliminary proposal, 1852, MSV papers.

Individuality of the Gentry; their educations, combining the advantages of country and city; Hospitality of Gentry, their urbanity."⁶

Had he pursued this project beyond an outline and a few rough sketches Valentine could have linked himself more firmly to the history, institutions and literature of his native state. Amidst building social, economic and political crises his project would have calmed anxieties and fueled feelings of nostalgia; instead he ultimately turned toward a project that participated in inciting sectional anger: **The Mock Auction.**

Valentine never wrote *Legends*; he didn't complete it before *Amadeus* nor did he return to it after this second publishing failure. Occupied with marriage, the first of many children, and new responsibilities in his store, Valentine did not publish between 1853 and 1860. He produced many sketches, poems, memos and letters and finally dropped his attention to the isolated genius figure-- neglected or exploited. The following unpublished essay (1853) illuminates his shift in favor:

A letter from a man of Genius

Valleyhold Jan 17th 1853

Messrs. Editors:

I spose you'll not be sprised to receve a letter

⁶ Ibid.

from me, for I can think its no oncommon thing for geniusses to write to Editors. I spose when they want to commute with the world, and let it know their grand thoughts; and deep and splendid feelings--For my own particlar part I very seldom writes, why, because I find words so insarniffically to express my feelings--I dar saye you have felt the same and ken symtimize with me--hoping and bleaving this to be the case I sit down to open to you my experience as a man of genius. In the first place, sir, I was born in poverty as all geniuses is--and sufferd accordin,--I never knew what it was to git learnin by havin a plenty of money, but thank God to come natral to me . . .

Mann's resistance to the emergence of genius from the wrong backgrounds lends force to his satire. This letter-writer styled himself an intellect, claiming all the attributes of natural genius that Valentine had once hoarded for Desultoria's hero. Could anyone make these claims? The letter-writer is uneducated and vulgar--but he has the self-assurance necessary for success. Valentine's satire located what was before unstated and perhaps unnoticed by him: resonance between the rhetoric of natural genius and egalitarian doctrine. His version of the making of a self-made man continues,

And from a little bit of a rignoramus I am what you see

me--no doubt to your great surprise. I had very early heard of "great oaks from little acorns" growin, and you may depend upon it, it stirred up my ambigious nature and I jest fixt my head pon something great, but did not exactly know what--I indulged freely in writin in the albums of the girls in the neighborhood first, and my poetry in them principrilly giv me a start it sorter sigmilated me...after a while every body got jealous of my standin in society, me and my preseusious manners were very much criticized by the vulgars and those who were not able to depreciate men engrafted with high loggyfysical talents.

By the looks of this manuscript Valentine was ready to dispute the idea that a self-made man, asserting his talents and acquiring his education in his own manner, merited respect.

For his last published work Valentine distanced himself from romantic narratives of genius and sensibility to seize a more pragmatic and immediately relevant subject: John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. **The Mock Auction** (1860) was his last desperate gesture in an unfruitful literary career. Valentine wrote his satire of John Brown not to gently revive memories of glorious Virginia, but to address perceived wrongs against the Southern population at the

hands of Northern intellectuals.⁷

One would think **Legends** still would have been the best choice of texts in 1860, and more then ever of importance, but Valentine did not have the time to compose it. As he stated in his notes on the fly-leaf of his copy of **The Mock Auction**, he felt he had only five or six weeks to create a heroic epic out of the glorious Southern traditions-- not the five or six months it would have taken him to even complete the first volume of **Legends**.

Mock Auction, a wicked satire on John Brown, is composed of nine lengthy cantos, each with a prefatory "argument" to acquaint the reader with the satirical intent of the section. Valentine reconfigured the Harper's Ferry incident, giving fictional names to all actors in the drama and exaggerating their known traits. The characters' ingenious titles indicate their position in Valentine's political hierarchies. Henry Ward Beecher appears as "Windy

⁷ I do not have information as to how many copies of **Mock Auction** were printed and bound. I can say however that far more copies of this text are currently floating around than his other two works which are close to impossible to find. The Valentine Museum has many copies of the text and it is the only work of Valentine's held at the Library of Congress. A copy of **Mock Auction** even turned up in an auction held by Goodspeed's Bookstore of Boston in the 1960s. It appeared in their catalog as a text with unknown author, interesting for its illustrations, relevance to Civil War history and caricatures of figures such as Emerson and Lincoln. The archives librarian of the Valentine Museum sent a letter to Goodspeed's to inform them of the author and the artist responsible for the illustrations (Copies of the correspondence are found in file box of MSV Papers, Valentine Museum).

Bags," Harriet Beecher Stowe as "Deborah Delusion," and William Lloyd Garrison as "Faith Foggy." The book is amply illustrated to better drive his blatant points across, creating instructive "tableaux" for the reader on almost every page. Valentine intended to respond with vengeance to Northern writers, ministers and lecturers who "inflamed the masses with ignorant accounts of Southern life" and who "circulated poisonous matter" regarding the south's religion.⁸

As a model this time Valentine turned to Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, a poem written in the late seventeenth century.⁹ Butler's jab at Britain's "evil times" was an instructive text on human nature, specifically satirizing individuals who placed themselves above others. It was composed in three parts, each with three cantos and each canto with an argument. Valentine adopted exactly the same form and lifted the satirical bent as well. He thus continued his tendency to revert to an older tradition of letters. Upon sending a copy of the book to a friend, Valentine underscored his use of *Hudibras*:

My work . . . is written in an unwelcome and

⁸ Notes on inside cover of Valentine's copy of *The Mock Auction*. Valentine Museum.

⁹ See Wasserman's *Samuel "Hudibras" Butler* (1976); or Appleton's 1847 reprint. Butler's poem was issued in three parts in 1662, 1663, and 1677. Wasserman calls it a "burlesque everyman's" poem.

misunderstood sort of style: fortunately, however: some folks have read and admired *Hudibras*, and if they do not perceive merit in my book, at least see that it has a type in literature.¹⁰

In turning back to what was a fairly obscure model Valentine limited his audience to a small population of learned intellectuals; only a select few would understand the source reference that provided the backbone of the satire.¹¹

Valentine also turned back to older modes of publishing with this manuscript, glad to shun the Northern businesses in order to control his work's appearance and distribution. Valentine hired a Richmond publisher and supervised the printing and the insertion of illustrations. He complained of his workload--the result of using a small publishing house--but unlike with his previous experiences he was able to control the entire publishing process:

The ceaseless energy required in getting a work before the public to be abused. I hope may be an apology for my not handing you one of the first copies of my

¹⁰ MSV to Henry Michard, May 2, 1860.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that Cervantes was supposedly Butler's literary model. Valentine sketched out a book review sometime in the 1850s in which he lauded Cervantes as the ideal author, largely because his texts were so challenging that they limited their readership to a select few. See "Book Review," MSV papers, Valentine Museum.

book: --for really, you may say I have been on the shoulders of printers, binders, and the publisher, spurring and lashing all the time, and yet strange the books are not half of them bound; unless I had worked continuously myself it would have fallen still born from the press.

Signed, The Author.¹²

Valentine's metaphor is eerie: lashing the publisher, the slave to a genteel author. This is what the publishers of the North would not and did not passively endure.

When the **Mock Auction** was ready for promotion Valentine shaped public response by writing his own review (anonymously) and inserting it an essay titled "Our Southern Literature." He cited his epic poem as an example of the type of art most needed by the Southern population:

The whole tone of the book evinces it the work of a man of cultivation and literary experience. . . . In the whole character of the work we find a strong appeal to Southern taste and feeling, if that taste could only be found within its own proper region, and that feeling in the right place--even in the great heart of our own Southern people.¹³

¹² MSV to Henry Michard, May 2, 1860.

¹³ "Our Southern Literature," MSV Papers, Valentine Museum. Unknown where (or if) this was published.

To other writers Valentine offered advice; he begged for their attention to "local chords and emotions" and he reminded them of the need to uphold the South's tradition of leadership.

Although there is little evidence as to Valentine's distribution strategies for **Mock Auction**, it is safe to assume that he handed it to a set of friends and critics. And aside from a few tepid letters, there is scant information regarding its reception. A confused review appeared in the **Southern Literary Messenger** (June 1860), but the reviewer chose to pretend ignorance as to the meaning of the text and focused instead on the illustrations. Valentine did receive a short and scolding letter from a friend in Charleston--in her own words, a "staid old lady"--in which she questioned whether Mock Auction was a "symptom of constitutional relapse." She was disappointed and concerned that Valentine, formerly a careful and talented writer who never said a harsh word and never allowed a character to emerge distorted, had used his poet's eye and heart to depict the figure of John Brown. She obviously hadn't read Valentine's previous books. In his letter of response Valentine was unapologetic for his actions, stating that he "meant only to honestly attack disloyalty and irreligion" and that the times merited such wrath.¹⁴

Mock Auction was likely swept out of the way by the

¹⁴ Valentine to Mrs. A. Young, May 31, 1860.

events of the early 1860s. It was Valentine's last published work, and the most profound failure of them all. With the first two he had hoped for recognition of his literary genius, imagining that his literary career rested on their acceptance or rejection. With the third he had asked that the book "hold on to those best inheritances of his father's honesty and truthfulness of character," staking more than his personal reputation on the venture. But after the war, he found himself writing this on the inside cover of his copy:

Since this book was written, we have suffered sorely for our opinions just preceding the war, which was in part the cause both of the death of my father and my wife; . . . how great are the temptations for our honest born and bred Virginian[s].¹⁵

Conclusion

Valentine's literary career saw him march full circle, passing through the modern arena of antebellum publishing in the North and back-sliding to the deeply held traditions of Virginia. He struck out for New York and Boston in mid-century, eager to involve himself in what he perceived as the vibrant intellectual culture of modern authors. But by 1860 he had returned to his familiar home territory.

¹⁵ Notes on inside cover of Mann's copy of *The Mock Auction*. Valentine Museum.

Valentine's publishing difficulties were due in part to the content of his texts--not one of the three was a polished work of prose--but also to his comportment as author. On one hand, he was knowledgeable about new technologies and keen regarding which literary men to contact for help; he sought a modern publishing contract that would bring him a national audience. On the other hand, his constant worries about controlling his reputation as a man of letters--his image of self based largely on models of older traditions--led him to resist certain necessary activities. Namely revising his manuscripts.

Valentine was unwilling to change his work to suit public tastes. He met with difficulties ranging from delays in publishing to outright rejection and he consistently attributed his failures not to problems with the quality of his bizarre texts, but to the mechanisms of the market. He was a clear literary failure if one measures failure by the sales of his books. He, however, managed to deny defeat by sustaining an imagined superiority to the market realities of antebellum print culture.

By 1860, Valentine identified the printed word as a means to defend not just his self-image but his shared heritage as a Virginian. Blaming Northern writers and publishers, he regressed to traditional modes of publishing and to a subject that enabled him to laud Virginia's institutions.

As a last word from Valentine, I include an excerpt

from the notes he wrote on the inside cover of his copy of **Mock Auction** sometime after the war and likely just before his death in 1892. Valentine wrote three pages of jumbled prose in an effort to express his understanding of the cause of the war, linking the crisis of the nation to the activity of intellectuals. To blame according to Valentine were the thoughtful elite, the genteel intellectuals (himself included) who underestimated the nerve of the North--those who wrongly supposed that Northern intellectuals shared their understanding of what the history of the nation had thus far dictated by 1860. Southerners had won all previous battles for the country, why would Northerners dare disrupt this deep-rooted pattern? Valentine's words indicate how he was able, until 1860, to ignore the growing sectional conflict and concentrate on his bid for literary fame. And, from this essay one is better able to perceive how after 1860 his literary career ended by dint of a personal crisis of authorship that paralleled the crisis of the nation:

I might have been said to have been a moderate and still hopeful man for the country. . . . Hateful as the North had shown itself, I did not believe it possible for them to resort to unconstitutional, dangerous means to obtain their objects. That they would eventually make the struggle one of blood-money, few had any conception, because, at no time did the Yankee like fighting, and, we thought he would, of course, rely

upon a cunning which he supposes himself to possess, to get control of the government, and, perhaps, to rob it as he has done now for thirty years. Had the North had any claim to being a warlike people they never would have gotten the South under. The latter would then have been prepared for them--and, it would have so severely and quickly punished them that they would not have had time to gather up allies from all over the world. Without an explanation, it will appear singular that the people of this country who have made all the conquests for it should themselves be conquered by a section not of any great war record.¹⁶

Afterword

Since Mann Valentine is more well known today for his Meat Juice business than for his book-writing ventures, I would be negligent if I failed to mention this aspect of his life. After the war Valentine re-ignited his merchant career, opening a notions business (M. S. Valentine & Company) that soon secured a large trade in Richmond. He maintained considerable extra-curricular avocations, applying himself not to literature at this point but to scientific experiments and medical dabbling. His wife, Ann Maria, had taken sick in 1870 and ostensibly Valentine's

¹⁶ Notes on the inside cover of **Mock Auction**, Valentine Museum.

research was performed in order to find a food that would nourish her--a substance that could be ingested easily. His solution, or "discovery" as it would later be deemed was meat juice--the concentrated extract of pure beef blood obtained through a fairly simple and efficient "pressing" process. Valentine patented his method of cow-pressing in 1871, kicking off what grew to become a multi-million dollar industry. He traveled to World Expositions and marketed his product extensively in both Europe and Asia. Upon his death he passed the business on to his sons and they sustained it well into the twentieth century.

The Valentine Museum Library contains ample material regarding Meat Juice--from bottles to photographs, from an Exposition case to a description of how to "press cows" in order to extract the fabled tonic--that stands ready for scholarly attention. Valentine saved everything, filling his scrapbooks with letters, bills, receipts, awards, newspaper articles and testimonials. Anyone interested in the detailed development of a consumer goods industry and in the development of international markets for American products, or, in the material culture of factories would find the collection useful.

APPENDIX A. MANN S. VALENTINE'S "CANONS" OF GREAT
 THINKERS AND WRITERS--AN EXPLICATION

Very few Americans, and very few men of mere literary fame alone appear in Mann's first list; he instead began with philosophers and scientists. Included among others were "Natural philosophers" from Copernicus to Lineaus; "Poets" Aristotle, Byron, Dante, and Petrarch; "Moral Philosophers" Bacon, Descartes and Hobbes; "Dramatists" Alfieri, Goethe (i.e. Faustus) and Shakespeare; "Authors of Law and Jurisprudence;" and finally, "Miscellaneous and novel writers" Cervantes, Scott, Rabelais, Defoe and Hazlitt.

Valentine followed his first list--his linnean classification system of great thinkers--with an even more curious one: a chronological list of eighty-five "men of letters," (twelve women are noted) with date of birth and place of origin included. This was his American list and seems to have served as his ideal reading list. In this list a check appears next to a small number of names--proof that he did indeed peruse their texts? Or, that he met them in person? The check marks are interesting in and of themselves; a number of them illuminate names of figures Valentine would later come into contact with. He checked the following names, but gave no indication as to whether

the marks signaled he had met the person in question, what books if any of theirs he had perused, or whether he had decided they served as apt models for his ambition as self-styled man of letters (the spelling is Mann's): John Trumbull (CT), Rich'd H. Wilde (MD), Wm Cullen Bryant (MA), I. G. Percival (CT), Fitz Greene Halleck (CT), L. H. Sigourney (CT), N. P. Willis (ME), H. W. Longfellow (ME), Park Benjamin (Guiana), Edgar A. Poe (MD), Lucretia Davidson (NY), Margaret Davidson (NY).

Of the eighty-five figures on list two, fifty-two were from New England, twenty-three from the mid-Atlantic, and only eight from the south--Poe, William G. Simms, and Washington Allston among others. The remaining two were transplants--one from London and one from Guiana. The figure from Guiana, Park Benjamin, served as Mann's literary agent for the publication of his first novel. Mann never mentioned Benjamin's origins in later writings nor in his correspondence; he did place a check beside Benjamin's name, indicating familiarity with Benjamin's work. Benjamin was born in Guiana to a trade-ship captain of 17th century Boston stock and a mother of Barbados royal government descent. His work, as editor, literary agent, and sometime poet, is considered in the next section of this essay as it relates to Mann's publishing experiences.

Valentine's canon of writers drew heavily upon New England letters and his canon of great thinkers relied upon figures of classical thought. It is impossible to

generalize from such lists, but what is of import is his obvious conscientiousness regarding his continuing informal education and influences; the lists too indicate the range of authors and works he had available to him as a Richmond merchant of mid to upper class means.

APPENDIX B. VALENTINE FAMILY LIBRARY

I have constructed the following list by using the Valentine Museum's inventory of books from the Valentine estate (date of compilation for this list is unknown but likely was sometime after Mann, Junior's death in 1892). The inventory lists only partial titles, often omits author, and leaves out many dates; no order is apparent in the groupings of works. I have reorganized the list to at least provide a sense of the different genres represented. The category titles (in bold capital letters) are mine. The list includes books that were likely in Mann's father's library as well as titles Mann, Junior added over the course of his life.

AUTHOR

TITLE(S)

I. LITERATURE, BELLES LETTRES (including political prose, collected works) -- texts listed in the inventory with fairly complete information as to author and date of publication

American

Coates	Royall, M.D.	Leaflets of Memory. 1845. Phil.
Cooke	John Esten	Ellie, or the Human Comedy. Richmond: 1855
Gregoire		Gregoire on the Negro. Brooklyn: 1810.
Goldsmith J.		Manners and Customs. Philadelphia: 1813.
Jefferson Thomas		Jefferson's Notes. London: 1787. Jefferson's Manual. Washington: 1801. Jefferson's Works. 4 vol. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, ed. Charlottesville: 1829.

- Marshall John Life of Washington. 5 vol.
Philadelphia: 1805.
- May Emily Sunshine of Greystone--a story
for girls. 1854.
- Moore Mrs. M.B. The Dixie Speller.
- Pinkerton Allan The Express Man and the
Detective
- Poe Edgar A. Eureka, or the Universe. 1848
Works of Poe, v. 2,3
- Sabell Julia Mayo Odd Volume of Facts and Fiction.
1852. Richmond
- Smith Thomas Nature and Art. 14 vols.
Philadelphia: 1806.
- Timrod Henry Poems of Henry Timrod
- Twain Mark The Innocents Abroad. 1869
- Valentine Mann S. The Mock Auction
Desultoria, Recovered Mss. of an
Eccentric (2 copies)
Amadeus (Karl Valmann)
- Warner Samuel Diary of a Physician. 1830s.
- Young Edward Young's Night Thoughts on life,
death and immortality. 1816.
Philadelphia
- Zimmerman Solitude. Wilmington: 1797.

European

- Anderson Hans C The True Story of my Life. tr.
Mary Hewitt
- Blackie John Stuart Self Culture, intellectual,
physical and moral. A vade
mecum or young men and students.
Edinburgh.
- Burke On the Sublime and Beautiful
Burke's Reflections

- Burns Robert Works of Robert Burns. 1 vol. 1839.
- Butler S. Hudibras. 1753. Glasgow (also two American volumes)
- Byron Childe Harold
Don Juan
Dramas
Tales
Miscellanies
- Carlyle Thomas Letters and Memorials of Jane W. Carlyle
- Clarkson Thos. Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species. London: 1786.
- Cobbett Cobbett's Letters. New York: 1815.
- D'Arblay (Fanny Burney) Diary and Letters. Fanny Burney 1752-1840.
- de Balzac The Letters of Monsieur DeBalzac. 1634. London
- De Quincey Writings, The Caesars. 1851. Ticknor, Reed and Fields.
Opium Eather and Suspiria. 1852. Ticknor, Reed and Fields.
- Dickens Charles Dombey and Son. 1848
Oliver Twist
Old Curiosity Shop
Pickwick Club
- Foster John Life and Correspondence. 1866
Critical Essays
Fosteriana. 1877
Gems of Beauty. 1857
- Goethe Goethe's Correspondence with a Child. 1839 London. 1859 Ticknor and Fields.
Correspondence with Goethe's mother.
- Goldsmith Oliver The Deserted Village. Illustrated by the Etching Club. 1841.

- Harris John Mammon; or covetousness the sin of the Christian church. 1836,37
- Harvey John Meditations and Contemplations. Dublin: 1750.
- Hazlitt Miscellanies. 1854. English lit, history and criticism.
- Hudson E. M. Der Zweite Unabhangigkeits-Kreig in Amerika. Berlin: 1862.
- Hunt Leigh Beaumont and Fletcher; or, The finest scenes, lyrics, and other beauties of those two poets, now first selected from the whole of their works, to the exclusion of whatever is morally objectionable. 1855
- Lamb Charles The Works of CL. prose and verse.
- LaMotte-Fouque Undine; A Romance. (Friedrich H. K. LaMotte-Foque 1777-1843)
- Milton Prose Works
- Neale W. Johnson The Priors of Prague. 1836
- Paine Thomas Thomas Paine's Writings. 1 vol. Albany: 1791.
- Pope Life and Letters
- Richardson Samuel A History of Pamela. (Richardson 1689-1761)
- Schlegel Friedrich Lectures on the History of Literature. 1818. (Schlegel 1772-1829)
Schlegel's Dramatic Literature.
- Shakespeare Wm Hamlet
Richard the Second
Macbeth
Book of Shakespeare Gems
Shakespeare Folio
(Courtenay's Commentaries on Shakespeare)
(Wisdom and Genius of Shakespeare by Price)

- (Craik's English of Shakespeare
by Rolfe)
- Sharp Granville The Just Limitations of Slavery.
1 volume. London, 1776.
The Law of Retribution. London:
1776.
- Trollope Mrs. Domestic Manners of the
Americans. London: 1838.
- Wirt William Memoirs of William Wirt.
Kennedy, ed.
- Wordsworth The Poetical Works, Illustrated
- Zschokke Heinrich Abaellino, the bravo of Venice.
A Romance translated from the
German of Heinrich Zschokke
1771-1848)
(Lewis, translator)

I-a. LITERATURE -- Texts missing information

American imprint--no Author

- The Danger of the Country (Philadelphia: 1807)
Navel Temple (Boston: 1816)
Rugh's Dignity (New York: 1812)
St. Eyremond and Waller (Baltimore: 1809)
A Tale of the Times (Alexandria: 1803)

European imprint--no author

- The Pocket Magazine (London: 1829)
The Mother's Legacy to her Unborn Child (London: 1722)
Baratariana (Dublin: 1773)

**Title and/or author given, but unknown genre, unknown
country of imprint's origin**

- Seven Ages (Evans, John)
Party Leaders (Baldwin, ?)
The Pleasures of Hope (Campbell, Thomas)
Philosophy of Magic (Thomas, ?)
Popular Delusions (Mackay, Chas)
Popular Readings (Carpenter, ?)
Blessington's Works
Greenbank's Periodical Library
The British Museum
Light and Darkness
Is Davis a Traitor? (Bledsoe)
In Vinculis (Keiley)

II. BIOGRAPHIES

The Life of General Francis Marion (Mellen. 1 vol. Hartford: 1838)
 Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry
 Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence (Sanderson, John. Philadelphia: 1830)
 Life of John Paul Jones
 Mack's Life of Lafayette (1 vol.)
 Life and Speeches of Henry Clay
 American Biography (Wilson, Thomas. 3 vol. New York: 1819)
 Life of Washington (Paulding, James K.)
 Memoirs of Samuel Foote, Esq. (Cooke, Wm. 3 vol. New York: 1806)

III. HISTORIES, NO AUTHOR GIVEN (or, only limited author information; selected few have publishing information)**American**

Publications of the VA Historical Society
 British Empire in America
 Smith's History of Virginia (2 vol., 1819)
 Burk's History of Virginia (2 vol., 1805)
 Ordinances of Richmond
 History of St. Mark's Parish (Rev. P. Slaughter)
 Book of the Indians of North America (Drake, Samuel G. Boston, 1837)
 Historical Sketches of the Late War between the United States and Great Britain (Thomson, John. Philadelphia: 1818)
 American Constitutions (Philadelphia: 1833)
 Constitutions (Washington: 1819)
 Willard's Republic of America
 Register of Officers and Agents in the Service of the United States for the year 1821
 Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution
 The History of the Mormons (Gunnison)

European, other

Plan of the Battle of Waterloo
 History of France
 Revolution in France
 Histoire de France
 Histoire de Louis XIV
 Memoires Du Regne de Lousi XIV
 Manier's Peninsular War
 Solis Conquesta De Mexico (5 vol. Madrid: 1798)
 Sketches of Man (Edinburgh: 1788)

History of Man (Dublin: 1791)
 History of the Poor (Ruggles, Thomas. London: 1793)
 The French in Algiers

IV. TRAVEL LITERATURE (American, European and other)

Grimshaw's France
 Gombault's France
 British Album (London: 1792)

Central America: Chiapas and Yucatan (3 vol. Stephens)
 South America and Mexico, Texan Revolution (Niles and Pease.
 Hartford: 1838)

Life, Travels, and Adventures of Ferdinand De Soto,
 Discoverer of the Mississippi (Lambert A. Wilmer)
 History of California (translated fr. Spanish of Miguel
 Venegas. 1759)
 Greenhow's Oregon and California
 Greenhow on the Northwest Coast
 A Book of the United States (1 vol. Hartford: 1838)
 The Homes of the New World--Impressions of America (Bremer,
 Fredrika. 2 vol.)
 Grimshaw's United States

V. COLLECTIONS, ANTHOLOGIES, POETRY COLLECTIONS

British Drama (1838)
 Remarkable Narratives (Charlottesville: 1834)
 Literary Miscellany, Charms and Counter Charms (McIntosh)
 British Essayists, by Tatler
 " " , by Spectator
 " " , by Guardian
 " " , by Rambler
 Encyclopedia of Anecdotes of Literature and Fine Arts
 (Arvine)

Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect
 Poems by Helen Currie (Philadelphia: 1818)
 Lines on the Death of Sallie (Richmond: 1870)

VI. MUSIC (Songbooks, music history)

Book of Favorite Ballads

Southern Warbler. 1845. Charleston (new collection of
 patriotic, national, naval, matrial,
 proessional, convivial,
 humorous, pathetic, sentimental,
 old and new songs.

Memoirs of the Opera. 2 volumes.

Hogarth's Musical History. 2 volumes.

Irish Melodies. M'Creery, John. Petersburg, VA. 1824.

Music Teacher. Warner.

Rudimentary and Practical Treatise in Music. Spencer.

Rudimental Lessons in Music. Warner.

VII. NEWSPAPERS/JOURNALS -- list of periodicals that were
 stored in the Valentine Library at the time the inventory
 was taken

The Richmond Enquirer
 The Whig
 The Dispatch
 The Enquirer
 The Staunton Vindication

The Southern Literary Messenger
 The Cornhill Magazine

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Charvat, William. **Literary Publishing in America 1790-1850.** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959.
- . **The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870.** Matthew J. Bruccoli, Editor. Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1968.
- Darnton, Robert. **The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History.** New York: Vintage Books, 1984.
- Davidson, Cathy N., ed. **Reading in America.** Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Davis, Richard Beale. **Literature and Society in Early Virginia 1608-1840.** Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973.
- Donoghue, Denis. **Reading America -- Essays on American Literature.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.
- Duke, Maurice and Daniel P. Jordan, eds. **A Richmond Reader 1733-1983.** Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. **Selected Writings of Emerson.** Donald McQuade, editor. New York: The Modern Library, 1981.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. **A Sacred Circle -- The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South 1840-1860.** Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Fredrickson, George M. **The Inner Civil War.** New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965.
- Gilmore, Michael T. **American Romanticism and the Marketplace.** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Green, Martin. **The Problem of Boston: Some Readings in Cultural History.** New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1966.

- Holman, C. Hugh, ed. "Southern Writing: 1800-1865." In **Southern Writing 1585-1920**. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1970.
- Hoover, Merle M. **Park Benjamin--Poet and Editor**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.
- Howarth, William. "Writing Upside Down--Voice and Place in Southern Autobiography." **Southwest Review** 75 (Winter 1990): 126-40.
- Inge, M. Thomas, Ed. "Richmond, Virginia and Southern Writing--Special Issue." **The Mississippi Quarterly** 27 (Fall 1974).
- Kazin, Alfred. **An American Procession**. New York: Vintage Books, 1984.
- Meeker, Richard K. **The Dilemma of the Southern Writer**. Virginia: Institute of Southern Culture at Longwood College, 1961.
- Minor, Benjamin Blake L.L.D. **The Southern Literary Messenger 1834-1864**. New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905.
- Neufeldt, Leonard N. "Thoreau's Enterprise of Self-Culture in a Culture of Enterprise." **American Quarterly** 39 (Summer 1987): 231-251.
- O'Brien, Michael. "The Endeavor of Southern Intellectual History." **Southern Review** 24 (Winter 1988): 65-78.
- ". "The Lineaments of Antebellum Southern Romanticism." **Journal of American Studies** 20 (1986): 165-188.
- Olney, James. **Studies in Autobiography**. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Ridgely, Joseph Vincent. **Nineteenth Century Literature**. KT: University of Kentucky Press, 1980.
- Rubin, Louis D., Jr. **The Writer in the South--Studies in a Literary Community**. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1972.
- Simpson, Louis J. "The Southern Literary Vocation." In **Toward a New American Literary History**, edited by Louis J. Budd, et al. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980.

- Strout, Cushing. **The Veracious Imagination -- Essays on American History, Literature, and Biography.** 1961. Reprint. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.
- Taylor, Welford Dunaway, ed. **Virginia Authors Past and Present.** Richmond: Virginia Association of Teachers of English, 1972.
- Taylor, William R. **Cavalier and Yankee.** 1957. Reprint. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Tebbel, John and Mary Ellen Zuckerman. **The Magazine in America 1741-1990.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Tompkins, Jane. **Sensational Designs--The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. **The Incorporation of America--Culture and Society in the Gilded Age.** 1982. Reprint. New York: Hill and Wang, 1991.
- Tryon, Warren S. and William Charvat, Eds. **The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields.** New York: The Bibliographical Society of America, 1949.
- Tryon, Warren S. **Parnassus Corner--A Life of James T. Fields Publisher to the Victorians.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963.
- Virginia, University of. **The Virginia Author 1819-1969.** Exhibition Document, October 18, 1969. Virginia: University of Virginia, 1969.
- Wasserman, George R. **Samuel "Hudibras" Butler.** Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976.
- Watson, Ritchie Devon Jr. **The Cavalier in Virginia Fiction.** Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985.
- Williams, Raymond. **Culture and Society 1780-1950.** New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Wolff, Sally. "Some Talk about Autobiography: An Interview with Eudora Welty." **Southern Review** 26 (Winter 1990): 81-85.
- Wood, Grodon S. "Democracy and the American Revolution." In **Democracy The Unfinished Journey**, edited by John Dunn. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992: 91-106.

Zboray, Ronald J. "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation." In *Reading in America*, Ed. Cathy N. Davidson. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

PRIMARY / 18TH and 19TH-CENTURY SECONDARY SOURCES:

Ames, Mary Clemmer. *A Memorial of Alice and Phoebe Cary*. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1873.

Bagby, George W. *The Old Virginia Gentleman and Other Sketches*. Reprint. Richmond: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1948.

Butler, Samuel. *Hudibras*. 1662-1677. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1847.

Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. 1841. Reprint. Edited by Michael K. Goldberg. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

Ellyson's Business Directory and Almanac. Richmond, VA: H.K. Ellyson, 1845, 1845-6.

Fields, James T. Correspondence. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Franklin, Benjamin. *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography*. 1771-89. Ed. J. A. Leo Lemay and P. M. Zall. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986.

Glasgow, Ellen. *Virginia*. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913. Reprint. New York: Viking Penguin, 1989.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Sufferings of Young Werther and Elective Affinities*. 1774. Reprint. Ed. Victor Lange. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1990.

----- *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (The Thomas Carlyle Translation). 1795. New York: The Heritage Press, 1959.

Harrison, J.B. *A Discourse on The Prospects of Letters and Taste in Virginia* (pronounced before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden-Sydney College). Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown, 1828.

Montague's Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser. Richmond, VA: William L. Montague, 1850, 1859.

- Poe, Edgar Allan. **The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe with a Memoir by Rufus Wilmot Griswold and Notices of his Life and Genius by N. P. Willis and J. R. Lowell.** Volume I, **Tales.** New York: Redfield, 1858.
- . **Eureka: a prose poem and The Business Man.** In **The Works of Edgar Allan Poe.** Edmund Clarence Stedman, ed. Vol. IX. London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1895: 326-335.
- Rau, Haribert. **Mozart--A Biographical Romance.** Translated by E. R. Sill. New York: Leypoldt and Holt, 1868.
- Richmond Directory, Register, and Almanac.** Richmond, VA: John Maddox, 1819.
- Richmond Lyceum Journal** (Devoted to the Moral and Intellectual Improvement of Young Men) Vol. 1, numbers 1-7 (April 1838-March 1839). Richmond: Richmond Lyceum.
- The Southern Literary Messenger.** Volumes 1-34 (1834-1862). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress. Microfilm.
- Timrod, Henry. "Literature in the South." 1859. Reprint. In **Southern Writing 1585-1920,** edited by C. Hugh Holman. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1970: 621-32.
- [Valentine, Mann Satterwhite II.] **Desultoria: The Recovered MSS. of an Eccentric.** New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850.
- Valentine, Mann Satterwhite II [Karl Valmann, pseud.]. **Amadeus: or, A Night With the Spirit.** New York: Charles Scribner, 1853.
- [Valentine, Mann Satterwhite II.] **The Mock Auction Ossawatomie Sold.** Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1860.
- Valentine, Mann Satterwhite. **Papers--correspondence, journals, unpublished manuscripts.** Valentine Museum Library, Richmond, Virginia.
- Weiss, Susan Archer [Talley]. **The Home Life of Poe.** New York: Broadway Publishing Company, 1907.

VITADeborah Lynn Owen

Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, October 4, 1966.

Ms. Owen graduated from Amherst Regional High School in Amherst, Massachusetts, June 1984. She earned a B.A. degree in American Studies from Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, June 1988. She then spent one year working for the United States Congress in Washington, D.C., and a second year in D.C. pursuing classes in Demographic history at Georgetown University. Ms. Owen entered the College of William and Mary in August of 1991 as a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies. With this thesis she completes her M.A.; she has completed her course requirements for the Ph.D. as well and has begun working on her comprehensive examinations and dissertation proposal.