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# *The Atlantic Between Them*

## *Dickens, Melville, and Nationality in the Transatlantic Market*

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van

Doctor in de letterkunde

2014

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof. dr. Gert Buelens and Prof. dr. Marysa Demoor for their guidance and for giving me the opportunity to pursue this project. It has been a privilege to work with such a pair of distinguished scholars whose expertise in American and Victorian literature respectively has allowed me to bridge the Atlantic in a way that otherwise would have been exceedingly difficult. The cordiality and personal warmth of their supervision was second to none, and for that, I am truly grateful.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Prof. dr. Yuri Cowan, who has from the outset been my cicerone, guiding me through the vagaries of academic life. His enthusiasm and drive have been an example to me. I am indebted to my doctoral advisory committee, Prof. dr. Dirk Van Hulle and Prof. dr. Ingo Berensmeyer, who offered valuable support and encouragement. Thanks also to dr. Marius Hentea, dr. Birgit Van Puymbroeck, dr. Koenraad Claes and Prof. dr. Yuri Cowan (again), for graciously agreeing to act as my proof-readers. Special thanks to Prof. dr. Brian Maidment for his kind generosity and dr. Jennifer Scott for her tireless support.

Thank you to all the colleagues I met along the way who made this journey that much more interesting: dr. Sarah Bull, dr. Isabelle Clairhout, Prof. dr. Philippe Codde, Prof. dr. Stef Craps, dr. Jolein De Ridder, Jennifer Henneman, Beth Hiskey, dr. Alise Jameson, Stavros Kelepouris, Tom Laughlin, dr. Frederick Morel, Tom Parlevliet, dr. Sarah Posman, Prof. dr. Flutur Troshani, Mieke Vandenbroucke, dr. Deborah Van Durme, dr. Marianne Van Remoortel, Veerle Van Steenhuyse, dr. Hélène Valance, dr. Stijn Vervaet and dr. Peter Yeandle.

And finally, thank you to my loving friends and family, without whom I would not be possible: Vincent and Sander, Sean and Toby, Vicky and Sarah, my grandparents, my parents, my sister Jolien, and my partner Charlotte.

# List of Abbreviations

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| B.O.E. | Bank of England |
| B.U.S. | Second Bank of the United States |
| CDP | Robert Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers* |
| HMB | Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography* |
| HMC | Herman Melville, *Correspondence: The Writings of Herman Melville* |
| HMR | Higgins, Brian and Hershel Parker (eds.), *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* |
| P. | Charles Dickens, The Pilgrim Edition of *The Letters of Charles Dickens* |

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# Introduction

*Until such an act is passed, our literature and consequently to a great degree the formation of our national character is in the hands of Great Britain. We are not independent. We have cast off our political chains but in almost everything else we are yet in colonial bondage. (Samuel F.B. Morse qtd. in Barnes 83)*

At a Boston public dinner held in his honor at the outset of his 1842 tour, Charles Dickens ended a speech by proposing a toast, calling for no division "but the Atlantic" between America and Great Britain (*Speeches* 22). This toast, which elided political and cultural differences into a simple geographical divide, was fundamentally at odds with economic and political reality. Dickens called for Anglo-American unity at a time when geopolitical tensions between the two nations were on the verge of escalating into war and his own works had become the focal point of a resentful debate surrounding Anglo-American copyright. Even in the context of his speech the rhetorical sleight was problematic, as Dickens prefaced his inclusive remark by arguing passionately for international copyright. The response from the assembled American press was hostile, accusing Dickens of being a literary aristocrat, wildly ungrateful to the democratic affection of the American public. Dickens's first tour of America thus became politicized almost immediately, with the press on either side pitting British authors against the American public, American reprinters against British authors, and British trade against American trade. Despite Dickens's invocation of kinship across the Atlantic, the stakes of these debates were incontrovertibly national ones.

In this dissertation, I argue that the mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American literary sphere was defined by a mutually constitutive relationship between authorship and its macro-economic context. Contemporary changes in financial policy established a relatively unregulated global market where Britain and post-independence America encountered each other as rival economies. As I will show, during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, print authority was crucial in establishing the international and opaque streams of labor and finance which characterize a global market. Once this global economic circuit gathered steam, however, nationalism and concepts of a "national culture" came to be informed by a sense of fiscal, economic gain. I argue that mid-century authorial and textual performances constructed nationality as an explicitly economic marker to draw and re-draw the political power dynamic between Great Britain and America. In order to investigate this type of "fiscal nationality" in the context of the mid-nineteenth century Anglo-American literary marketplace, I take the prose careers of Charles Dickens and Herman Melville as my case studies. How did these authors engage a largely unregulated global economic space, both imaginatively and

pragmatically? How did their nationality signify on the open market? What were the implications for the reception of their work, and for their relationship to their transatlantic publishers? How did they negotiate nationality and national identity in texts that circulated transnationally almost by default?

In *Atlantic Double-Cross* (1986), one of the foundational texts of transatlantic studies, Robert Weisbuch argues that "enmity [is] the keynote of Anglo-American literary relations in the mid-nineteenth century" (xviii). In Weisbuch's account, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *Moby-Dick* (1851), and *Walden* (1854) are American "counterthrusts" in a literary duel with Great Britain, "literary works of sufficient ambition to refute the British insults by their total being" (13). "The American writer," according to Weisbuch, "begins from a defensive position and [...] the achievements of British literature and British national life are the chief intimidations against which he, as American representative [sic], defends himself" (xii). Even though, like Weisbuch, I am interested in Dickens and Melville, I do not pair them as he does; I do not read "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853) as Melville's "aggressive, parodic response" to "the Dickensian" (15). I start with Weisbuch not because my research is "Weisbuchian" (to borrow the term coined by Amanda Claybaugh in "New Fields, Conventional Habits, and the Legacy of *Atlantic Double-Cross*" (2008)). Indeed, as Claybaugh shows in that piece, Weisbuch's "model of cultural rivalry" has not been "particularly influential" (441).[1] The significance of *Atlantic Double-Cross* lies instead in its authorization of transatlantic studies as a field, by reading "literature in English" as inseparable from a transnational context.[2]

In "State of the Subject" (1987), Fredric Jameson added his voice to this debate by arguing that "scholarly perimeters" almost inevitably create fields which are "self-defining and inward-looking," and stressing the importance of comparative

[1] In fact, Weisbuch's model was heavily criticized by Jonathan Arac, Harry Levin, Richard Gray, and Lawrence Buell. See "New Fields, Conventional Habits, and the Legacy of *Atlantic Double-Cross*" (440-41).

[2] Claybaugh convincingly argues that Weisbuch's book provoked critiques that have come to define the field of transatlantic studies, writing: "*Atlantic Double-Cross* has presided over the development of a field that has moved [...] along the lines that [Weisbuch's] first reviewers predicted (442).

perspectives in resisting the "temptation of isolationism" (17, 25). By 2001, Paul Giles was calling this recognition of the importance of comparative approaches in defamiliarizing the politically and institutionally charged artificiality of "American literature" and "British literature" an academic commonplace. Indeed, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, transatlanticists such as historian Lawrence Buell and literary critic Paul Gilroy had already explored the nation-building rationale behind the search for a quintessentially British or American aspect to literature produced by nationals of either country. Anglo-American transatlantic studies have thus far largely been concerned with the role each nation played in the ongoing processes of the other's nation-formation, as well as the ideological consequences of the material networks which connected them (such as slave trade and emigration).[3] These approaches, though valuable, tend to focus on the connections between Great Britain and the United States, sometimes (like Dickens in his toast) eliding any considerations of nationality by taking "literature in English" as their subject.[4]

Paul Giles has warned against this "linguistic idealism," as it may promote a "cultural transcendence which would effectively proscribe the disruptive discontinuities of social

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[3] For scholarship which examines the ideological implications of the slave trade, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and the Double Consciousness* (1993), Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance (1996)*, Audrey Fisch, *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature and Culture* (2000) and Helen Thomas, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies* (2000). For examples of scholars whose focus is on emigration see William E. Van Vugt, *Britain to America: mid-nineteenth-century immigrants to the United States* (1999) and Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland Since 1600* (2004). Other approaches include scrutiny of transatlantic networks of religion (Anna M. Lawrence, *Love, Belonging, and Authority in Early Transatlantic Methodism* (2011), Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (1978)) and of political reform (Ray Boston, *British Chartists in America, 1839-1900* (1971), Amanda Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose* (2007)).

[4] William C. Spengemann holds up the English language as the single most important binding factor in the Anglo-American literary field, as a part of a late-twentieth-century surge of critical interest in "literature in English," which Claybaugh has described as considering "the crossing of national boundaries to be incidental to whatever argument [it is] seeking to make" (14) (see for example Richard Gravil, *Romantic Dialogues: Anglo-American Continuities, 1776-1862* (2000) and Leon Chai, *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance* (1987)).

formation and political change" (*Insurrections* 6). Giles, for his part, identifies Edward Said's concept of "cross-cultural force fields" as a useful alternative for the study of national literatures (12). In an Anglo-American context, however, it is difficult, if not impossible, to define *when* "British culture" and "American culture" became sufficiently detached to allow for such "cross-cultural" exchange. In *The Novel of Purpose* (2007), Amanda Claybaugh has argued convincingly for the persistence of crucial cultural links between America and Great Britain after the Revolutionary War: emigration, intermarriage and bi-directional travel ensured that political as well as religious movements crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic, alongside economic networks of trade and finance (1). Political, legislative independence does not imply a concurrent cultural independence, as American international copyright proponents like Samuel Morse (quoted in the epigraph of this introduction) were keen to point out.[5] The question what does is a contentious one, and the difficulties that scholarship has encountered in this context (and which some transatlanticists have taken as their object of study) are the result of the slipperiness of nation as a concept.

In *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (1990), Hobsbawm argues that "the nation" is a rhetorically contested space, forced into a quantum state of entanglement by the projected posterity of nationalism, which means that the reality the rhetoric represents can only ever be "recognized *a posteriori*" (9). As a result, according to Hobsbawm, "nationalism comes before nations [...] nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around" (10).[6] In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson defines

[5] Emerson's merging of self and landscape in "Nature" (1836), for example, could be extrapolated to argue for an independence which precedes the Declaration by more than a century, culturally Othering the seventeenth-century inhabitants of Jamestown from Great Britain by situating the divisive moment in their exchanging the British "countryside" for the American "wilds," despite their status as British citizens.

[6] In the period with which I am concerned, the state borders of America as a whole had not yet been defined, and both the young American Republic and the British Empire were particularly engaged in conflicting processes of state-building. The nationalist-imperialist drive towards geographic expansion which marked the "Manifest Destiny" rhetoric and concomitant policies of Jacksonian democracy, clashed with British imperial self-imagining over the borders of New York (1837) and Maine (1839), and over the territories of Oregon (1841-

nations as "imagined political communities," within the confines of which various forms of media are instrumental in creating a shared political consciousness. By addressing the audience as members of the same imagined community, texts can construct and maintain a sense of communion. After the United States achieved independence, however, the ties of trade, emigration, religion and language with Great Britain remained as strong as they had been. The result was that nineteenth-century texts written in either America or Great Britain could, and often did, appear on the other side of the Atlantic as well, making them a problematic nexus for the interrelated concepts of nationalism, state-building and nation-formation, projecting self-definition both domestically and abroad, or using the transatlantic Other as a transformative mirror through which potential internal improvement could become visible.[7] The literary products of these socio-economic unifying factors were often invested in obfuscating the very conditions that made them possible. Any study of the mid-nineteenth century Anglo-American literary sphere, then, must examine the mutually constitutive relationship between its texts and its macro-economic context.[8]

In this dissertation, I take my cue from Hobsbawm's insight that states precede nations, but my focus is more economically oriented: the Declaration of Independence divided what had been a single economy into two separate ones.[9] For a few decades after

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46). As a result, the threat of a new war between Great Britain and America loomed throughout the 1830s and 40s, particularly over the Oregon Question.

[7] The image of a "virtualizing" or alienating mirror as a framework for the reciprocal processes of nation-formation in this context has been developed by Giles, in "Two-Way Mirrors: British-American Literary History and the Ideology of Exchange" (1998) and in *Virtual Americas* (2002).

[8] I am of course not suggesting that all (or even most) texts published in this context *thematize* contemporary macro-economics. Instead, I want to improve our understanding of what Amanda Claybaugh called the "trans-Atlantic condition" by investigating the economic structures that informed this condition. Indeed, even though *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) does not deal with global streams of capital and labor, it did participate in the transnational economy as a commodity, stimulating Dickens's American popularity.

[9] Though the economy of the Empire consolidated under Parliament's control, it was not a unified economy in that it favored the center over the colonial periphery. The Boston Tea Party, for instance, was a response to the 1773 Tea Act which gave the East India Trading Company a *de facto* monopoly on the tea trade. Through a discrepancy in colonial taxation, this state monopoly put American merchants at a considerable disadvantage.

American independence, these distinct economies interfaced through a transitional mercantilist Anglo-American market, strengthened by the extensive network of transatlantic trade ties which had survived the Revolution. After the British Parliament repealed the Bubble Act in 1825, however, incorporation with limited liability asserted itself as the dominant business model, which created a global free-trade market where opaque streams of capital could cross state borders with minimum effort.[10] I posit that the positional identities constructed by mid-nineteenth-century texts were informed by economic self-interest in the emergent global marketplace. I want to stress that this model implies a fundamentally reciprocal process. Mutual fear of economic dependence prompted a kind of fiscal nationalism in both Great Britain and America as nationalist rhetoric almost inevitably embraced the idea of protectionism.

Various coinciding material, economic, and social factors established a strong Anglo-American market in the mid-nineteenth century.[11] As a result, texts (as commodified material objects) managed to cross state boundaries with apparent ease. In the context of the Anglo-American sphere, however, the same networks which made that textual mobility possible complicated the political and ideological divides between Great Britain and America. What interests me here is the performativity of transatlantic texts in constituting the Anglo-American space, taking into account their form, publication history and distribution, as well as their content. Texts were reinterpreted along a

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Economic independence from the British Empire, then, was one of the central issues in the American War of Independence.

[10] For more on the impact of the emergent global financial market on Britain and America in the nineteenth century, see *International Capital Markets and American Economic Growth* (1994) by Lance E. Davis and Robert J. Cull and *The Origins and Development of Financial Markets and Institutions from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (2009), edited by Jeremy Atack and Larry Neal.

[11] I will elaborate on these factors later, but suffice it to say here that conditions such as the lack of transnational copyright, the shared linguistic background, and the speed and reliability of steam technology promoted (and in some cases, were promoted by) social influences such as the British interest in the "exotic" New World embodied by the contemporary popularity of travel narratives, and the American belief in a latent high cultural value of Old World texts which prompted what Meredith McGill has called a "culture of reprinting."

transatlantic axis. This appropriation of labor in the transatlantic market is thematized in Melville's *Israel Potter*, which relies on a mutability of national identity rooted in labor productivity to sustain the plot. The eponymous Israel, an American veteran of Bunker Hill, poses as a British subject numerous times throughout the plot by becoming part of the British workforce, with neither his language nor his ethnicity betraying him. Israel slips in and out of this role as though it were a costume, which, on occasion, is almost literally true, as he symbolically dresses in rags to pass for "English," thereby somehow concealing his innate Americanness and his republican beliefs (which preclude him, even in his English rags, from doing any "Sir Johnning" (455)).[12] Even though his political ideologies set him apart, Israel is culturally, linguistically, but above all, economically, a convincing British citizen. This economic focus within the snarl of national identities in *Israel Potter* characterizes the interaction between America and Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, and warrants close critical scrutiny.

Indeed, if culture is always political, both systems are inextricably embedded in their surrounding economies. I argue that the Anglo-American sphere as a whole was crucially defined by a print overlay, as the complex of political, ideological, and above all economic ties between the two nations manifested itself for the most part through a print medium. A useful notion in this context is Jürgen Habermas's concept of the "public sphere." Even though, as Nancy Fraser has argued in "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere," Habermas's invaluable insights regarding (English) coffee houses and (French) salons as discursive arenas cannot simply be transferred into a transnational context, we can take away the underlying sense of the fundamental part played by texts in shaping the dialogue.[13] I want to tease out this implied importance of the overall

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[12] I am using the Library of America editions of Melville's works which print the texts from the authoritative *Northwestern-Newberry Edition of the Writing of Herman Melville*, edited by Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle. Regrettably, the volumes of the *Northwestern-Newberry Edition* were not themselves available from Ghent University Library.

[13] In "Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension?" (2006), Habermas identifies five types of actors (which he calls "professionals of the media system" (416)) within the public sphere: lobbyists, advocates, experts, moral entrepreneurs, and intellectuals. He writes that "[f]rom the spectrum of published political opinions, we can distinguish, as *polled opinion*, the measured aggregate of pro or con attitudes to controversial

performance of texts (including factors such as form and publication history as well as content) in the context of the tangled nineteenth century Anglo-American public sphere. Instead of situating the public sphere in infrastructure, I posit an Anglo-American public sphere which is a shimmering fabric of authorial performances and textual interventions from either side of the Atlantic concerning the other.[14]

In other words, I cast the imprint of the abstract complex of Anglo-American ties as an inseparable part of the process which defines those ties, in a move akin to the recognition of the "observer effect" in physics and quantum mechanics. Simply put, the observer effect refers to those changes caused by the instruments of observation in the observed phenomenon. I argue that a similar contamination takes place in print representations of an Anglo-American public sphere: a text which engages with that space, delineating, defining and commenting on it, inevitably alters the sphere it was commenting on. For example, Eric Richards points out in *Britannia's Children* that "the phenomenon of emigration" from the Old World to the New – and particularly from Great Britain to America – "happened outside government control and beyond contemporary understanding," which prompts Richards to call it "atomistic" (149). In *Replenishing the Earth*, however, James Belich explains the grass-roots nature of this westward movement by the superabundance of "books, pamphlets, newspaper and journal articles, lectures and advertisements" promoting American emigration (153). These publications, Belich argues, encouraged "a persistent 'boom mentality,' an ideology between 'bounded rationality' and collective hysteria" (200). These textual interventions, then, inform the decisions of potential British settlers and investors, by representing America (however speciously) as a place where "British citizens [...] could better themselves by emigrations and overseas investment even if they were doing relatively well at home" (Richards 184). Such print representations were one of the few

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public issues as they tacitly take shape within weak publics" (ibid.). I would argue, in a Latourian turn, that these "published political opinions" are actors in their own right.

[14] In *Protocols of Liberty: Communication Innovation and the American Revolution* (2013), William Warner argues a related point in the context of the American War of Independence by showing the ways in which American revolutionaries deployed the media of their time to challenge British authority while constructing consensus.

tangible and recognizable manifestations of this transatlantic sphere in the nineteenth century, meaning that the former in large part constituted the latter. The nineteenth-century Anglo-American transatlantic sphere was mostly a paper one, made up of books and periodicals, but also of stocks and ledgers.

As a result, the concept of nationality loses the rigidity of institutional delineation and becomes instead a contested marker of meaning within a transnational print sphere which defines itself through countless intricate processes of adjustment and adaptation. As nationality is consistently at stake, the center of the Anglo-American public sphere is metaphorically moved to the intervening ocean in what constitutes a relentless ebb-and-flow of rejection, adoption and reinterpretation. The Anglo-American print public sphere is a transnational space because of the way in which the texts and authors which constitute it as a field continuously position themselves relative to the transatlantic Other, as defined by notions of fiscal nationality. This positioning is often a complex process, casting the other nation as an example to be admired and shunned simultaneously.[15] In *American Notes* (1842), Dickens holds up the working conditions of factory workers in Lowell, Massachusetts, to his British audience as an example of democratic improvements made to working conditions, before pointing to the continued practice of slavery in the Southern states as evidence of Great Britain's moral superiority. Melville, for his part, has no qualms about attributing all of the systemic problems he identifies in the American navy to the British origins of American naval law (which he denounces in *White-Jacket* as monarchical and un-American), while at the same time praising the British navy for the superiority of their officers and conditions aboard their ships, even citing British naval heroes as champions against flogging. Perceived transatlantic national identities are appropriated to construct, modify and

[15] Christopher Hanlon has commented on this paradoxical formation in his book *America's England. Antebellum Literature and Atlantic Sectionalism* (2013) with regards to the rhetorical capital "Englishness" had in domestic American political polemics. In Hanlon's own words, his book is concerned with both "the expressions of transatlantic esteem through which northerners and southerners rearranged their reciprocal aversion in terms of an imagined rapport with England; but also the wholesale recall of affection through which these same partisans finally came to recoordinate over questions of federalism, slavery, and the future of the Republic around various expressions of Anglophobia" (xi).

project a national identity back into the Anglo-American sphere, creating the feedback loop I referred to earlier.

Even though I argue that the transatlantic public sphere is dynamically constituted by authorial and textual performance, I am careful not to neglect Habermas's earlier insights with regards to infrastructure. An enlarged notion of textual performance posits an equal and mutually constitutive relation between infrastructure and content, between writing and its context (Van Puymbroeck 155, 162). Circumstances and modes of production and circulation contribute in important ways to the performance of texts, which must therefore be read within those contexts. In my first chapter I investigate what I call the pragmatics of transatlantic publishing. Until the completion of the first permanent transatlantic telegraph cables in the late 1860s, print's position as the pinnacle of (long-distance) communication technology was unassailable (Cohen 3-4). In the emergent global market of the early nineteenth century, investors were on the lookout for lucrative foreign investments while remaining wary of being taken in by deceitful investment pamphlets. Travel narratives as well as books and periodicals reprinted transatlantically provided readers with potentially useful – because impartial – investment information from far-flung regions. Literary authority came to inform the stock market concept of "investor confidence." However, from the proliferation of purportedly disinterested writing on life abroad, it is clear that the promoters whose pamphlets were being shunned as biased had caught on to reader habits. They began commissioning writers (like Disraeli) and periodicals (like *The Quarterly Review*) to praise some region's natural wealth, political stability, or infrastructure in an attempt to promote investment while concealing the moneyed interests behind it. As I will show, transatlantic authorship had a macro-economic significance which evolved as the century wore on and the global market developed. By mid-century, authors were thematizing the dangers of a global market where money and labor could cross state boundaries virtually unchecked: they were more familiar than most with these dangers, as a result of the legal lacunae which enabled reprinting abroad. Much of what was written in contemporary periodicals and criticism on the international copyright question pitted notions of solitary genius against the importance of popular education, but whenever the matter came before British or American legislative bodies, economic rhetoric came into play. I will touch on the position of authors within the international

copyright debates, where legislators tended to be more concerned with their national industries than with their literary "national treasures." Finally in this chapter, I will discuss how authors signing extralegal transatlantic contracts tended to rely on informal literary agents: friends or family staying abroad, deputized by the author to negotiate with transatlantic publishers.

In the second chapter, I discuss the decidedly British start to Melville's career and pay close attention to his preoccupation with the Anglo-American public sphere in many of his prose works. First, I touch upon the fluidity between British and American nationalities which manifested itself prominently in the reception of Melville's earliest works, mapping out the expectations and markers of performativity that were at work in this transnational cultural geography. Second, I will elucidate the way in which Melville's prose works – such as *Redburn* (1849), *White-Jacket* (1850), *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Israel Potter* – are often fundamentally concerned with issues of nationality and are self-consciously located within the framework of an Anglo-American economic space. These works co-constitute this space, while explicitly commenting on its foundational shared cultural history. Finally, I will explore the author-publisher relationships between Melville and John Murray as well as Richard Bentley. Melville's "exotic" nationality initially made him desirable to British publishers (there is even evidence to suggest that Bentley tried to poach the budding author from Murray's stable), but by the time *The Confidence-Man* (1857) appeared, no British publisher wanted any part of it, as Melville's marketable "Otherness" had long given way to an impenetrable web of "what appear to be local allusions" (HMR 493).

My third and final chapter will investigate Dickens's engagement with America. From the early 1840s, Dickens recognized the value of the American market, leading to his well-known first American tour in 1842. First, I will discuss the relevance of Dickens's American novels, showing that the traditional travel narrative of *American Notes* on the one hand, and the imaginative engagement with the perceived dangers of a fluid transatlantic financial market in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) on the other, both point towards British protectionism. With the growing importance of global finance, national ties become attached to both geography and the ability to negotiate transatlantic financial waters. As British and American monies extended across the Atlantic, patriotism and citizenship became equated with not only cultural loyalty, but with

financial and economic loyalty as well. Next, I will investigate the impact America had on Dickens's editorial policy for his weeklies *Household Words* (1850-59) and *All the Year Round* (1859-95). Early proposals for *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840-41), Dickens's first periodical venture, had already featured suggestions of visiting America, specifically to gather material for publication. By the 1850s, however, Dickens was beginning to revise his strategy towards America, backtracking on his resolution not to deal with American publishers and going to considerable lengths to collaborate with American republishers. I will show that this is not just a part of Dickens's own (authorial) repositioning towards the American market, but part of a wider adjustment of British attitudes towards a shared Anglo-American economic space. Finally, I will discuss Dickens's 1867-68 American reading tour. This six-month *tour de force*, I argue, is Dickens's most remarkable engagement with America. Recognizing that there were no barriers in personal financial transactions similar to the ones that were preventing him from profiting fully from published material – because of the continued inability to legally prevent cross-national reprinting – Dickens shifted the value and appeal of his works away from their materiality and onto himself as their source and authenticator. Dickens's reading tour, I will argue, was a canny manipulation of economic structures, as the author entered the marketplace both geographically as well as in a more abstract sense: Dickens became his own commodity personified, eliding the gap between his authorial persona and his writing.

Given the fecundity of the nineteenth-century literary sphere, my choice of these two canonical authors is not unproblematic. As scholars such as Susan Coultrap-McQuin and Nina Baym have suggested, it is hard to overestimate the importance of female authorship in antebellum America. By 1850, female authors were responsible for almost half of the best-selling books in America (Coultrap-McQuin 2). Baym notes in her *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870* (1978): "some male authors felt threatened by the apparently sudden emergence of great numbers of women writers. Their distress showed itself in expressions of manly contempt for the genre, its authors and its readers" (22). Nathaniel Hawthorne's vitriol, in an 1855 letter to publisher William D. Ticknor, has been made to exemplify this reaction: "Besides, America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash—and

should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed" (Hawthorne 17: 304).[16] In Britain, authors such as Elizabeth Gaskell and the self-proclaimed professional Harriet Martineau contributed to the idea of a Carlylean "woman of letters," drawing on and responding to what Linda Peterson calls "Brontëan myths" of Victorian female authorship in *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (2009). A comprehensive study of the mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American transatlantic literary marketplace would not only have to deal with issues of gender and female authorship in a transnational setting, but also with matters of race, empire and what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has called subaltern authorship. The Atlantic proved to be both buffer and conduit when it came to highly politicized topics such as American slave narratives. These were first published by English abolitionists in Britain but nevertheless made their way swiftly onto the American market. My dissertation does not engage with these issues directly, dealing with them only as and when they relate to my case studies. However, this is in no way a reflection on their relevance and importance in transatlantic studies. Recent scholarship, such as Amanda Claybaugh's *The Novel of Purpose*, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1995) and the essay collection *Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain* (2012) edited by Lueck et al., has revealed how race and gender signified on the Anglo-American literary stage. In later permutations of this project, I aim to include these issues in my study of nationality in authorial representation and reception in a transatlantic economic context. The celebrated figurehead of abolitionism Frederick Douglass and the international literary sensation Harriet Beecher Stowe would be good places to start.

My project is an investigation of a very specific historical moment – the mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American literary marketplace – but it has implications that extend far beyond its specialized scope. The broader relevance of this research is its ability to interrogate the idea of what Winston Churchill would define in 1946 as a

[16] In her essay, "Again and Again, The Scribbling Women," Baym has argued that this frequently quoted passage should be read as an off-handedly hyperbolic reason not to return to writing, in response to his publisher's overtures to that effect.

"special relationship" between Great Britain and America. Throughout the twentieth- and into the twenty-first century, this phrase has been deployed as a political commonplace by British and American politicians alike. By considering the nineteenth-century origins of the current Anglo-American axis of power, I work to defamiliarize its pervading sense of "natural alliance," and reveal the underlying economic interactions informing the cultural and political dynamic between nations.

# Chapter 1

*When we meet with a book written by Herman Melville, the fascinations of "Omoo" and "Typee" recur to us, and we take up the work with as much confidence in its worth, as we should feel in the possession of a checque [sic] drawn by a well-known capitalist. So much the greater is the disappointment, therefore, when we find the book does not come up to our mark. (Review of* The Confidence-Man, *HMR 487)*

The eponymous character in Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) helps a "strange figure" (59) dressed in old-fashioned Dutch clothing carry a keg of liquor up "the dry bed of a mountain torrent" (60) and into a small natural amphitheater. Once there, Rip waits on a mysterious group of "grave roysters" (64), before partaking of their liquor himself. This puts him into an enchanted twenty-year doze. When he wakes up, Rip finds his bearings in a landscape which is wholly familiar to him: "There stood the Kaatskill Mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been" (67). His native village, however, is uncannily different, symbolized neatly by the palimpsestical sign of the village inn: "the ruby face of King George [...] was singularly changed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a scepter [...] and underneath was painted in large characters, General Washington" (68). When Rip declares himself "a loyal subject to the king" (70), he becomes the center of much unwanted attention and finds himself accused of being a Tory firebrand. The situation is only defused when a passing local historian explains Rip's twenty-year absence through the mischievous intervention of the ghost of the early explorer "Hendrick Hudson," an ancient and mysterious remnant of America's colonial origins (75).[1]

"Rip Van Winkle," then, engages with the uncanny nature of the American independence. Indeed, after 1783, Boston and Liverpool, which had been two major British ports in 1775, were suddenly in two different countries, separated by more than the three thousand miles of the Atlantic between them. In 1831 Nathaniel Hawthorne reiterated this theme in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," where the young protagonist is shocked to find that the British patriotic credentials of his kinsman (which he had hoped would help establish him in life) have provoked a mob of republican Bostonians

[1] It is interesting that Irving does not translate the Dutch-sounding "Hendrick" back into the original "Henry." Henry Hudson may have been working to find a northwest passage to China for the Dutch East India Trading Company when he sailed up (what is now known as) the Hudson River in *Halve Maen* (Irving does translate the ship's name to *Half Moon*) in 1609, but he was English by birth. Irving ascribes this Dutch nationality to Hudson based purely on his economic loyalty. In 1611, Hudson returned to the region to find the Northwest Passage for the British East India Trading Company, but his crew allegedly mutinied against him, and turned him adrift on the Hudson Bay (Isserman 406).

into tarring and feathering the Major. In both short stories, parts of the British Empire are suddenly no longer under King George's dominion, and loyal British subjects find that the political landscape has changed around them. In the words of Paul Giles:

> [T]he national identity of the United States emerged in the late eighteenth century out of a civil war within the British empire and [...] shades of this internal fissure [have] continued to haunt the cultural traditions of both nations over the course of the past two hundred years. (*Virtual Americas* 16)

In "Rip Van Winkle," this "internal fissure" is foreshadowed by the dry riverbed. Indeed, after waking up Rip tries to retrace his steps back to the little amphitheater, but he is astonished to find his path blocked by water: the dry bed now has a mountain stream "foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs" (65). The amphitheater itself has become "a broad, deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest" (ibid.). This passage is charged with symbolism: when America ceased to be a part of the British Empire, the Atlantic ocean as a geographical divide became an ideologically charged boundary between nations which "babbled with murmurs."

These "murmurs" came in the form of printed texts, and what interests me here is the role they played in constituting an Anglo-American public sphere. Even though America and Great Britain had separated politically, a unique set of material conditions had developed that allowed for an unprecedented degree of cultural exchange. In both Great Britain and America, the early nineteenth century saw a rise in literary production and consumption, and there was a concurrent increase in textual mobility across the Atlantic.[2] Aside from the near-total lack of international copyright (which I

[2] As Richard Altick points out in *The English Common Reader* (1957), a combination of industrial improvements in printing, the decline of paper prices, and the abolition of stamp and paper duty drastically reduced the production costs of publishing in England (354). A rise in literacy rates over the first half of the nineteenth century and a concurrent increase in literary consumption enabled literary mass-production in Great Britain (277). Similarly, America benefitted from technological progress in the shape of machine-made paper and increasingly fast cylinder presses, like the Napier-Hoe cylinder press of the 1840s (Machor 20). Literacy rates

will discuss later on), the boost in Anglo-American transatlantic cultural exchange was helped along by a revolution in shipping technology: steam propulsion provided a fast and above all reliable way to carry ships across the Atlantic. The North Atlantic Passage – with its constant threat of icebergs, combined with dense fog and frequent storms – was a perilous one, especially in winter. Stephen Fox points out in *Transatlantic: Samuel Cunard, Isambard Brunel and the Great Atlantic Steamships* (2004):

> By the nineteenth century, through various accidents of history, this most dangerous sea passage had also become the most trafficked long ocean route in the world. The burgeoning imperatives of trade, empire and human migration between hemispheres would not give way, even to the North Atlantic Ocean in winter. Some reliable means of making this roughest transatlantic crossing [...] had to be devised. (xvii)[3]

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, crack sailing packets could make the eastbound run in under twenty-two days and the westbound trip in under thirty-five, provided that conditions were good: adverse winds could lengthen voyages dramatically (5). In 1833, Ralph Waldo Emerson noted in his sea journal that sailing ships "are pensioners of the wind [...] All our prosperity, enterprize [sic], temper come and go with the fickle air. If the wind should forget to blow we must eat our masts" (qtd. in Fox 8). This dependence on the elements would not do in an era characterized by dizzying

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among white adults improved noticeably, from 75% in the North and between 50 and 60% in the South in 1810, to 90% nationwide in 1840 (21).

[3] Dickens plaintive description of his 1842 westbound crossing on the *Britannia* in *American Notes*, as well as in his ominous fictionalization of the journey in *Martin Chuzzlewit* illustrate how dangerous and uncomfortable it could be to travel across the North Atlantic. Martin's passage to America is extremely grueling as the "unchecked liberty" of the Atlantic seems bent on sinking any ships that braves it: "[A]t [the ship's] boldness and the spreading cry, the angry waves rise up above each other's hoary heads to look [...] they press upon her [...] high over her they break; and round her surge and roar; and giving place to others, moaningly depart, and dash themselves to fragments in their baffled anger" (206). The dangers of the passage are reinforced by the narrator's bafflement at people asleep on board such an ocean-tossed ship, "as if no deadly element were peering in at every seam and chink, and no drowned seaman's grave, with but a plank to cover it, were yawning in the unfathomable depths" (ibid.).

acceleration, and by the late 1830s, the steam engines that powered the railway locomotives had been adapted to fit transatlantic steamers.[4] By the early 1840s, steamers were completing westbound crossings in less than ten days and eastbound trips in less than nine (113). More importantly, they could make good time regardless of the weather.[5] The speed and reliability of steam vessels made them invaluable to commerce and cultural exchange.

As steam technology reduced distribution lag, the Anglo-American world became more synchronized, with newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets and books appearing more or less simultaneously on either side of the ocean. In the first week of February 1841, for example, American and British audiences alike were agonizing over the fate of Little Nell.[6] Paul Giles points out in *Virtual Americas* (2002), however, that we cannot simply

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[4] For his 1842 American trip, Dickens made the outward journey in a steam-packet (the *Britannia*), but returned in a sailing packet (the *George Washington*). The names of these vessels resonate with obvious symbolism, but the technologies were significant in their own right. Indeed, in the chapter "The Passage Home" of *American Notes*, the *George Washington* becomes becalmed, prompting squabbles between a supporter of sail ("the Sanguine One") and a supporter of steam ("the Despondent One"): "The latter character carried it hollow at this period of the voyage, and triumphed over the Sanguine One at every meal, by inquiring where he supposed the *Great Western* (which left New York a week after us) was *now:* and where he supposed the 'Cunard' steam-packet was *now*: and what he thought of sailing vessels as compared with steam ships *now*" (Vol. 2, Ch. 8, 244).

[5] Steamers – like the international copyright question, as I will show – created fierce national competition. The British Cunard Line (1839) was sponsored by Whitehall through mail contracts, while the American Collins Line (1841) was backed by the Polk administration. One Collins supporter pointedly marks the national pride involved in the competition between these prominent companies, writing: "In this, *the third war with England* which we are now waging, I, for one, mean to be on the side of my country [...] The power of the British Government is, and for years has been, devoted to the maintenance of this Cunard Line" (qtd. in Fox 127). This choice of martial metaphor is revealing. The armed conflicts of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 were still very much a part of public memory on either side of the Atlantic, inevitably tied to patriotism.

[6] The story that there were crowds gathered on the New York docks to greet any ships that might have been carrying the final installment of *The Old Curiosity Shop* with shouts of "Is Little Nell dead?" (Ackroyd 182) is appealing, but difficult to substantiate. Nevertheless, from notices which appeared in the American press, it is clear that Nell was dear to American audiences. The critic writing in the January 1843 issue of *The North*

assume that this increased synchronicity implies "that the cultures of Britain and the United States should be symbiotically conflated into one hegemonic discourse" (15). The relationship between these two cultures was more complex. In the May 1851 *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art*, for example, the anonymous author of the article entitled "Graham versus Reprints" writes: "John [Bull, i.e. England] is a stout fellow – drinks his ale, and eats his roast beef with great *gusto* – but he hasn't *quite* all the brains of the family [...] [He] forgets young Johnathan [sic] has whipped him twice in war – is his master at mechanics, and is not *altogether* a dolt at letters" (*Graham's* 280).[7] Referring to a perceived kinship between the two nations as a vehicle for criticizing Britain was a favorite among American editors, as it recognized America's history as a British colony but resisted the simple genealogy implied by an imperial "mother country."[8] "John Bull" and "Brother Jonathan" are related, to be sure, but their relationship is cast as one of equality rather than dependence: America is rival sibling, rather than progeny. Anglo-American interchange proved mutually constitutive for both cultures, with the transatlantic marketplace proving itself a crucial site where cultural markers from the other side of the ocean were accepted or rejected. Among those cultural markers, authors featured prominently. The mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American cultural horizon, then, was characterized by a complex interplay of antagonistic and reconciliatory stances informed by the opposing forces of national myths and trade interests, with a common language underpinning it all. The increased synchronicity of the Anglo-American print sphere worked to create positional identities on both sides of the Atlantic, which were informed, as I will show, by a mutual unease about economic (inter-)dependence.

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*American Review* calls Nell "a creation of finished and exquisite art [...] [Dickens] certainly gave to her little adventures, and her mighty sorrows, and her heroic endurance a living reality, which month after month deepened the sympathies, and held at their highest tension the feelings, of the whole reading world" (220).

[7] Like "Uncle Sam," "Brother Jonathan" was a fictional character used to personify America in its entirety, the counterpart to the British "John Bull."

[8] See, for example, the scathing "John Bull the Compassionate" in the March 1848 issue of *The American Whig Review*, the satirical "John Bull, Esquire," in *The United States Democratic Review* of March 1853, or "A Letter to John Bull," published in *Putnam's Monthly* in February 1853.

In this chapter, I explore the importance of the print sphere in not only representing but also constituting the Anglo-American socio-economic dynamic. First, I will show that print, as a medium for trading and investment information, played an essential role in the establishment of a global financial economy. As Smithian laissez-faire ideology began to replace mercantilism, investors seeking profitable overseas ventures could no longer rely on state bonds and securities and were forced to exercise their own due diligence (i.e. potential investors had a responsibility to themselves to evaluate each venture in order to make individual, informed decisions). Even though steam had made travel easier, it was still expensive and onerous, which meant that the only practical way to exercise due diligence on ventures in faraway places was to glean as much information as possible from printed sources. Letters from reliable business partners *in situ* were as desirable as they were difficult to come by, so any and all print sources were mined for tidbits of impartial investment information, even if (or especially if) they were not primarily concerned with the prospective venture (Neal 63). Armed with this knowledge, project promoters approached authors and periodical editors, paying them to puff (i.e. promote) their shares, under the guise of disinterested reportage.[9] The print sphere, then, was inextricably implicated in the emerging global marketplace.

Second, I will re-evaluate the Anglo-American copyright question against this backdrop. The financial interconnectedness of the British and American economies caused a series of financial panics and stock market crashes. The Panic of 1837, in particular, was caused by a deeply rooted unease about the influence of foreign financial policy on either side of the Atlantic. The Bank of England briefly considered increasing its discount rates for American investment to stem what it perceived as a dangerous flow of gold reserves out of Britain. The measure was never adopted, but rumors to that effect were enough to introduce panic into the financial market. The result was a deep financial crisis which lasted for most of the 1840s. In this context, the issue of transatlantic copyright was a relatively minor one. Neither the American nor the British

[9] Businessman and promoter John Diston Powles, for example, recruited a young Benjamin Disraeli to pump up mining by publishing a number of supposedly unbiased pamphlets (St John 4). For more detail, see Marshall C. Eakin's *A British Enterprise in Brazil: The St. John d'el Rey Mining Company and the Morro Velho Gold Mine, 1830-1960*.

government could afford to push a measure to benefit so few in a depressed economy, especially since print industry opponents on either side cast the issue rhetorically as an oppositional one, pitting vulnerable industry jobs against the interests of a few authors. By mid-century, as my case studies show, authors like Dickens and Melville had recognized their vulnerability on the unregulated transnational market, and began thematizing the challenges and dangers of global currents of finance and labor.

Finally, I will discuss the ways in which authors approached the problematic transatlantic knowledge economy. Entering into agreements with a publisher was as much a gamble as an overseas investment was, especially in a marketplace where authors had no real way of ensuring remuneration. American publishing houses sometimes offered gratuities to British authors when reprinting their works, but they were under no legal obligation to do so. It was up to individual authors to protect their interests as best they could. Conversely, there were quasi-legal ways in which American authors could obtain a British copyright for their work by assigning it to a British publisher and ensuring it appeared in Britain before it did anywhere else. This, too, was a leap of faith, as a publisher could just renege on payment after being assigned the copyright. Mirroring the way investors sought information about overseas ventures, many authors, including Dickens and Melville, attempted to find a kind of impromptu overseas agent. These "agents" were not usually industry professionals, but trusted acquaintances who happened to be abroad, and who could act as the author's proxy in time-sensitive business agreements for which transatlantic correspondence would be too cumbersome.

## 1.1 Transatlantic Markets and Print Culture

In the early 1830s, continental Europe experienced a renewed wave of revolutions, most notably the French July revolution and the August uprising in the United Kingdom of

the Netherlands. British Whigs became increasingly concerned that this stormy political climate with its threat of escalating mob violence would spill over into Great Britain.[10] In a bid to prevent this from happening, the Whig faction around Charles Grey sought to placate the middle-class by enfranchising them.[11] In 1832, the Representation of the People Act (now known as the Reform Act) was passed in Parliament, giving the vote to any man at the head of a household worth at least £10.[12] Prime Minister Lord Grey's call for "a greater influence to be given to the middle class, who have made wonderful

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[10] Earlier attempts at British reform had been quashed in Parliament by the backlash that followed in the wake of the French Revolution. However, popular support for reform continued to mount throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century. A sad testament to this fact is the 1819 "Peterloo massacre," when the Manchester Yeomanry cavalry charged a pro-reform rally of 50,000 people at St. Peter's Field in Manchester. Seventeen people were killed, and over 650 wounded. For more on the importance of "Peterloo" to the Reform Movement, see Robert Poole's "'By the Law or the Sword': Peterloo Revisited" (2006).

[11] Up to 1832, the British working class and middle class had been united in agitating for Parliamentary reform: the former through demonstrations and riots, the latter through economic boycott. The Reform Bill divided this front by acceding to some of the demands of middle class radicals, effectively undermining the worker's movement (*Industry and Empire* 55). For a full discussion of the socio-economic tension behind the Reform act, see Chapter 3 of Hobsbawm's *Industry and Empire*, "The Industrial Revolution 1780-1840."

[12] For a detailed discussion of the passage of the Bill and its consequences, see John A. Phillips and Charles Wetherell's "The Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Political Modernization of England" (1995). Dickens began working as a journalist sometime between March 1825 and October 1826, penny-a-lining at first, before teaching himself shorthand, indispensable to serious parliamentary reporting. While he was working his way through Gurney's *Brachygraphy; or, An Easy and Compendious System of Short-Hand*, Dickens was a freelance stenographer at the Doctor's Commons from 1829, for eighteen to twenty-four months, before moving into Parliament (Douglas–Fairhurst 61, Drew 10). This means that Dickens would have been active as a parliamentary reporter in the beginning of 1831, working for *The Mirror of Parliament*, which in turn implies that Dickens witnessed the Reform Bill from its outset (Douglas-Fairhurst 73). John Drew's *Dickens the Journalist* (2003), which includes a thorough discussion of Dickens's early journalistic career, supports this claim. Drew writes: "Another contemporary notes that in addition to reporting for Barrow's *Mirror* 'throughout the great Reform debates of 1832' Dickens also ' [...] acted as a sort of sub-editor of the work. It was a great object to get it before the public in advance of its rival, and by means of the good system the new hand established it was usually done'" (Drew 14). Given Dickens's preoccupation with the insidious effects of capitalism in his prose, his unique position as a witness to some of the most fundamental social and economic reform in history seems to have been formative to his career.

advances in property and intelligence" (qtd. in Douglas-Fairhurst 77) promised class-mobility for the newly enfranchised. Concurrent with this socio-political empowering, however, the economic influence of the middle-class entrepreneur was being undermined by a series of banking and financial reforms.

Most important among these financial reforms were the 1825 repeal of the Bubble Act and the subsequent passage of the Joint Stock Act of 1844. The initial Bubble Act of 1720 was passed just prior to "the first international stock market bust" (Harris 610).[13] Rampant speculation on shares of the South Sea Company – a joint-stock company financed through shareholders from around the world – had caused them to balloon in value, only to come crashing down in what is known as the "South Sea Bubble" of 1720. The Bubble Act stipulated that the establishment of any joint-stock corporation required either a Royal Charter or a Special Act of Parliament. As a result of this restriction, unscrupulous promoters took to selling shares of unincorporated companies. As these companies were partnerships, with every partner retaining unlimited legal liability for the actions of the company as a whole, unwary buyers were exposed to potential litigation and exploitation. The repeal of the Bubble Act was the start of a bid to end these practices and heralded a new age of legal incorporation. In the words of Joel Bakan, "with the Bubble Act's repeal in 1825 [...] the corporation was poised to begin its ascent to dominance over the economy and society" (10). Indeed, in 1825, Walter Scott was already deploying the idea of incorporation in the context of authorship. The introduction to *Tales of the Crusaders* (1825) is subtitled "Minutes of Sederunt of a General Meeting of the Shareholders Designing to Form a Joint-Stock Company, United for the Purpose of Writing and Publishing the Class of Works Called the Waverley Novels." The chairman of the meeting, "Eidolon," proposes to "apply to

[13] Harris writes: "The crisis that followed threatened to unravel the whole web of English public finance" (610). In *The constitution and finance of English, Scottish and Irish joint-stock companies to 1720*, William Scott concurs, writing that "the joint-stock system [...] was the sole and sufficient explanation for the miseries of the country" (436-37). Unlike Scott, however, Harris argues that the Bubble Act was not passed in order to stop speculative practices altogether, but rather to stop *competing* speculation. According to Harris, the act was "an attempt to hinder alternative investment opportunities and to divert more capital to South Sea shares" (612).

the Legislature for an Act of Parliament in ordinary, to associate us into a corporate body, and give us a *persona standi in judicio*, with full power to prosecute and bring to conviction all encroachers" (v). The humor of this passage hinges on the authorial "Eidolon" (or apparition) seeking incorporation, and satirically highlights the way in which both authorial personae and corporate personalities are fictional constructs. As such, it gestures towards the immediate impact these economic reforms had on authorial self-imagination.

In 1844 the Joint Stock Act was passed, which further loosened Parliament's hold on incorporation. It established the Registrar of Joint Stock Offices, which was authorized to grant incorporation to companies, meaning they were considered distinct legal entities, acting as a single body under law (Poovey 16). As a result, incorporation quickly became the predominant business model in Great Britain, despite the fact that shareholders only became fully protected from unlimited liability in 1855, with the passage of the Limited Liability Act (Alborn 85-115). This act prevented individual investors from being held liable for the actions of the corporation, an intervention which effectively replaced direct personal accountability with an abstract autonomy of financial currents. In "Community and the limits of liability in two mid-Victorian novels" (1974), N.N. Feltes points out that joint-stock ventures created (and were specifically designed to create) "business associations in which the members might not know each other personally" and protected the members from "being called upon to contribute to the debt and liabilities of the company" beyond their stake (359).

These political and socio-economic changes, then, quickly found their way into the Victorian creative consciousness, and as the nineteenth century progressed, financial plots became increasingly common in fiction: the fates of characters, indeed of entire narratives, became bound to the cycles of a fictionalized stock market. James M. Brown has remarked on the parallel between the increasingly negative connotation assigned to "business" in Victorian literature and the displacement of the traditional middle-class entrepreneur by "passive, remotely controlling directors of mid-Victorian business, the large-scale investors and stock-market speculators" (Brown 27). Taken together, these Acts of Parliament constituted a political and legal sanctioning of limited corporate liability, which fundamentally changed the face of the British economy, and by extension that of the global economy as the Acts opened up the financial market to

investors and speculators through British networks of trade and empire. In the words of Peter Mathias:

> In the new foreign markets being created by British merchants [...] most of the enterprise behind the trade, both ways, was British. These countries had no long-distance merchant shipping fleets of their own, no local discount markets, no powerful insurance brokers, often few indigenous merchant houses who would keep in non-British hands the profits of internal distribution of British exports inland to final customers. Where British merchants organized the cargoes, they insured in London, they discounted in London, they banked in the branches of British banks set up in South America, India, Turkey, and Egypt, Hong Kong and elsewhere. (283-84)

These economic structures challenged traditional conceptions of national economies by enabling streams of money to become both opaque and international. As stock markets and global finance made it possible for a vast amount of funds to be concentrated (at least nominally) in one place, they created a problematic interdependence between local and global economies.

In the 1820s, for example, Great Britain had invested huge sums in South American mining, as well as in funding revolutionary governments there (Tames 90).[14] Neither speculation paid off, for several reasons. None of the newly emerging Latin American states were able to repay their debts through exports or taxation. This was due at least in part to the hefty commission fees London bankers charged them, which severely limited the working capital these emergent states had available for trade improvements (Neal 62). The mining shares which had been sold in London represented mines which

[14] For an in-depth discussion of British financial involvement in South America during the 1820s, see Frank Griffith Dawson's *The First Latin American Debt Crisis. The City of London and the 1822-25 Loan Bubble* (1990). Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*, though set later in the nineteenth century, thematizes problematic European financial involvement in South America, with one character describing the fictitious republic of Costaguana as "the bottomless pit of 10 per cent loans and other fool investments" (76-77). In the words of Terry Collits: "Set in what was, strictly speaking, a *post*-colonial Latin America, *Nostromo* describes new forms of imperialism based on multinational capitalist interests and projects a vision of empire beyond the demise of European colonialism" (140).

had been poorly prospected or even mines which had never existed in the first place. The business practice of due diligence was problematic, as investors had very little information to go on. The markets recognized this risk, and in the words of Larry Neal "until further information came in from newspapers or merchant's letters from the respective countries [...] they [Latin American bonds] all looked much alike, and all were priced at punitively low levels "(63).

The kind of print due diligence that Neal suggests here was widespread but hugely unreliable. Perhaps the best example of the problematic relationship between print and speculation is the *Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, Including the Territory of Poyais, Descriptive of the Country*, ostensibly written by Captain Thomas Strangeways in 1822. The authorship of this book was contested almost immediately, with early reviewers disclaiming the existence of Strangeways and suggesting that Gregor MacGregor, the book's dedicatee, was its true author. As Alfred Hasbrouck points out, the *British Army List* for 1825 does mention a Thomas Strangeways serving as Captain in the 9th Royal Veteran Battalion, but it is impossible to determine whether this officer was the author of this book (444). The *Sketch* was printed in Edinburgh by W. Reid, but in an apparent bid for prestige the title page boasts it was "sold by William Blackwood, Edinburgh and T. Caddell, Strand, London," both well-known and respectable publishers.[15] This was not the last, nor the biggest, lie contained between the covers of this book.

The "territory of Poyais" was described in the most impossibly glowing terms, prompting the *Quarterly Review*'s critic to mockingly describe it as the land "where all manner of grain grows without sowing, and the most delicious fruits without planting; where cows and horses support themselves, and where, like another blessed country on the same continent, roasted pigs run about with forks in their backs, crying, 'come, eat me!'" (158). The sketch promised fertile land for cultivation, to be sure, but the real bait was its promise of rich veins of silver and gold and well-established trade infrastructure. Despite claiming to be "chiefly intended for the use of settlers," the intended audience for this book were London speculators, and its publication followed neatly on the issue

[15] "Caddell" probably refers to Thomas Cadell the Younger, son of the better-known Thomas Cadell who published Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, as well as works by Hume and Johnson.

of Poyais bonds on the London Stock Exchange (Neal 63). The *Quarterly*'s critic smelt a bubble:

> First, the sale of lands is advertised; then a loan is required; and finally a book is published to bolster up the two former processes [...] [Thomas Strangeways] has gutted and garbled Bryan Edward's Account of the West India Islands, and Browne's History of Jamaica, and transplanted, word for word, the whole produce of these islands into the Poyais, or rather into his pages—nay, he has even carried off the late Mr. Rennie's sugar mills from Jamaica and placed them where no sugar mill has yet made its appearance. (160)

The *Quarterly*'s critic was right to be wary. The driving force behind Poyais was Gregor MacGregor, a Scottish adventurer and conman, who styled himself *Cacique* or "prince" of that territory.[16] In 1822, he set up the Poyaisian Legation at Dowgate Hill, London, where he kept a "parchment map showing the territory of Poyais, neatly marked out into squares of 540 acres each" (Hasbrouck 442).[17] Poyais was nothing like the plagiarized descriptions of *The Sketch*, and when duped settlers began arriving on its shores in 1823, they found nothing but the dense, uncultivated Honduras jungle (446-47). These settlers, it seems, were collateral damage. Attracting them was a cynical way

[16] MacGregor was possibly also "Verax," the author of "A Letter to the editor of the Quarterly Review, for February 1823 on a review of Captain Strangeway's sketch of the Mosquito Shore," (1823), which remonstrated the *Review*'s critic for his incredulity, and lending his support to Strangeway's account.

[17] MacGregor's map may have given Dickens the idea for the one in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where the American grifter Scadder sells the idea of Eden as a thriving frontier city through the plan which dominates his office. Browne's illustration on the subject is titled, dryly, "the thriving city of Eden, as it appeared on paper." There are other echoes of MacGregor's swindle in Scadder's scheme. On being introduced to Martin and Mark by General Choke, Scadder scolds the General for having let "loafers" in on their Eden project, the lots of which were to be reserved for "Aristocrats of Natur [sic]" (353). This echoes the assurances given in the introduction to Strangeway's *Sketch* that "no person but the honest and industrious, shall find an asylum in the territory" (vii).

for MacGregor to reassure speculators about the viability (and, indeed, reality) of their Poyaisian venture.[18]

The South American boom MacGregor was exploiting came to an abrupt halt when the Bank of England raised its rates in the summer of 1825. The puffing of rotten shares was not limited to slightly shady books by scamps like MacGregor: even respectable publications like the prestigious quarterlies got involved. The quarterlies were highly influential nodes of culture with clear political agendas. According to the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (2009), edited by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, "[t]he bulky quarterlies dominated the first four decades of the nineteenth century in terms of critical and political influence" (523). Yet, despite the vitriol the influential *Quarterly Review* aimed at *The Sketch of the Mosquito Shore*, John Murray, the publisher of the *Review*, and people from that circle – like Benjamin Disraeli – were heavily involved in pushing South American mining shares. Murray published a number of pamphlets written by Disraeli, all of which pretended to be unbiased evaluations of South American mining, for the general edification of potential speculators. These works, with non-committal titles like *An Enquiry into the Plans, Progress, and Policy of the American Mining Companies*, in fact actively promoted certain companies and were as misleading as Strangeway's sketch (O'Kell 12). The practice of puffing had become so widespread and so successful that the Bank of England's Board of Executives took measures in order to stem the perceived drain of British gold reserves (Neal 70). Investor confidence plummeted, and the result was the stock market crash known as the Panic of 1825, when practically all of the South American countries which had floated bonds in London defaulted (62).

This episode is indicative of the fundamental involvement of the print sphere in global finance and the stock market, with authorship and authority informing the decisions of speculators. The concentration of British funds in South American shares and bonds was due, in large part, to the promotion of those investments in the print

[18] For more on MacGregor and his Poyaisian exploits, see Hasbrouck's "Gregor McGregor and the Colonization of Poyais, between 1820 and 1824" (1927), Matthew Brown's "Inca, Sailor, Soldier, King: Gregor MacGregor and the Early Nineteenth-Century Caribbean" (2005), and David Sinclair's *The Land that Never Was: Sir Gregor MacGregor and the Most Audacious Fraud in History* (2004).

sphere: not only though traditional advertisements and pamphlets, but through travel accounts and fictionalized representations of emigration. Some emigrant guides, such as the one published in 1816 by William Darby, warn settlers against trusting "the information of persons offering lands for sale" and urge them to make their inquiries "as much as possible from persons whose interests are not engaged on the side of a too favorable representation" (297). Darby concludes, rather sadly, that "circumstances of bitter regret sometimes happen where the sufferer has been guilty of no other fault than credulity" (ibid.). However, as we have seen with Strangeway's *Sketch*, print representations of financial or settlement ventures obfuscated the interests which lay behind them. Speculators would not (necessarily) emigrate themselves, but stories of successful settlement inspired confidence in emerging economies.[19]

In the 1840s, not even twenty years after the South American bubble, Great Britain found itself similarly embroiled in the economy of the United States. In Dickens's most famous Christmas novella, *A Christmas Carol* (1843), the miserly protagonist Scrooge is confronted in his counting house by the ghostly apparition of his deceased business partner, Jacob Marley, wearing a chain "made [...] of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel," to represent his greed and avarice (17). This macabre scene is completed by a sky "filled with phantoms" wearing chains like Marley's ghost, and the narrator notes that "some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together" (22). If an inattentive reader missed this dig, Dickens followed it up a few paragraphs later. Shaken by his spectral visitor, Scrooge briefly fears that "night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world" and is relieved to find that no such thing has happened. Relieved, because the time-sensitive securities through which Scrooge manages his wealth "would have become a mere United States security if there were no days to count by" (23). This is obviously not

[19] See Jennifer Anne Scott's doctoral dissertation "The Business of Writing Home: Authorship and the Transatlantic Economies of John Galt's Literary Circle, 1807-1840" (2013), which discusses the connection between the author John Galt and the Canada Company. The Canada Company used Galt's representations of emigration to attract not only working-class and middle-class settlers, but also investors speculating on the Company's land development.

quite the response Marley had been hoping for, as it indicates Scrooge's continued preoccupation with the stock markets, but is interesting for my purposes here, as it shows a savvy commercialist like Scrooge glossing "United States security" as worthless.

To be sure, Dickens's ghostly government here fits into his overall project of indicting Britain for its continued failure to adequately care for its poor (symbolized in this passage by "a wretched woman with an infant" (22)). However, the slap at the United States which follows immediately on that passage works to implicate America as one of these guilty governments. Dickens comes to the heart of the matter a month later, in January 1844, when the thirteenth installment of *Martin Chuzzlewit* appears, containing chapters 33 through 35. In chapter 34, Martin encounters Elijah Pogram, a United States congressman who sets out to prove the superiority of America and its "Institutions."

> "What an extraordinary people you are!" cried Martin. "Are Mr Chollop and the class he represents, an Institution here? Are pistols with revolving barrels, sword-sticks, bowie-knives, and such things, Institutions on which you pride yourselves? Are bloody duels, brutal combats, savage assaults, shooting down and stabbing in the streets, your Institutions! Why, I shall hear next that Dishonour and Fraud are among the Institutions of the great republic!" The moment the words passed his lips, the Honourable Elijah Pogram looked round again. "This morbid hatred of our Institutions," he observed, "is quite a study for the psychological observer. He's alludin' to Repudiation now!" "Oh! you may make anything an Institution if you like," said Martin, laughing, "and I confess you had me there, for you certainly have made that one." (534)

What was on Dickens's mind in these passages from *A Christmas Carol* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* was the same event that had inspired the pun in the full title of his 1842 travelogue *American Notes for General Circulation*: the wave of debt repudiation by American states which caused wide-spread panic on the global financial market at the beginning of the 1840s.[20]

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[20] In July 1842, a week or so after starting work on the *Notes*, Dickens already signals his awareness of America's financial straits as well as the country's tendency towards defaulting on (or even repudiating) debt

Contemporaries would have had no trouble associating Dickens's *Notes* with the paper money issued by the second Bank of the United States (B.U.S).[21] A year prior to Dickens's visit, the bank underwent liquidation, causing Dickens to describe it as "the Tomb of many fortunes; the Great Catacomb of investment," the stoppage of which had "cast [...] a gloom over Philadelphia" (Vol 1, Ch. 7, 110). This "gloom" was a hefty financial crisis, the impact of which was felt far beyond Philadelphia. In *British Businessmen and Canadian Confederation* (2008), Andrew Smith writes:

> While the United States may have been popular with British investors during the brief American bond manias of the 1830s and 1840s, the tendency of American states to repudiate debts deeply distressed British investors. Especially after the famous Pennsylvania default of 1842, British investors tended to shy away from American investments in favour of domestic, imperial, and European ones. The overall level of British investment in the United States fell during the middle decades of the century. (29)

The B.U.S.'s use of paper promissory notes contributed to the American credit crisis of 1819 and the recession which persisted through much of the early twenties. This caused outrage among groups within the Democratic Party, specifically the "hard money" factions around Andrew Jackson opposing banking that was not fully backed by gold or silver. Upon being elected President in 1828, Jackson sparked the political conflict now known as "the bank war," as he worked to undermine the B.U.S.'s regulatory role as a central bank – a goal he would achieve a few years later by blocking its re-charter.

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in a letter to G.P.R. James, writing: "I fully agree with you that one can expect but little in this respect [the international copyright question] from a people who have shewn themselves so shamelessly dishonest in the plain question of repaying or with-holding borrowed money" (P.III 286). In *Dickens and His Publishers*, Robert Patten suggests that the titular pun in the notes was meant as an additional allure for contemporary audiences: "There was little [Dickens] could do to further stimulate sales among the 15,906,589 inhabitants of England and Wales. He certainly appealed through the title of his travel book – *American Notes for General Circulation* – to contemporary interest in defaulting banks, journalism, plagiarism and imitations" (136).

[21] For more on the second Bank of the United States, see Bray Hammond's "Jackson, Biddle, and the Bank of the United States" (1947), as well as *Banks and Politics in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War* (1957) by the same author.

When the B.U.S. lost its federal charter, it secured a state charter from Pennsylvania in 1836, making it (briefly) the Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania. After seeing the success of New York's Erie Canal project, Pennsylvania had borrowed heavily in the late 1820s and early 1830s in order to finance its own "internal improvements," mostly transportation development projects in the form of canals and railroads.[22] These plans were ambitious in the extreme, but by 1835, it was clear that they would never break-even – especially galling because their promoters had promised a surplus big enough to fund public schools and local government. Refusing to impose property tax, Pennsylvania continued to borrow money against long-term bonds on the international financial market, paying the interest on earlier borrowing by taking out further loans. Jackson's aggression had put the B.U.S. in a disadvantageous negotiating position, and in return for the state charter it needed to keep trading, it had been forced to give Pennsylvania impossibly generous terms. This skewed the state's finances for a few years but when the bank failed in 1839, the situation was catastrophic. By the time of Dickens's visit in 1842, Pennsylvania had run up a debt of $34.5 million, over $20 million of which was held in bonds by British investors (English 261). In the summer of that year, Pennsylvania defaulted, issuing stock certificates to its creditors, bearing interest at five percent payable a year later (Worthington 57).[23] This was a sign of good faith (the

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[22] Dickens experienced what it was like to travel "along the line of internal improvement" (P.III 127 & n), from Baltimore to Pittsburgh, taking the railroads and canals which had been opened in the 1830s. The most impressive piece of engineering he encountered was the Portage Railroad, which carried canal boats across the Allegheny Mountains through a series of inclines (described in *American Notes* 171-72), but Dickens was unimpressed by how Pennsylvania had spent its money, largely because of his dismay at how uncomfortable the canal boats themselves were (P.III 169).

[23] In the event, August 1843 saw Pennsylvania issue stock certificates to its creditors, once more payable at a later date; only in 1845 did Pennsylvania resume its payments (Worthington 57). Although Pennsylvania's default was one of the most notorious instances of this practice, Pennsylvania was far from alone in its financial situation. The deflationary period of recovery which came in the wake of the collapse of the Second Bank of the United States, saw a marked increase in debt-defaulting by several American states. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, Arkansas, Florida (technically still a territory until 1845), Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania all defaulted on all or some of their liabilities, as the dollars they had borrowed were worth less than the ones they would be repaying their debts with. Of those nine, four

other alternative being outright repudiation), but these American notes were not ready currency and left the international financial markets badly shaken.

Pennsylvania's default caused an outrage among European investors (English 263). Yet, in describing the bank which lay at the heart of this international financial crisis in his *Notes*, Dickens seems, at first glance, dismissive, fancying that the building seemed to look "rather dull and out of spirits" (Vol 1, Ch. 7, 110). When the *Notes* were published in October 1842, British outrage at the American strategies in dealing with this financial crisis was coming to a boil, so this brief reference may seem, as the editors of the Pilgrim edition of the *Letters* would have it, "flippant" (P.III 206n). Yet, in the very next paragraph, Dickens writes of the influence Philadelphia supposedly had on him, after spending only a few hours there:

> The collar of my coat appeared to stiffen, and the brim of my hat to expand, beneath its quakery influence. My hair shrunk into a sleek short crop, my hands folded themselves upon my breast of their own calm accord, and thoughts of taking lodgings in Mark Lane over against the Market Place, and of making a large fortune by speculations in corn, came over me involuntarily. (Vol. 1, Ch. 7, 110)

Speculation and the consequent disconnect between the nominal and the actual value of bonds and currency had caused the credit bubble which, in bursting, had jeopardized and ultimately destroyed the bank which Dickens described in its "gloomy" state just a paragraph earlier. This is more than a throwaway humorous remark: in the context of the failure of the second Bank of the United States, this passage satirically highlights both the American predilection towards speculative practices and the dangers it held for British subjects.

The sovereign debt crisis of American states sent new shockwaves through the global financial market, affecting British investors in particular. Sidney Moss has argued that Dickens's decision, halfway into writing *Martin Chuzzlewit*, to send Martin to an America peopled almost exclusively with conmen and hucksters, was calculated to chime with

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defaulted only temporarily (Illinois, Indiana, Maryland and Pennsylvania), but the remaining five repudiated some, or even all of their debt (English 265).

these British anti-American sentiments (28-52). Among the British investors who had lost by the wave of American repudiations was Sydney Smith, whose sharp pen had hurt America before. The voice of honest (European) outrage, Smith circulated a petition to the United states Congress in May 1843. Accusing America of having "tricked and pillaged Europe," Smith expressed his distaste with "that total want of shame with which these things have been done; the callous immorality with which Europe has been plundered, that deadness of the moral sense which seems to preclude all return to honesty" (*The Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith* Vol. 3, 466). When Smith's petition sparked outrage in the American press, the good reverend responded by comparing Pennsylvanians to lepers, adding: "the eyes of all capitalists are averted from the United States. The finest commercial understandings will have nothing to do with them [...] [America] is becoming, since its fall, the common-sewer of Europe, and the native home of the needy villain" (Vol. 3, 472). Smith is predicting here that America's financial policy, with its breaches of trust, breaches of contract, misrepresentations and even fraud, would make it so infamous on the international financial market that it would never again be able to sell any bonds. This belief in long-term self-regulatory consequences proved to be misplaced: after the American Civil War ended in 1865, American states would once again issue bonds to English investors, only to repudiate the debt a few years down the line (Orth 7).[24]

The ultimate irony of the kind of anti-American animosity displayed by Dickens and Smith is that this entire financial crisis could be traced back to the Bank of England. In 1836, the Bank of England's gold reserves were running low. This was the result of its low discounting rates, which were beneficial to encouraging trade, but the governor of

[24] In the conclusion to the *Notes*, Dickens writes that America's fast dealing had "done more in a few years to impair the public credit, and to cripple the public resources, than dull honesty, however rash, could have effected in a century" (267). Dickens, however, overestimated the innate justice of the international market, as his American auditors seemed to realize: "remarking on the bad effect such gross deceits must have when they exploded, in generating a want of confidence abroad, and discouraging foreign investment [...] I was given to understand that [...] its smartest feature was, that they forgot these things abroad, in a very short time, and speculated again, freely as ever." (268)

the Bank of England (B.O.E.), James Pattison, became convinced that "his institution was losing specie because London investors sent it to America" (Lepler 53). Globally, Britain was the economic hegemon, and when the Bank of England's governor became worried about the fate of British money in American investments, trouble soon followed. The directors of the B.O.E. increased its discount rates and briefly considered calling a halt to discounting American bills of exchange (55). Although the latter measure was not adopted, rumors of it began to circulate in the City and soon found their way across the Atlantic. The confidence of investors on either side of the ocean was shaken, and investment all but stopped. Furthermore, because the transatlantic economy was such an open one, with almost no trade barriers, the Bank of England's policy forced the hand of American banks: if they did not at least match the B.O.E.'s increase, their rates would be so competitive that the increase in trade would fundamentally jeopardize their reserve ratios. Refusing loans was also an option, but it meant risking international trade sanctions, or worse, a crisis in investor confidence and a run on the banks. Because the Bank of the United States had been dismantled, there was no central authority in America monitoring the nation's finances, which meant that "America could not offer a unified response to Britain's national currency policies" (Lepler 41). Instead, American banks opted to raise their rates as well, further throttling an already depressed domestic economy. Financially then, despite being cast as the villain in this financial drama by the likes of Sydney Smith, America was largely at the mercy of British economic policy. It was this dependence on (and vulnerability to) British financial policy which caused the general feeling of malaise among American capitalists, and which ultimately led to what is now known as the Panic of 1837, the aftermath of which dominated the American financial market for much of the early 1840s.

In *The Many Panics of 1837*, Jessica Lepler reminds us of the fundamentally human nature of economic crises. In the words of Lepler, the Panic of 1837 was the result of countless "individuals [channeling] their uncertainty into action" (6). There was no mechanical causal relationship between, for instance, changing British financial policy and the plummeting prices of American cotton in 1836. Instead, the relationship between these events was a cumulative one, as individual investors and speculators lost confidence and stopped believing that their capital was safe. Then as now, this devastated financial markets, because, as Lepler puts it, "the decision to invest

depended on trust in distant trade partners, what contemporaries called 'confidence' [...] [and which] had the power to transform economic backwaters into bustling cities because it generated credit" (9). Melville's last completed and published book (and arguably his most cryptic), *The Confidence-Man*, engages with these key economic concepts of "confidence" and "credit." In what reads more like a series of sketches than a sustained book-length narrative, the eponymous confidence man assumes a dazzling array of personae over the course of a Mississippi riverboat's cruise down to New Orleans. The plot, such as it is, is a national commentary on a calculating and deceitful American society, with the cast of characters representing a rough cross-section of the country. It is by far Melville's most inward-looking novel, preoccupied with Americans in an American landscape, prompting the critic writing in the 11 April 1857 issue of the London *Spectator* to claim that English readers are unable to "appreciate what appear to be local allusions" (HMR 493).

*The Confidence-Man* was, first and foremost, a critique of America's (economic) morals, but as I have shown in my discussion of Poyais, British investors were always on the lookout for a particular variety of economic "local allusion" from overseas to help inform their investment decisions. All transatlantic trade and investment was a gamble, an informed wager that the person or persons on the other side of the ocean deserved confidence and credit. In order to minimize risk, savvy capitalists gathered as much information as possible about their partners, their ventures, and the context of these ventures by digging through newspapers, periodicals and other accounts. Because the overwhelming majority of this information came in printed form, the print sphere was instrumental, even fundamental, to the global trade networks which established themselves in the nineteenth century, as it was through texts that investor confidence established itself. *The Confidence-Man* engages with this complicity of print in global finance when, halfway into the riverboat *Fidèle*'s (textual) journey, flanked on either side by twenty-two chapters, we find an elaborate, chapter-long allusion to Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, bringing together the paper city of Cairo, Illinois, with Dickens's

cynically-named fictionalized representation of it, Eden.[25] This chapter, entitled "In which the powerful effect of natural scenery is evinced in the case of the Missourian, who, in view of the region roundabout Cairo, has a return of his chilly fit," ironically ascribes the dawning suspicion of "the Missourian" that he has been duped by the confidence man, to the negative psychological effects of the gloomy landscape which surrounds him. "The Missourian," of course, really has been duped, and the chapter, like the Eden episode in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, casts the unattractive natural surroundings as symbolic of America's "down-at-the-heel roguery and expansive financial manipulation" (G. Smith 48).

The mid-nineteenth century, then, was characterized by a mutually constitutive relationship between print and global finance. On the one hand, all kinds of publications, ranging from biased scientific reports to impartial travel accounts and bare-faced fictionalized advertisements, worked to promote a global money economy by making available information from across the Atlantic and the farthest reaches of the globe. On the other hand, this system of global finance quickly found its way into the contemporary creative consciousness, inspiring the genre of the financial novel, which tends to harbor a deep unease regarding the dangerously opaque and apparently impossibly complex economic processes which could make or break an investor, or even an entire community.[26] Examples include novels such as Thackeray's *The Great Hoggarty*

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[25] This chapter from *The Confidence-Man* is not the only textual response to Dickens's works Melville wrote. Critics such as Robert Weisbuch and Brian Foley have argued that "Bartleby the Scrivener" was Melville's response to Dickens's *Bleak House*.

[26] For an in-depth study of financial plots in Victorian fiction see Tamara S. Wagner, *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction. Plotting Money and the Novel Genre, 1815-1901* (2010), as well as the collection of essays *Victorian Investments: New Perspectives on Finance and Culture* (2009), edited by Nancy Henry and Cannon Schmitt. Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson have both argued that the nineteenth-century processes which put (public) finance at the heart of public life had become hegemonic to such an extent that the novels of George Eliot have taken on a different meaning. In the words of Eagleton: "the corporate society which in *Daniel Deronda* remained a goal to be realized, and so an idealist critique of contemporary England, has now become an effusive celebration of the *status quo*. The voice of liberal humanism has become the voice of jingoist reaction" (125).

*Diamond* (1841), Dinah Mulock Craik's *Olive* (1850), Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), Ellen Wood's *The Shadow of Ashlydyat* (1863), Braddon's *Charlotte's Inheritance* (1868) and Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1875).

## 1.2 The Copyright Question

The issue of an international copyright law, and specifically of an Anglo-American agreement, was a thorny one throughout the nineteenth century. Proponents and opponents on either side of the Atlantic both argued their case with a national discourse, either calling for a strong national literature through remuneration of its authors, or rallying to the democratic principle of cheap literature for the education of the masses. Reciprocal cultural traffic between Great Britain and the United States was facilitated by the lack of transnational copyright. This legislative and political situation was a powerful determinant for the transatlantic marketplace both in and of itself as well as through the resistance it encountered. At the beginning of the century, Great Britain made a few lackluster attempts at multinational copyright legislation, but the results were ineffectual. In the United States, bills and petitions in favor of international copyright were submitted to Congress throughout the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, but no change in policy was forthcoming. In practice, unauthorized reprinting of texts from the other side of the Atlantic was big business both in America and Great Britain throughout the period I am investigating. With enforceable international copyright introduced only in 1891, authors operating before that time were forced into creating alternative strategies to negotiate the lack of legal protection for their works.

When America gained independence, it also disposed of its inherited intellectual property laws. The text of the 1788 American Constitution invested Congress with the power to secure American copyrights to authors for a limited period of time, provided the work was published first in the United States. In 1790, federal copyright legislation established nationwide literary copyright protection for authors who were citizens or residents of the United States. The term of this protection was fourteen years, with the possibility for a single renewal if the author was still living at the expiration of the

initial protection. In the 1820s and 1830s, amendments were made to make provisions for heirs of an author and the initial term of protection was extended to twenty-eight years (Barnes 50). These laws did not give foreign authors any legal claim to copyright, and nothing prevented American citizens from legally reprinting texts copyrighted in other countries. Reprinting came to define the American literary marketplace, since it enabled American publishers to expand their lists with popular works, and to do so cheaply.

The lack of legal statutes for foreign literature implied that there was no legal protection available to reprinters either. In order to protect their investment of time and capital in reprinting certain works, reprinters relied on "trade courtesy," meaning rival houses would respect a prior claim on the works of an author and would refrain from issuing their own editions. On the American market, the works of British authors such as Scott, Bulwer and Dickens became the tenuous property of American publishing houses such as Carey & Lea and Harper & Brothers. While these houses occasionally offered British authors gratuities in order to secure their goodwill, they resisted international copyright because it would make publishing foreign authors more expensive, thus cutting into their margins (Barnes 94). According to them, international copyright would inevitably drive up the price of literature, which runs counter to republican ideology that places the "general good" of the American people above individual property rights – especially the property rights of a *foreign* author. An 1838 anti-copyright petition from the inhabitants of Massachusetts to Congress stated that international copyright was "hostile to that general diffusion of intelligence [...] which is the best safeguard of our republican institutions" (qtd. in McGill 94). In *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, Meredith McGill memorably calls this line of argument "a theory of *republic*ation," which represents the reprinting industry as the "locus of national values," establishing cultural independence through a radically different publishing system (93). The stress on democratization implies a shift away from origination towards adaptation, material production and distribution. Pro-copyright campaigners denounced these pleas of democratization as a mere fig leaf for ruthless market practices which robbed authors of the fruits of their labors, while lining the pockets of the reprinters. McGill pithily posits that what was at stake in the

copyright question was not the existence, but the definition, of a (literary) national culture: origination versus production (109).

The informal arrangements of trade courtesy were by definition difficult to enforce, and the Panic of 1837 exposed the frailty of such gentlemen's agreements. The depressed American economy created a demand for cheap fiction, which was soon answered by "mammoth" weeklies like *The New World* and *Brother Jonathan*, both founded in 1839.[27] These weeklies issued whole novels as supplements, printing them in minuscule type on their massive sheets. The result was ungainly and unwieldy (the best way to manage these supplements was to spread and read them on the floor), but devastatingly cheap. A double number cost twenty-five cents, which came in at roughly one-eighth the cost of a standard duodecimo volume (Barnes 9-11). Their low margins prompted these weeklies to disregard trade courtesy entirely, reprinting popular novels despite previous claims by American publishers. Mammoth weeklies came roaring into the marketplace. Their sales soared, in part because they marketed their publications aggressively by deploying legions of newsboys to hawk the latest issues, but also because they consistently undercut traditional publishers and booksellers. Large publishing houses like Harper & Brothers responded to this provocation by slashing their prices and matching the weeklies' aggression. The fall of mammoth weeklies was as meteoric as their ascent had been: by the end of 1844, *The New World* and *Brother Jonathan* had folded to the Harpers' superior assets and printing capacity, as well as to changes in postage rates.[28]

The relevance of these mammoth weeklies within a discussion of the contemporary transatlantic marketplace – aside from being the product of yet another Anglo-

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[27] These so called "mammoth" weeklies derived their name from their enormous dimensions: some measured a ludicrous six feet seven inches by four foot four inches – slightly over two meters by one meter thirty-four centimeters.

[28] Originally, mammoth weeklies and their supplements qualified for the reduced postage rates for newspapers (one cent for any distance up to a hundred miles, one-and-a-half cents for greater distances), but by the spring of 1843, the United States Post Office charged the supplements at pamphlet postage rates (four cents for short distances, six cents for longer ones) (Barnes 18-23).

American financial crisis – lies in the ways their editors responded to criticism from traditional publishers and booksellers. *The New World* and *Brother Jonathan* adopted the nationalist rhetoric used in the international copyright question and deployed it domestically, extolling the virtues of cheap literature, as affordability stimulated "the spread of popular intelligence – the only safeguard of the Republic" (qtd. in Barnes 26). The phrasing echoes that of the anti-copyright petition to Congress cited above, making these democratic and republican ideals an effective – albeit temporary – moral bulwark, and the mammoths knew it. *The New World* haughtily denounced traditional reprinters, cheekily equating them to the British through class discourse which was calculated to stir up emotion in the youthful republic:

> The community [...] owes us a debt of gratitude for reducing the prices of works of light literature to the means of the poorest classes. We have begun a great literary revolution, which will result in enlightening the understanding of the masses. It is truly democratic—utterly subversive of that intellectual aristocracy which has hitherto controlled the energies of the nation. (qtd. in Barnes 15)

The book trade's protest at being undercut and undermined fell flat, for, as James J. Barnes puts it in his definitive study of the struggle for Anglo-American copyright *Authors, Publishers and Politicians* (1974): "Was it not these same critics who consistently opposed an international copyright agreement in the name of cheap literature for America? All that the mammoths were doing was to extend low prices to their logical conclusion" (15). Ultimately, flaunting free market ethics proved to be a mistake. Mammoths were not the biggest things in the economic struggle for life, and when behemoths like Harper & Brothers went blow for blow with the weeklies, the entrenched and diversified publishers soon broke them.[29] After the mammoths went extinct, "traditional" reprinters largely settled back into their extra-legal code of conduct, trade courtesy.

[29] Not before the free market competition turned ugly, however, as the Harpers came to suspect that an alleged arson in their bindery was a part of an effort by *The New World* to steal an advance copy from which they could set their type. (Exman 158-59)

The free-trade rhetoric of American opponents of international copyright, then, was a thinly-veiled protectionist stance, calculated to benefit American industry in the open transatlantic marketplace (Barnes 75-76). There were also proponents of international copyright in America, and they too deployed protectionist rhetoric in their arguments, but the movement seemed unable to gain any political traction.[30] McGill suggests that this was due to the inherent clash between international copyright legislation and American republican ideals. Since copyright law is predicated on a Lockean notion of labor, it did not chime well with the emphasis on "popular intelligence." Copyright opponents posited that possessive individualism paved the way for the centralization of capital and power, which threatened the sovereignty of the people. McGill has argued that, by making ownership of a foreign text widely available, reprinting acted as a centrifugal force which counteracted the danger of consolidated capital taking control of which texts could circulate in the American marketplace (McGill 79-87). Nevertheless, as the fate of the mammoth weeklies shows, American consolidated capital had already established *de facto* control over the American marketplace. McGill's concept of reprinting as a centrifugal force, then, applies specifically to American resistance to British interference. In essence, it is a protectionist measure which neutralizes Britain's position of power as the economic hegemon. As McGill puts it, "[i]n equating international copyright with a threat to American industry, and locating national identity in the process of production, they make the powerful claim that manufacturing, and not literature, is America's true cultural product" (95). Melville crisply summarizes

[30] Emblematic of this movement was the short-lived American Copyright Club, a group of American literati who allied themselves with G.P. Putnam and his copyright memorial – which called for American printing and binding of foreign reprints as well as international copyright – by opining on the copyright issue in an overtly protectionist tone: "In all other circumstances and questions save that of literature [America has] taken a high ground of freedom and self-reliance [...] [H]ave you marked how authorship in any worthy sense is almost utterly silent throughout the land – how day by day and dollar by dollar the revenues of writers known far and wide [...] have shrunk to nothing" (Mathews qtd. in Barnes 83). Not long after its formation, the Club imploded due to internal strife, and despite its impressive list of members, it did not manage to effect any change.

the political supremacy of "public interest" over private ownership in Jacksonian democracy in an 1851 letter to Richard Bentley:

> Who have any motive in this country to bestir themselves in [International Copyright]? Only the authors. –Who are the authors? –A handful. And what influence have they to bring to bear upon any question whose settlement must necessarily assume a political form? –Scarcely any influence whatever. (HMC 197-98)

The influence lay instead with the publishing houses, printers, typesetters, papermakers and countless other manufacturing professions. The publishing trade's utilitarian protectionist argument was that in protecting the livelihood of foreign authors, countless laborers would be stripped of theirs (Barnes 63, 69-70).

This familiar "American jobs" rhetoric is what Isaac Kramnick has called a "commercial republican" revision of "classical republican" values (644). This republican rhetoric went down well in Washington, but tangible influence does not come from rhetoric alone. Barnes attributes the failure of the pro-copyright movement to effective lobbying in Congress from its opponents and to the relative insignificance of the matter in the face of widespread economic turmoil. Protecting the rights of authors – foreign or domestic – was just not high on the political agenda. Historical perception of the issue is skewed because its ephemeral context has been largely erased while the debate which went on between both sides took place in print, the primary source for most literary criticism. Authors on either side of the Atlantic came out in favor of international copyright in prefaces, newspapers and periodicals. The objections of opponents filled the columns of cheap weeklies and the editorials of "eclectic" journals, which reprinted selected material from various foreign magazines in one issue. The subject and medium of the discussion converged, creating an exaggerated image of its importance to contemporary legislators.

Dickens's quarrel with American reprinters is particularly infamous in this context. His 1842 American tour was to be a celebration of the power of popular affection, but Dickens's early triumphant reception quickly turned sour when he spoke up in favor of international copyright at several of the many public dinners held in his honor. Dickens felt that he spoke on behalf of British and American authors alike. Eliding the cultural

and political gap between America and Great Britain, Dickens proclaimed that both nations should work together to mutually protect each other's authors. However, nationality and patriotism made the mid-century Anglo-American literary marketplace as treacherous as the waters of the North Atlantic, and Dickens's disregard of the republican ideals operating in American national discourse proved problematic. His plea for an international protection of author's copyright was perceived as self-interestedness, wildly ungrateful to the American reading public (McGill 112). The reaction of the American press was negative, even hostile. One reviewer dryly asked: "Has Mr. Dickens yet to learn that to the very absence of such a law as he advocates, he is mainly indebted for his widespread popularity in this country?" (*New World* 12 February 1842, 18). Another critic expressed his distaste with Dickens's plea for American money to flow across the Atlantic, snarkily noting that Dickens's "urging upon those assembled to do honour to his *genius*, to look after his *purse* also" (qtd. in McGill 112) proved his rapacious disregard for his handsome American reception. McGill points out that Americans interpreted Dickens's support of international copyright and his subsequent defense of his position on the matter "as proof that he was both mercenary and plotting – that he came not voluntarily, to be celebrated by his readers, but as a national emissary on behalf of British trade" (113).

Dickens reacted to this overwhelmingly negative response by ostensibly withdrawing – hurt and indignant – from the American literary marketplace. In a printed circular among friends and acquaintances, dated 7 July 1842, Dickens writes: "I have resolved that I will never from this time enter into any negociation [sic] with any person for the transmission, across the Atlantic, of early proofs of any thing I may write; and that I will forego all profit derivable from such a source" (P.III 258). Dickens restated his resolution not to engage in the American republishing of his works in letters to Lea & Blanchard, the only American publishers he had dealt with thus far. Lea & Blanchard, formerly Carey & Lea (and originally Carey & Son) was a Philadelphia-based publishing firm that had established itself in the early decades of the nineteenth century through widespread pirating of British works. In *Between Covers: The Rise and Transformation of American Book Publishing* (1987), John Tebbel describes the house as "one of the leading pirates of British novels," pointing out that "their exploits with Scott's novels were legendary in the trade" (Tebbel 46). Interestingly, given Dickens's stance on the subject,

the firm was strongly opposed to international copyright, but did pay voluntary royalties to the British authors it reprinted (P.III 125). From June 1837 until 1842, the publishing house sent Dickens sums of money – ranging from £25 to £300 – at first to secure the author's goodwill, but later in payment for advance proofs of *Oliver Twist* and *Barnaby Rudge* (CDP 97, 110). After the copyright controversy broke, these payments left Dickens vulnerable to further charges of being a literary mercenary. One such accusation, published in the 26 August 1842 issue of *The American Traveller*, maintains that "Mr. Dickens, who receives some forty thousand guineas per annum for his works in England, opens upon us in his foulest billingsgate because we will not permit him to double the sum out of our own pockets" (qtd. in P.III 258). Although the cited figure is outlandish, Dickens was outraged by these attacks. After assuring Lea & Blanchard that he had made his decision not to deal with American publishers on principle, and that it was in no way a reflection of their performance as publishers, Dickens explained that he "would have nothing blown to [him] by a side-wind, which the dishonest breath of the popular legislature with-held" (P.III 405). When Lea & Blanchard pressed the issue, Dickens declined again, politely refusing "to break [his] determination in [Lea & Blanchard's] favour" (P.III 404).[31]

Privately, Dickens was much less restrained. On 1 May 1842, he wrote a letter to his brother-in-law, Henry Austin, decrying American reprinters in very strong terms:

> Is it not a horrible thing that scoundrel-booksellers should grow rich here from publishing books, the authors of which do not reap one farthing from their issue, by scores of thousands? And that every vile, blackguard, and detestable newspaper,—so filthy and so bestial that no honest man would admit one into his house, for a water-closet door-mat—should be able to publish those same writings, side by side, cheek by jowl, with the coarsest and most obscene companions, with which they *must* become connected in course of time, in people's minds? Is it tolerable that besides being robbed and rifled, an author should be *forced* to appear in any form—in any vulgar dress—in any atrocious company—that he

[31] Interestingly, this strategy appears to have paid off to a degree, as the *New World*, which had criticized Dickens before, gave the author credit for the consistency of his resolve (P.III 259n).

> should have no choice of his audience—no controul [sic] over his own distorted text—and that he should be compelled to jostle out of the course, the best men in this country [America] who only ask to *live*, by writing? I vow before High Heaven that my blood so boils at these enormities, that when I speak about them, I seem to grow twenty feet high, and to swell out in proportion. (P.III 230)

At first glance, and given this depth of feeling, Dickens's decision to withdraw from American publishing seems like a spirited and understandable reaction. Since he could not legally defend his copyright against American (re-)publishers, he declined to form courtesy agreements with them for over a decade (CDP 131). By protesting against American republications and the lack of an international copyright, Dickens tried to claim a central position for the author within the transatlantic marketplace. In a letter to John Forster, written on 24 March 1842, Bulwer Lytton expressed support for this position, stating that "Dickens is very right to jeopardize an idler popularity for the probability of advancing a cause which may put so many dollars into his pocket" (P.III 214).

The problem here is that, unlike Melville in his letter to Bentley quoted above, Dickens was unaware of how little influence authors could bring to bear on Congress. Ironically, Dickens assumed that his popularity – the very thing he was accused of betraying by speaking out for international copyright – would translate into political influence. But, as Amanda Claybaugh has pointed out in "Towards a New Transatlanticism: Dickens in the United States" (2006), transatlantic authority was dispersed and variable. British authors like Dickens were celebrated and respected, and British reviewers were highly influential, but the large American readership made the American publishing industry increasingly powerful (443-44). As it became clear that he could not force the issue through his popularity, Dickens largely abandoned his efforts on behalf of the copyright question. When Bulwer made another attempt to introduce and pass an international copyright Bill through the Houses of Congress, this time with the assistance of a number of lobbyists, Dickens was reluctant to get involved, further proving his ignorance of the workings of American legislative mechanisms.

Dickens's decision to relinquish any income generated in America, which he would have had to bargain for outside of the confines of the law, is strikingly similar to the resolution of the American episode in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The eponymous main character

and his servant Mark Tapley set out to the United States in search of wealth and success. They fall prey to Scadder, one of the many swindlers in Dickens's America. They invest all their money in the frontier town of Eden and are financially ruined when that cynically-named place turns out to be nothing more than a deadly swamp, far away from civilization. Mr. Bevan, a kind and generous gentleman from Massachusetts, insists on lending Martin and Mark their passage home. Despite this kindness, no American money finds its way onto English soil through Mark or Martin: Mark manages to secure a position as ship's cook, and thus pays for both their fares. This constitutes a powerful parallel to Dickens's retreat from American publishing, and suggests that Dickens's transatlantic market is a British one, using the *idea* of America alone to captivate British audiences.[32]

Interestingly, despite Dickens's misjudgment of the political pull he could muster, he recognized the role played by the material book – the product of the publishing industry rather than of an individual author – in the intrinsically speculative literature trade. The material belies the immaterial: the physical object promises a wealth of ideas that are not inherent to it, nor is there a direct correlation between the tangible, material quality of a book and the quality of its contents, hence Dickens's comment of being "*forced* to appear in any form – in any vulgar dress" in his letter to Austin quoted above. Paradoxically, this variability of form in American reprinting implies a recognition of the essentially immaterial nature of literature. This is where commercial value is situated for the reprint industry: the commodity at hand is the "disembodied text," a particular brand of ideas, inseparable from their phrasing, their wording, but not from their form: *American Notes* is the same narrative in both the authorized Chapman & Hall first edition and in *Brother Jonathan*'s "supplement" reprinting. The materiality of American "pirated" reprints undermines the writer's authority, wresting away the author's control over intended form and readership. What is at stake in this struggle for control over the materiality of a text, subsumed within the larger debate surrounding

[32] Dickens's friend and biographer John Forster implies as much in his (controversial) claim that Dickens sent Martin to America in order to boost sales figures (Forster vol. I, 285).

international copyright, is the projected authorial image in the transatlantic marketplace.

At the start of 1850, Melville became embroiled in the international copyright dispute, which was then hotly contested in the New York literary scene. Thomas Powell, a British literary rogue and conman who had ingratiated himself with the literary circle around Evert Duyckinck (with which Melville was at least marginally associated), turned on his New World literary friends with startling acerbity, targeting Melville specifically.[33] Powell's book, *The Living Authors of America*, denounces Melville as a traitor to America's republican values, in league with British publishers and therefore one of the "worst enemies of the national mind":

> These are authors who till lately have entirely enjoyed the monopoly of the English market; now they will be obliged to join the body of native authors, and hurry to the rescue. So long as they could trespass on the mistaken courtesy of the British publishers, and get four thousand guineas for this Life of Columbus, and two hundred guineas for that Typee, there was no occasion for any interference; in fact, they were materially benefited by this crying injustice to the great body of authors. Now their own rights are in jeopardy, and they must join the ranks of International Copyright (112)

Powell blatantly misrepresents Melville's stance on international copyright. In a letter to Bentley, written in July 1849, Melville expressed hope that "ere long, doubtless, we shall have something of an international law – so much desired by all American writers," and marveled at its absence in the first place.[34] Adding insult to injury, Powell anonymously published a sanctimonious article entitled "Fruits of Literary Appropriation" in the 6 February 1850 issue of the *Herald*, ostensibly lamenting the

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[33] Hershel Parker describes Powell as "a poetaster, dramatist, editor, and journalist [...] a thief, a forger of commercial and literary documents, and a compulsive, accomplished and grandiose liar and all-round blackguard" (646). For more on this fascinating figure, see Hershel Parker's *The Powell Papers: A Confidence Man Amok Among the Anglo-American Literati* (2011).

[34] The problem with Powell's charge against Melville here is that it assumes popularity or even sales numbers translate into political power for an author – a misconception shared by Dickens.

calamitous effects of transatlantic piracy on the "morals, the principles and national spirit of [America]." In reality, the piece gloats over the newly altered state of British copyright for foreigners, making Melville the punch line, characterizing him as greedy and foolish:

> Mr. Melville started, we are told, some time ago, for England, with the early proof sheets of his last book, intending, on the avails of it, to make the fashionable tour over the continent, and luxuriate in the capitals of Europe on the fruit of his labors [...] He was coolly informed, by his former London publisher, that he could pay no more copyrights; and the aforesaid intellect quits the great metropolis in despair, with empty pockets, and turns his face once more towards his native land. (*Powell Papers* 182)

This, again, was a shameless lie, the effect of which should have been pre-empted by a letter from Bentley printed in the *New York Times* of 25 January 1850, in which he states that "the work was in the first place offered to me by the author himself, and I have become the purchaser of what I firmly believe to be the copyright, for a considerable sum." Yet the accusation lingered, as its rhetoric was a dangerously effective compound of the same kind of popular nationalism which had sparked the Astor Place Riots a year earlier, combining anti-British sentiment with class tension by casting the "well-fed" literati of Duyckinck's coterie as cynical, treasonous Anglophiles who oppressed hard-working but penniless American authors.[35] Melville's attempts to obtain recompense for his labors on the other side of the Atlantic were denounced as an un-American ploy, putting him, somehow, in cahoots with British publishers. The reasoning is obviously muddled: the steps Melville took to ensure his works were not simply republished without his authorization are similar to the strategies of British authors, and work to

[35] These were, by now, familiar charges laid against Duyckinck and his Union Square group: their public support of William Macready after the disturbances at his initial Astor Place Opera performances backfired when at a subsequent performance the conflict escalated into full-scale riots. Melville had signed the open letter inviting Macready to continue performing, thereby implicating him in its "sycophantic Anglophilia" (*Powell Papers* 26). For a more in-depth discussion of Melville's engagement with the Astor Place Riots, see Dennis Berthold's "Class Acts: The Astor Place Riots and Melville's 'The Two Temples'" (1999).

emulate the effects of international copyright protection for his works. Clearly, Powell was (ostensibly) seeking the same thing Melville was: protecting American intellectual property in the British market. This attack on Melville, then, hinged on misguided resentment, which presupposed that Melville was reaping substantial rewards from wildly popular works and to such an extent that he saturated the British demand for American literary products. Powell charged Melville with letting down the American side, claiming that his efforts to work around the lack of international copyright were actually impeding political action on that front. Melville, however, recognized that international copyright was not high on the list of priorities for Congress in the 1840s and 1850s. In a letter written to Bentley in July 1851, Melville characterized the American government as comprised of "sturdy backwoodsmen [...] who care not a fig for any authors except those who write those most saleable of all books nowadays – ie – the newspapers, & magazines," meaning that authors with a stake in international copyright could bring "scarcely any influence whatever" to bear upon a question which required a political solution (HMC 198). Moreover, such political influence lay with the publishers on either side of the Atlantic, many of whom benefitted from this lack of legislation. Unfair though Powell's accusations may have been, they do highlight the highly national stakes within the transatlantic marketplace.

The same economic and technological circumstances which gave rise to America's reprinting presses operated in the British market as well, stimulating an industry which reprinted American books. This industry ranged from so-called "pirates," through importers, to something approaching patrons of American literature. Publishers John Murray III and Richard Bentley belonged to the latter category, publishing – and paying – American authors such as Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Melville. Richard Bentley prided himself on being "the most largely engaged of any London publishers in the purchase of copyright [...] of American authors, paying for them at the same rate as those of English authors" (qtd. in Barnes 175). This was not without risks, however. The status of legal protection granted to foreign authors was in flux for much of the nineteenth century, and the outcome of copyright disputes could vary wildly, depending on which court, and even which judge, dealt with the case. In theory, the only prerequisite for copyright protection of a work was first publication in Great Britain, or at least synchronous publication with its appearance abroad. This would

seem simple enough, but American records, for example, recorded only the date on which a copy of a work was deposited at the local District Court to secure its American copyright, not the date of publication. Moreover, in some cases, the nationality or place of residence of the author was taken into account, complicating things further.

In an 1849 foreign copyright case, *Boosey v. Purday*, the Court of Exchequer had ruled against the rights of foreign authors, as "the legislature legislated *prima facie* for its own subjects and those owing obedience to its laws, so its object was not to encourage importation of foreign works and their first publication in Britain, but to promote the cultivation of the intellect of its subjects" (Seville 176). Bentley, who had become Melville's British publisher after Murray refused the manuscript for *Mardi* (1849), recognized that this most recent precedent undermined his business model. In an 1849 letter to Melville, Bentley explains that while "[t]his drivelling absurdity [i.e. the *Boosey v. Purday* ruling] can scarcely be suffered to remain," he could not afford to make Melville a more generous offer for the copyright of *Redburn* because "in the mean time this decision will expose publishers like myself, who am so largely engaged in this department of publishing to the risk of attack from any unprincipled persons who may choose to turn Pirate" (HMC 596).

In practice, then, publishing American authors the way Murray and Bentley did was a gamble, because unauthorized reprinters could operate in a murky, quasi-legal way, and any legal battle over copyright would be lengthy and costly. John Murray purchased the English copyright to *Typee* (1846) from Melville for £100 in 1845 and a year later agreed to publish Melville's second book, *Omoo* (1847), on half-profits (Paston 51) — only to see both works reprinted in Routledge's *Popular Library* by 1850 alongside works by Washington Irving, to which Murray also owned British copyright. Lengthy litigation ensued, and it was not until the end of 1851 that Routledge complied with an out-of-court settlement, in which he agreed to stop reprinting works copyrighted by Murray, pay the legal costs for both sides, surrender the stereotype plates and turn over any printed copies to the copyright owner (Barnes 162). Even so, Routledge dragged his feet, exporting what reprints he had on hand to the American market and selling the stereotype plates for scrap metal (163). Routledge's estimated profit on reprinting works by Irving and Melville came to £2,000, making it very likely that even after settling with Murray he at least broke even, probably even turning a small profit from the venture

(ibid.). Unauthorized reprinting, then, was potentially lucrative, despite legal entanglement.

To make matters worse for publishers such as Bentley, the House of Lords ruled in 1854 that the only way a foreigner could secure legal protection for a literary work was for the author to travel to Britain and remain there long enough to witness its publication (174). Failing that, no foreigner could obtain a British copyright, nor sell it to a British subject. This verdict – temporarily – clarified the legal status of reprinting, and because of its retroactivity, it devastated those publishers who had committed money to purchasing the copyright to American works. These were now reprinted with impunity, spelling financial disaster for Bentley. In a letter to Lord Brougham, one of the Lords involved in the 1854 ruling, Bentley wrote:

> Some of the works then purchased by me were only recently acquired, and therefore have not repaid the consideration given for them. By the late decision the provision which I had thought [...] I had made for my family in the latter years, has been at once taken from me. Editions upon editions of the works purchased by me are now issued by pirates, and an annual amount taken from me which I am not able to ascertain exactly, but I know to be very large. (175)

Bentley's claims are of course informed by business sense, but unlike American reprinters, he purchased the "copyrights" to foreign works, which indicates a belief in a Lockean notion of property as a legitimate regulatory measure of the market. Nevertheless, Bentley's rhetoric echoes that of American reprinters: the infringement of his rights as the legitimate publisher of foreign works by unauthorized reprinters harms the credibility and vitality of the national publishing industry. The difficulty with the mid-nineteenth century Anglo-American marketplace was the nature of the interests of those involved. Authors could potentially benefit from spreading their works across boundaries of state and even of language as long as they were able to monetize this dissemination in some way (outright sale of the foreign copyright, for example, or shared profit agreements). Printers and publishers, on the other hand, tended to be invested in specific, often domestic markets, which made them keen to protect their investment, but which also incentivized ignoring the interests of authors in other markets.

These economic factors shaped the political stances which reprinters and authors took on the subject. Melville, in his 1850 anonymous review of Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, tried to galvanize – and perhaps shame – his American readers into "reading locally," preferring American literature over all others. He calls on America to "let her own authors [...] have the priority of appreciation" ("Mosses" 1162) and to do all it can to support its authors, since only then would they be able to establish the strong national literature which Melville considered crucial for the fledgling nation. This "strong national literature," apparently, should translate into sales figures, for if "the books of Hawthorne have sold by the five-thousand, – what does that signify? – They should be sold by the hundred-thousand; and read by the million" (1171). According to Melville's "Mosses," America should "first praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises [...] the best excellence in the children of any other land," adding, with perhaps more than just a touch of self-interest, "it is for the nation's sake, and not for her authors' sake, that I would have America be heedful of the increasing greatness among her writers" (1162-63). This rhetoric is explicitly financial and protectionist: it equates literary quality with proportionally high sales numbers and financial reward for the author as, first and foremost, Hawthorne should have been bought more by American readers. The review calls for American literary capital to be rewarded by American financial capital, but the profitability of unauthorized reprinting made any kind of international copyright legislation unpopular with American (and British) reprinters, as the additional overhead would cut into the industry's profit margins.[36] This industry consideration was a powerful motivation for legislators on either side of the Atlantic to delay the establishment of international intellectual property laws.

[36] British reprinters like Longmans, for instance, resisted British efforts to establish an Anglo-American copyright, much to John Blackwood's chagrin: "there will be no getting together the money for the American copyright movement [...] it is a great pity and Longmans have as usual behaved like despicable shits – petty tradesmen they are, incapable of taking the broad generous [view] of anything" (qtd. in Barnes 222).

## 1.3 Transatlantic Coteries: The "Five of Clubs," and the American Legation

In an 1877 biographical article on the (then recently-deceased) United States Senator Charles Sumner, published in the December issue of *The Galaxy*, a brief, almost throw-away paragraph makes readers aware of the existence of an 1830s Boston-based coterie which dubbed itself "The Five of Clubs." The full passage reads:

> In the same year [1834] we find [Sumner] settled in Boston, beginning the practice of the law, with a wide circle of friends, with young associates many of whose names have since grown famous. Quite a rare little circle was in No. 4 Court street, where he had his office, and soon after he with four other men near his own age formed a coterie known among themselves as "The Five of Clubs." The names of the five were Felton, Longfellow, Hillard, Cleveland, and Sumner; not one of whom the world hears now unrecognized or without response. They used to meet Saturday afternoons and have a friendly banquet and discourse. What notes may not then have been struck of coming fame for one or other of the little band? The bond of friendship was lasting and sincere. Sumner was the youngest, being twenty-six, Longfellow the oldest, being thirty. (758-59)

The article meanders on, discussing Sumner's early life and European tour, never returning, at least not explicitly, to that mysterious club. Indeed, current scholarship has also relegated "The Five of Clubs" to footnotes and brief mentions.[37] Yet *The Galaxy*'s claim that, by 1877, all of the Senator's fellow members had become famous was not an empty boast. Sumner himself was noted for his abolitionist zeal and shot to fame in May 1856 after he was viciously caned in the Senate chamber by Congressman Brooks of South Carolina, who had taken offence to Sumner's fiercely anti-slavery "Crime against

[37] The editors of the Pilgrim edition of Dickens's letters, for example, do little more than indicate its existence and membership in a brief footnote (P.III 217n).

Kansas" speech.[38] The fragile Henry Russell Cleveland had died before achieving any real notoriety, but the man who replaced him in the club, Samuel Gridley Howe, became famous for his ground-breaking work on educating the blind.[39] George Stillman Hillard went on to become the District Attorney for Massachusetts, while Cornelius Conway Felton served as the President of Harvard University between 1860 and 1862. Most famous of all was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, arguably the most popular American poet of the nineteenth century. These men, all of whom were Harvard graduates, contributed (in varying degrees) to shaping the legal, political and cultural face of the young republic. What to make, then, of this "Five of Clubs"?

Samuel Longfellow, in his *The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1886), mentions his brother's membership in the "Five of Clubs" and hints at the literary ambition which lay at the core of that circle: "when they began to speak well of each others' books in the Reviews, the newspapers gave them the name of 'the mutual Admiration Society'" (I: 254). Indeed, each of the members of the "Five" took an active interest in the literary scene, forming connections with publishers and journal editors, and publishing speeches, reviews, and full-fledged books.[40] The key to the mystery of what this "Five of Clubs" was lies in the address which Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana (Longfellow's second grandchild) gave to the Dickens Fellowship of Boston in 1942:

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[38] For more on the caning of Sumner, and the polarizing effect it had on the slavery debates, see David H. Donald's *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War* (1981) and Manisha Sinha's "The Caning of Charles Sumner: Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War" (2003).

[39] Howe's most famous pupil was the deaf-blind Laura Bridgman, who would go on to become a teacher at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, which Howe directed. The third chapter of Dickens's *American Notes* includes a fairly extensive section on Bridgman, much of which was borrowed from Howe's "Director's Report on Laura Bridgman."

[40] To name just a few of their literary activities: Sumner edited *The American Jurist*, a law review, and served as a reporter for the United States Circuit Court. Hillard co-edited *The American Jurist* with Sumner, as well co-editing (with George Ripley) *The Christian Register*. Felton published editions of Greek classics (and wrote a spirited defense of the study of the Classics in the *North American Review*), notably an edition of Aristophanes. Howe had published *A Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution* in 1828. All of them would continue to edit and write for periodicals throughout the mid-nineteenth century.

> In imitation of the famous Pickwick Club, with its noble-minded Mr. Pickwick, its amorously susceptible Mr. Tupman, its would-be sportsman Mr. Winkle, and its sentimentally poetical Mr. Snodgrass, Longfellow and four of his closest friends [...] formed a little club of five, which they called "The Five of Clubs." (Dana 56)

According to Dana, what brought the "Five" together was a love of Dickens that had been ferried across the Atlantic by Longfellow in 1836, on his return from a European Tour. The "Five of Clubs" delighted in reading *Oliver Twist* (1837), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). Its members wrote each other humorous letters in the style of Pickwick. In one such letter, written in November 1838, Felton mocks Sumner (apparently a terrible shot) for having actually hit his mark by explicitly invoking *Pickwick* and its characters:

> Is it possible you killed anything on purpose? Did you think of Mr. Winkle? Did you remember Mr. Tupman's shooting a partridge by accident? That unfortunate rabbit will haunt you as long as you live, if you are indeed guilty of his blood. I think we must have a series of papers, after the manner of Pickwick, describing the adventures of the club; and it is plain that you must be the travelling committee, to say nothing of being our great oracle on matters of sport. (qtd. in Dana 56)

At this point, three of the five members had become faculty at Harvard University: Longfellow as professor of Modern Languages, Felton as professor of Greek Literature, and Sumner as lecturer in Law.[41] It was in this capacity that they were invited to one of the celebratory dinners held in Dickens's honor after his arrival in Boston in January 1842. There, Felton and Longfellow met Dickens, and each side made a favorable impression on the other. In a letter to John Forster, Dickens wrote: "The Professors [...] Longfellow and Felton [...] are noble fellows" (P.III 39). Longfellow was more jubilant in his phrasing, writing to a friend that "Dickens is a glorious fellow" (*Longfellow Letters* ii

[41] In the "Boston" chapter of *American Notes*, Dickens is fairly rapturous about Harvard's faculty, claiming that the "resident professors at that university are gentlemen of learning and varied attainments, and are, without one exception I can call to mind, men who would shed a grace upon, and do honour to, any society in the civilized world." (Vol. 1, Ch. 3, 35).

381). Dickens spent the next few weeks in the company of the members of the "Five of Clubs." Felton even accompanied Dickens to New York City, staying in his company for over a month. These weeks in January and February of 1842 formed the basis of a number of life-long friendships.

More important for my purposes here, however, is the fact that the "Five of Clubs" also acted as Dickens's proxies in the American marketplace from 1842 onwards. They fought in Dickens's corner in the polemic surrounding international copyright in the American press, forming a counterweight to the damning publicity he was receiving. These men, authors and editors, politicians and lawyers, corresponded with Dickens and actively defended him against his American critics. They published reviews such as the one by Felton in the January 1843 number of the *North American Review* entitled "Charles Dickens; his Genius and Style." This twenty-five-page article supported Dickens's views on international copyright, refuted allegations against Dickens's disinterestedness made by the American press, and gave a highly favorable review of *American Notes*. Felton, Sumner and their friend William Winston Seaton – co-proprietor of the *National Intelligencer* – even caused Dickens's 1842 memorial on copyright, complete with a pro-copyright petition and letters of support from several British authors, to be published in the American periodical press at Dickens's request. Between 8 and 10 May they were the driving force behind its publication in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, *New York Evening Post*, *New York Herald* and the Washington *National Intelligencer* (P.III 214). The memorial was reprinted widely in the days that followed, with the *Boston Weekly Messenger* remarking on "the impressive manner in which this subject has been brought to the attention of the public" (P.III 215).

The members of this group, unequivocally a part of America's cultural elite, acted as the rear guard of Dickens's 1842 withdrawal from American publishing. As such, they became local markers in the ideologically laden international copyright question and fundamentally subverted the nationalized stakes of that debate. The "Five of Clubs" promoted Dickens's works and carried out his requests. In his letter to Felton, asking to circulate the memorial on copyright, Dickens's choice of metaphor is revealing: "I fear this is imposing a heavy tax upon your friendship; and I don't fear it the less, by reason of being well assured that it is one you will most readily pay" (ibid.). Dickens's arrival in America had initially been celebrated as proof of the power of public affection to raise a

self-made author to unprecedented popularity. Josiah Quincy, proposing a toast to Dickens at an early public dinner, summarized the situation: "The occasion that calls us together is almost unprecedented in the annals of literature [...] A young man has crossed the ocean with no hereditary title, no military laurels, no princely fortune, and yet his approach is hailed with pleasure by every age and condition" (*The Boston Dinner to Charles Dickens* 111). A few months later, the bitter dispute concerning international copyright prompted the press to accuse Dickens of aristocratic nationalism. Dickens's deployment of his transatlantic connections did not have the desired effect, but rather the reverse. This group of wealthy, well-educated Bostonian gentlemen clashed fundamentally with the American press's republican belief that authors are – and should be – common property.[42]

In August 1850, Longfellow wrote to Hawthorne, his long-time friend and former classmate at Bowdoin College, sending him the 17 August 1850 issue of *The Literary World*, which contained the first part of Melville's review of *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Melville's extravagant praise was couched in terms of strong literary nationalism, culminating in a defiant call to "away with this Bostonian leaven of literary flunkeyism towards England" (1164). Longfellow, perhaps recognizing himself and the other members of the "Five of Clubs" in these charges, wrote in the accompanying letter to Hawthorne: "I suppose some other friend has already sent you the inclosed notice of yourself and your writings; but it [is] good enough to have two copies of it. I have rarely seen a more appreciating and sympathizing critic: and though I do not endorse all he says about others, I do endorse all he says about you" (*Longfellow Letters* 266).

Despite his charges against "Bostonian flunkeyism," however, Melville also relied on transatlantic deputies to look after his interests and help establish himself as an author

[42] Groups like the "Five of Clubs" are remarkable because they bridge the gap between quasi-belligerent nations, gesturing towards the "special relationship" between Great Britain and America before it became policy. Very little work has been done on how the "Five of Clubs" informed American attitudes towards Dickens and Britain on the one hand, and American self-imagining on the other. In the academic year of 2014-2015, thanks to funding from the Belgium American Educational Fund, I will be doing archival research at the Harvard University Archives where the papers of the individual members of the "Five of Clubs" are held, in order to excavate this coterie.

in Great Britain. He gratefully deployed his elder brother Gansevoort Melville as a kind of literary agent. Gansevoort was a talented diplomat and politician who had been appointed the secretary to the American legation in London by President Polk. There, Gansevoort did sterling work as a kind of literary agent and found both a British and an American publisher for *Typee*.[43] Gansevoort's determined pushing resulted in the manuscript being accepted by John Murray. On 4 May 1846, only a few months after securing Murray as Melville's publisher, Gansevoort died of a "disease of three essential organs namely the heart liver [sic] and kidneys" (qtd. in HMB I: 423). Hershel Parker speculates that there may have been a connection between Gansevoort's immense effort on his brother's behalf and his sudden demise. In the words of Parker:

> No one ever said it, but everyone could reflect privately that if Gansevoort had not driven himself in the last months to launch Herman's career, he might have recuperated in some pleasant village outside London and survived his illness, which had attacked, the doctors said, so many organs of his body. (HMB I: 430)

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[43] For a fuller picture of Gansevoort's involvement in the start of his brother's career, see his 1846 London journal, where he frequently mentions *Typee* and gives detailed descriptions of his efforts to promote its publication. Particularly interesting to note is that Gansevoort did not waste any opportunities to further his brother's literary career in America, either. On 8 January 1846, Gansevoort breakfasted with, amongst others, George Palmer Putnam of the Wiley & Putnam publishing house. Putnam was in London to establish a branch there, and to expand the house's stable of British authors, who tended to sell well in America. Gansevoort clearly saw the opportunity he was presented with: on 10 January, he put the first 107 pages of *Typee*'s proofs in Putnam's hands. That evening, Gansevoort met the American publisher at a social gathering, where Putnam expressed his desire to publish *Typee* in America, claiming that "[the opening chapters had] kept him from church, that it had all the interest of Robinson Crusoe, superadded to that of being a work of fact" (Gansevoort Melville 22). Putnam decided to acquire *Typee* for their recently established Library of American Books series. Its first American run sold out quickly, and Wiley & Putnam published a second—revised—edition before the year was out (Tebbel 23). Despite this modest success with them, Melville's relationship with Wiley & Putnam was not to be a long one. *Omoo* was not included in the Library of American books for a number of reasons. John Wiley had been irritated by Putnam's failure to consult with him about *Typee*, and Melville's fiercely anti-missionary stance in that book did not endear the author to the devout Presbyterian publisher. Unsettled by the reactions of the religious press—which charged *Typee* with impiety and licentiousness—Wiley requested that Melville tone it down, prompting the expurgations of the 1846 "Revised Edition." Melville acquiesced, but retaliated by offering *Omoo* to Harper & Brothers instead (HMB I: 440,470).

Apart from everything else, his brother's death left Melville in an awkward position with his publisher, whom he had never dealt with directly. Herman Melville lacked Gansevoort's smooth and precise diplomatic style, and negotiations with his publisher suffered from it. Just a few weeks after Gansevoort's death, on 15 July 1846, Melville wrote an awkwardly direct yet rambling letter to Murray in London:

> The decease of my brother Mr. Gansevoort Melville leaving me without any correspondant [sic] in London thro' whom to communicate with you, I waive cerimony [sic] & address you at once by letter.—My object in so doing, is to inform you of certain matters connected with "Typee" which you ought to be made acquainted with, & to allude briefly to one or two other subjects [...] This is an unconscionable letter for a first one, but I must elongate it a little more [...] Mr Murray must pardon the evident haste in which this long letter has been written—it was unavoidable. (HMC 54-58)

All the same, Melville felt he needed someone to act on his behalf on the other side of the Atlantic. In December 1846, he wrote to John Romeyn Brodhead, who had succeeded Gansevoort as Secretary of the American legation in London, asking him to become his "correspondent in London":

> I have no correspondent in London who can act for me – is it too much to solicit your friendly offices? – there is little to be done – a mere sale to effect [...]. Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street has by letter informed me, that upon receiving the proof sheets of my new book he would make me a liberal offer therefore. [...] Now, relying upon your friendly consent to do what I ask of you, I shall write Mr. Murray to the effect, that I shall empower Mr. Brodhead to treat with him for the sale of the book, & that I will also send the proof sheets under cover to you by the steamer of 1st of February, & that you will upon their arrival at once submit them to him for an offer. Do not, I pray you, entertain the slightest apprehension or delicacy as to any responsibility you may think you will assume by acting for me in this matter. For by the steamer which carries over the proof sheets I will give you such instructions as will remove all scruples upon this head (HMC 70-71)

This frank and rather abrupt letter gives us an insight into what exactly went into literary transatlantic negotiations of this kind. The delay in communication made it impossibly cumbersome for Melville and Murray to haggle back and forth in

correspondence, so instead, Melville deputized Brodhead to do the negotiating for him. To be sure, Melville would have given Brodhead (and perhaps Gansevoort, too) instructions on how to proceed and what to accept, but in the end it was Brodhead who sent the proof sheets of *Omoo* to Murray, and it was Brodhead who negotiated the cash payment of £140 on publication for the English "copyright" of that book.[44] Brodhead would continue in his capacity as voluntary London agent for Melville until 1849. He helped Melville make the transition from Murray to Bentley and secured generous terms for *Redburn*'s English copyright. After that time, Brodhead returned to America, and Melville was once again left without a London agent. In 1850, Melville negotiated (with considerable difficulties) terms for *White-Jacket* with Bentley, who would also publish *The Whale* (the English version of *Moby-Dick*) a year later. After this time, Melville's presence in the English marketplace faded.

The speed of steam transport and the consequent reduction in distribution lag on the transatlantic literary marketplace had made print the absolute pinnacle of information technology, but in conjunction with the unregulated literary marketplace, those same technological factors made unauthorized transatlantic reprinting increasingly attractive. This is what motivated the kinds of transatlantic arrangements between author and informal agents described above. Despite print culture's fundamental role in establishing global economies based on a more abstract notion of confidence, when it came down to literary business, authors like Melville and Dickens evidently still placed great value in having a trusted friend or acquaintance on the other side of the ocean who could act as their proxy. As I will show in my following two chapters, the ease with which literary labor could be appropriated along a transatlantic axis without authorial consent influenced Melville and Dickens, both in their prose and in their career development.

[44] Hershel Parker writes that Brodhead "handled [the sale] as well as Gansevoort himself could have done," referring in particular to Brodhead's diligence in clearing a hitch at the British Customs (HMB I: 481).

# Chapter 2

*The only patriotism is born and nurtured in a stationary home, and upon an immovable hearth-stone; but the man-of-war's man, though in his voyagings he weds the two Poles and brings both Indies together, yet, let him wander where he will, he carries his one only home along with him: that home is his hammock [...] the man-of-war's man rolls around the world like a billow, ready to mix with any sea, or be sucked down to death in the Maelstrom of any war.* (White-Jacket *Ch.90, 748)*

In this chapter, I investigate Melville's prose career in order to explore his engagement with the significance of global trade in shaping national identities, particularly within the intimately entwined economic and cultural markets of Great Britain and America. In his 1983 book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson posits that a nation is constituted by a group of individuals consciously self-defining themselves as a cohesive unit, essentially equating "nation" to a quantitative critical mass of individual national identification.[1] Anderson attributes the rise and spread of these "imagined communities" to what he calls "print capitalism," the process whereby the exponential growth in print production made possible by the printing press prompted entrepreneurial publishers to switch to printing in the vernacular, in order to maximize popular appeal. These insights surrounding cultural production are invaluable, but implied in Anderson's idea of "print capitalism" is the notion that members of these imagined communities were readers who were necessarily customers, purchasers of keystone texts. The intended audience (and potential imagined community), then, is defined not only by its linguistic background but also by economic access (i.e. availability of the texts). This amounts to a distinctly economic conception of Renan's "daily referendum," where the recurring choice of continued association between the members of a group, a nation, takes the form of an economic transaction.

Yet this self-identification does not hinge entirely on acquiring and reading texts; there can be no simple "buying into" a stable gated community to which a text provides the key. The characteristics Anderson posits as essential to "print capitalism" – and, by extension, to "imagined communities" – are precisely those which defined the nineteenth-century Anglo-American cultural horizon: a shared language (and to a certain point, a shared cultural history) as well as increasingly entwined economies. Indeed, as Amanda Claybaugh points out, transatlanticism "is not an impulse that some authors feel or some critics pursue: rather, it is the condition under which all works in many periods were written, published, read, and reviewed" ("New Fields" 443). Certainly, during Melville's life, the transatlantic circulation of texts was rampant, even

[1] Anderson takes his cues from Ernest Renan's 1882 discourse "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?," in which Renan defined his concept of a nation as a "daily referendum."

systemic to the extent that the literary marketplace was Anglo-American almost by default. As I will show, however, these linguistic and economic conditions did not lead to the establishment of a homogeneous transatlantic imagined community. Despite their availability and their accessibility, texts like Melville's *Typee* did little to create an Anglo-American "nation." Instead, they became contested markers, harnessed to political and ideological causes on either side of the Atlantic, prone to reinterpretation and even outright appropriation, "billows, ready to mix with any sea." As I will demonstrate, much of Melville's published prose problematizes the agency of texts within a transnational marketplace, through either their context of production, or their subject matter, or both.

First, I will examine how Melville's relatively popular travel accounts, *Typee* and *Omoo*, were appropriated into a British literary tradition. These travel books initially appeared in London, published in John Murray's *Home and Colonial* series, alongside other works of that genre. From the outset, their veracity was doubted and soon Melville's nationality, even his identity, was called into question. As the perception of his nationality shifted, the contemporary critical response to Melville's earliest works changed: British reviewers came to perceive these narratives less as eye-witness accounts of life in far-flung regions and more as an elaborate pastiche of American authorship by some British man of letters. Melville's literary labor was appropriated, reinscribed and incorporated into an explicitly British context. The importance of nationality as a signifier within the Anglo-American field is equally clear from the way in which Melville sought to convert the prestige of his British publisher and his modestly positive British critical reception into American success.

Next, I will investigate *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, and Melville's review of Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*. I argue that these texts recognize how embroiled Great Britain and America were. *Redburn* works to implicate Great Britain in the same economic processes as America, most notably in its treatment of Sir Richard Westmacott's monument to Admiral Nelson's victories. The eponymous protagonist is unimpressed by the England he encounters, which fails to live up to the expectations raised by its print representations. Rather than a Romantic, almost Arthurian space of "Abbeys and Minsters," Redburn finds Liverpool dominated by structures of commerce and trade, prompting him to complain that "this boasted England is no older than the State of New

York." *White-Jacket*, too, engages with Great Britain, in particular with the British legislation at the basis of American naval law. The book purports to be a critique of flogging, but it was written and published at a time when that practice had been all but banned from American ships. Its domestic political agenda turns out to be a vehicle for a kind of literary nationalism, similar to that found in *Redburn*, which worked to put Great Britain and America on an equal footing. I argue that these books challenge the British economic hegemony, and develop an American alternative. Melville, I claim, was not advocating a simple rejection of British influence. Indeed, for all of the critical attention which "Hawthorne and His Mosses" has received as Melville's "Young America Manifesto," its literary nationalism is heavily inflected by its self-positioning against Great Britain. Melville wants to rival, even surpass, British authors, but not forget them. When Melville exclaims in "Hawthorne and his Mosses" that Americans "want no American Goldsmiths; nay, we want no American Miltons," he was not only expressing a lack of desire, but also a lack of need. The very fact that he can deploy Goldsmith and Milton as signifiers indicates that these authors were already at work within American literature: Milton is the American Milton.

Thirdly, I investigate the ways in which *Moby-Dick* and *Israel Potter* approach nationality as conditional upon which state benefits from an individual's labor.[2] There is a recognition in these novels that national industries and institutions, such as the American whaling industry in *Moby-Dick* and the British navy in *Israel Potter*, are not necessarily "crewed" exclusively by nationals. The *Pequod*'s hands may be a motley mix of nationalities but the whales they catch are to the fiscal benefit of America; a British naval victory is no less British for the international crews manning the guns. The sailors retain their respective administrative nationalities, but their labor and its product take on the nationality of the context into which they are received. To be sure, sailors are notoriously transgressive of national boundaries, but so are authors, especially within the shared linguistic and cultural space of the Anglo-American Atlantic. These novels, I

[2] A prime example here is the eponymous protagonist in *Israel Potter*, whose nationality is invariably determined by an occupation: American soldier, British gardener, American spy, British sailor, American sailor, British sailor (again), British brick maker, British gardener (again).

argue, are illustrative of the ways in which "national literatures" are affected and even constituted by foreign influences.

Finally, I touch briefly on the late nineteenth-century British enthusiasm for Melville, as well as the "Melville Revival" in the 1920s that propelled Melville to his current state of canonization. The process which reclaimed Melville from relative obscurity was incontrovertibly a British one, as British writers and scholars began to consider Melville's dense, difficult prose a token of his literary worth.

## 2.1 The American author and the British pressgang: *Typee* and *Omoo*

The ideal of authorship which pervaded American society well into the mid-nineteenth century was that of the leisured writer – what Lawrence Buell in *New England Literary Culture* has called "the genteel amateur" (58). This ideal complicated the professionalization of American authorship by hindering its transformation into a respectable, openly remunerative occupation (Newbury 6). Writing was a luxury, reserved for those who had separate lucrative careers and time to spare, or for the independently wealthy – people, in short, who were above base commercial considerations (Coultrap-McQuin 13). As the second son of an impoverished merchant, the young Melville was outside that particular mold. From the age of 19 onward, Melville was on the lookout for any kind of suitable gainful employment. He had gone west in hopes of a job as a "Canaller" on the Erie Canal, but by 1839, the economic boom of the "Internal Improvements" had waned considerably, and Melville found no work on American shores (HMB I: 145). Famously, he turned to the sea, with its fleets of whalers and its merchantmen, as a fluid plane of economic possibility.

Between 1839 and 1844, Melville worked aboard merchantmen, men-of-war and whalers, in a sailing career that would take him around the world and provide him with enough material for a lifetime of nautical books. Despite Melville's indomitable reputation as a "sea-author" (approached only, perhaps, by Conrad), the significance of

the sea is determined by the shore. The sea is a collection of heavily trafficked trade routes, distributing cargo, capital and labor to innumerable ports. Even Melville's prose commodifies the economic activities which the sea sustained, rather than the sea itself. In spite of the expression, when Melville "went to sea" in June 1839, the sea was not his destination. Melville shipped aboard the *St. Lawrence*, a fast-sailing merchantman carrying cargo and passengers between New York and Liverpool. He was away for four months (nothing compared to the years he would spend in the South Seas) and made very little money, but he had become a sailor, the profession which he would come to exalt in *Redburn* as "a bridge of boats across the Atlantic [...] the *primum mobile* of all commerce" (154). The first wages Melville ever earned stemmed from the transatlantic trade between America and Great Britain.

When Melville returned to New York in 1844, he attempted to follow in the footsteps of opportunist authors like Richard Henry Dana, the author of *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840).[3] Drawing from his own experience as a sailor in the South Seas in the "factual" travel novels *Typee* and *Omoo*, Melville hoped to capitalize on contemporary interest in that genre.[4] In 1845, however, the manuscript that would become *Typee* was rejected by Harper & Brothers, who had published Dana's bestseller and therefore seemed like the most likely publisher for Melville's adventures. As had been the case in 1839, Melville struggled to find remuneration in America. Once again, the solution lay across the Atlantic. As described in the previous chapter, Melville got his literary start not in America but in London, through the efforts of his brother. Because most of Melville's

[3] Early on in his career, Melville modeled himself after Dana. As a young man from a respectable family, Dana had gone out to sea before settling down to a more comfortable professional life. He published a fictionalized account of his journey in the hugely popular *Two Years Before the Mast*, before moving into law for the rest of his life (Kaenel 97).

[4] Dana's success was indicative of a wider popularity of the travel account. Scholars such as Stephen Fender, Robert Mulvey, and Robert Patten have pointed out that travel accounts were one of the genres whose sales held up despite the downturn of the Anglo-American publishing industry that marked the 1830s and 40s. Its appeal lay mostly in representations of exotic locales and societies, but American audiences tended also to encounter themselves as the subject of (British) travel accounts.

works were published first in Britain, British reviews tended to appear first, which gave them time to make the Atlantic crossing and influence his critical reception in America.[5]

The high cultural value attached to British publishing gave Melville an advantage in the American market, while also allowing him to have an authoritative – and remunerative – edition on the British market.[6] Securing a prestigious publisher like Murray was a coup, doubly so because Murray's was the ideal British publisher for Melville's sea-faring manuscript. This stalwart publishing house had strong connections to the navy, and was known for travel guides as well as Murray's "Home and Colonial Library" series.[7] In the prospectus for this series, Murray described the collection as including "useful and entertaining volumes" that also upheld high standards of "good taste" (Post-Lauria 13). *Typee* and *Omoo* fit the bill perfectly. Both were relatively well-received in Britain as their representations of far-flung regions made them attractive to audiences looking to stay up to date with exploration and the opportunities for investment it might offer. Melville's works were published alongside titles such as Malcolm's *Sketches of Persia*, Meredith's *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales* and Darwin's *Naturalist's Voyage*. The appeal of the series lay in the fact that these were eyewitness

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[5] Ostensibly, publication was simultaneous in Great Britain and America, but British reviews consistently appeared a week or two before the American ones did. Positive British reviews worked in Melville's favor at the outset of his career, as American critics, for the most part, echoed their judgment and tone. This proved to be a double-edged sword, however, as later in Melville's career, a few negative British reviews created a skewed perception in America of *The Whale*'s critical reception (which was, overall, mildly positive), and led to a much harsher condemnation of *Moby-Dick* in the American press.

[6] This is illustrated by the fact that when Melville, frustrated by Wiley's Presbyterian zeal in expurgating *Typee*, offered his next book, *Omoo* to Harper's in 1846, they promptly accepted it, allegedly sight unseen – not bad for an author they had turned down flat only a year earlier (HMB I: 470)

[7] Murray's imprint became indelibly connected to Melville's name. Not only did the prestige connected to Murray's publishing house help to establish the young author – however precariously – as an up-and-comer on both sides of the Atlantic, but the inclusion of both *Typee* and *Omoo* in Murray's "Home and Colonial Library" ensured that Melville's earliest works spread to the furthest reaches of the British empire, effectively canonizing these South Sea narratives for much of the nineteenth century (HMB I: 510). Because only these books were included, the Library helped cement Melville's reputation as the traveler who lived among cannibals — something which would needle him later on in his career (HMC 193).

accounts of life in far-flung regions, and therefore the narrator in these works must be read as representative of the author.[8]

While British critical reception of Melville's travel accounts was undoubtedly positive, it was certainly not uncontroversial. From the outset, Melville's nationality became the topic of lively speculation for British critics. Indeed, the amount of critical attention bestowed on the question of whether or not Melville was an American is surprising, considering that "Tommo" (ostensibly Melville's pseudonym for both *Typee* and *Omoo*) is almost entirely mute on the matter. In fact, a passage in the opening paragraph of *Typee* creates an Atlantic ambiguity surrounding the narrator's nationality:

> Oh! ye stateroom sailors, who make so much ado about a fourteen days' passage across the Atlantic; who so pathetically relate the privations and hardships of the sea, where, after a day of breakfasting, lunching, dining off five courses, chatting, playing whist, and drinking champagne-punch, it was your hard lot to be shut up in little cabinets of mahogany and maple, and sleep for ten hours, with nothing to disturb you but "those good-for-nothing tars, shouting and tramping overhead,"—what would ye say to our six months out of sight of land? (*Typee* 1)

This passage rhetorically downplays the Atlantic passage in order to emphasize the privations which sailors of the Pacific undergo. By stressing the remoteness of the Pacific, Melville underscores the exotic nature of his subject matter, but the juxtaposition is revealing in and of itself, as it presupposes a shared familiarity with the Atlantic. This situates both author/narrator and audience in the (Anglo-American) Atlantic sphere, but crucially, it does not take a side. With transatlantic traffic going both ways, it is impossible to make any conclusive judgments about the narrator's national identity from this opening paragraph. Neither book, then, was as preoccupied with its narrator's nationality (and by extension, that of its author) as British critics seemed to be.

[8] See, for example, the *Athenaeum* reviews of *Typee*, which, in summarizing the plot, consistently place Melville in the middle of the action, rather than his narratorial pseudonym "Tommo" (HMR 3-6).

One of the earliest British reviews of *Typee*, published in the 28 February 1846 issue of the *Spectator*, set the tone for its overall reception by casting Melville's nationality as the determining factor in the question of veracity (so crucial to the genre):

> Had this work been put forward as the production of an English common sailor, we should have had some doubts of its authenticity [...] But in the United States it is different. There social opinion does not invest any employment with caste discredit; and it seems customary with young men of respectability to serve as common seamen, either as a probationership to the navy or as a mode of seeing life. Cooper and Dana are examples of this practice. The wide-spread system of popular education also bestows upon the American a greater familiarity with popular literature and a readier use of the pen than is usual with classes of the same apparent grade in England. Striking as the composition may sometimes seem in [*Typee*], there is nothing in it beyond the effects of a vivacious mind, acquainted with popular books, and writing with the national fluency (HMR 7-8)

Typically, a narrative of fact was characterized by a simple, even naïve style (Samson 23), as that tended to confirm the critical bias that ordinary sailors could not craft a sophisticated authorial voice. Melville's "striking composition" in *Typee* prompts the *Spectator*'s reviewer to rationalize away the "anomaly" of a common sailor displaying any kind of fluency or erudition by claiming a difference between Great Britain and America in the "caste" system connected to jobs. Being a sailor is presented as an impermanent position for American young men from wealthy families, an intermediate step between education and employment. As such, while it is not a serious alternative to a more "appropriate" profession, according to this review, young Americans dipped in and out of shipboard professions without blotting their social standing. Melville's alternative authorial voice in *Typee*, then, is explained by his nationality, which excused him from British class expectations.

Even so, the *Spectator*'s perceptive reviewer entertained doubts. Many of the passages, he rightly suggests, are "not beyond the range of invention, especially by a person acquainted with the islands, and with the fictions of De Foe [sic]," before adding that "several things have been heightened for effect, if indeed this artistical principle does not pervade the work" (HMR 8). Melville had indeed padded out his own South Seas experiences quite extensively, drawing from genre sources. In the first chapter,

Tommo mentions that the reason he is keen to explore the distant islands of the South Seas, is because of "an irresistible curiosity to see those islands which the other voyagers had so glowingly described" (*Typee* 3), referring to "a few general narratives" (*Typee* 4), thus accounting for any influences of other travel accounts as a part of Tommo's background (Samson 23-24). Tommo lists Captain David Porter's *Journal of a Cruise made to the Pacific Ocean, in the U.S. Frigate Essex, in the years 1812, 1813 and 1814* (1815), Charles Stewart's *A Visit to the South Seas, in the U.S. Ship Vincennes 1829-1830* (1831), and William Ellis's *Polynesian Researches* (1829). As Hershel Parker shows in "Evidences for Late Insertions in Melville's Works," these were the very books from which Melville had borrowed set pieces.[9] The suspicion that *Typee* was (at least partly) a fictional tale led to allegations that the author was not, in fact, an American, but a Briton posing as one. The kicker was Melville's fiercely anti-missionary stance, a popular view in Britain at the time. The *Spectator*'s reviewer ends by citing, at length, the passages in which Melville condemns a missionary's wife from New England who blatantly abuses her station and treats as serfs the "heathens" for whose salvation she "left friends and home" (*Typee* 207). Another reviewer, writing in *John Bull* on 7 March 1846, suggests that Melville's vindication of "the conduct of Lord George Paulet in the affair of the Sandwich Islands, would almost justify the suspicion that the work is not written by an American at all" (HMR 13).[10]

Melville was quickly pressganged into the British literary tradition, with British critics appropriating him as a British. His unusual eloquence for a sailor was initially explained by an American nationality, but as the veracity of the account continued to be doubted, critics came to perceive the eloquence of the text as a terrific in-joke, in which

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[9] This process of being influenced by earlier accounts is common in most nineteenth-century travel writing, and Melville is obviously not at all coy about it in *Typee*. As I will show in the third chapter of this dissertation, Dickens's account of his first American tour was so heavily inflected by earlier travel narratives that critics charged it with being clichéd.

[10] In 1843, Captain Paulet RN occupied the Hawaiian islands, after allegations that the American councilors of King Kamehameha III (and specifically, the American Methodist missionary, Dr. Judd) had induced him to deny British subjects their rights. Tensions built, and both the American and British navy sent warships to the area. The conflict was resolved peacefully, but the incident gained some notoriety.

some British man of letters was masquerading as an American sailor. Several critics, keen to show they had not been taken in, joined in on the "fun," such as in a satirical notice published in the 12 December 1846 London *Literary Gazette*:

> [A]s we happened to fancy the name of Melville to be equivalent to that of Sinbad the Sailor, we certainly abstained from noticing this clever and entertaining production, as an apology for which, we beg Mr. Melville to accept this explanation, and do us the honour to dine with us on the 1st of April next: we intend to ask only a small party,--mssrs. Crusoe, Sinbad, Gulliver, Munchausen [...]. (HMR 68)

According to this review, Melville, both as the protagonist and the author of *Typee*, was as fictional as the other illustrious adventurers/dinner guests. This notice embedded *Typee* within the British literary tradition even as it debunked *Typee*'s factuality *and* the identity of its author. The *Gazette* should by rights have listed him alongside Defoe, Swift and Raspe, but in his incredulity, the reviewer instead places Melville among those authors' infamous characters. Given the companions Melville was assigned, it seems to have been intended as a compliment, a humorous tip of the hat to the successful prankster. Instead, it denied Melville's nationality and, indeed, his very identity.

In its June 1847 issue, *Blackwood's Magazine* considered the matter settled. "Herman Melville," wrote its reviewer of *Omoo*, "sounds to us vastly like the harmonious and carefully selected appellation of an imaginary hero of romance" (HMR 120). Utterly unconvinced by any paratextual markers of the author's American nationality, specifically *Omoo*'s dedication to "Herman Gansevoort, Of Gansevoort, Saratoga County, New York," the reviewer considered the "Melvilles" to be part of the fiction:[11]

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[11] *Typee*'s dedication was to "Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," while *Omoo*'s full dedication was to "Herman Gansevoort, Of Gansevoort, Saratoga County, New York, This Work is Cordially Inscribed by his Nephew, the Author." Both dedications suggest Melville was indeed an American, but for the *Blackwood's Magazine* reviewer of *Omoo*, such markers of local identity were entirely unconvincing. In a letter to Murray, written on 29 October 1847, Melville responded to the *Blackwood's* review: "Old Maga – God bless his cocked hat! – shakes his venerable head sagatiously [sic], notwithstanding his keen relish for the humorous. Verily, could he survey the portly figure & substantial Dutch bearing of "mine honored Uncle" he

> Of the existence of Uncle Gansevoort, of Gansevoort, Saratoga County, we are wholly incredulous. We shall commission our New York correspondents to inquire as to the reality of Mr. Melville's avuncular relative, and, until certified of his corporality, shall set down the gentleman with the Dutch patronymic as a member of an imaginary clan. (HMR 120)

Like the reviewer in the *Literary Gazette*, the review in *Blackwood's* was complimentary, calling *Omoo*'s tone "refined and well-bred" and claiming that its author wrote "like one accustomed to good European society" (ibid.). Neither Herman Melville nor Herman Gansevoort were imaginary characters, however, and the latter did actually live in Gansevoort in New York's Saratoga County. Indeed, the hamlet of Gansevoort was named after Melville's maternal grandfather, Peter Gansevoort, who distinguished himself as a hero of the Revolutionary War by successfully defending Fort Stanwix from a British siege, effectively ending the British Saratoga campaign: immaculate credentials for a patriotic American family.[12]

This local family history was prominent in Melville's upbringing, but *Blackwood*'s reviewer read it instead as an escalation of the tongue-in-cheek claim of being American by a British wit.[13] Melville's impressive family ancestry became nothing more than made-up names in a literary game. This review was direct and overt in its suspicion of the author's nationality and identity. For *Blackwood's*, Melville's style and eloquence – which the 1846 *Spectator* review had attributed to Melville's American nationality –

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would, perforce, confess that a little flesh & blood entered into the composition of my "avuncular relative" (HMC 98).

[12] Not only was Melville related to General Gansevoort, but his paternal grandfather was also an American hero. Major Thomas Melvill took part in the Boston Tea Party, and participated in the shelling of the English fleet at Boston in 1776. Both Major Melvill and General Gansevoort received the Marquis de Lafayette during his American tour of 1824, confirming and cementing their role in the Revolutionary War (HMB I: 44).

[13] Parker writes that "General Peter Gansevoort was known as the "Hero of Fort Stanwix," even among his children and his grandchildren [...] in the parlor of his widow [...] he remained a palpable presence, not only through his array of military artifacts but also in a fine portrait" (HMB I: 5). The Gansevoort branch of the family had not – as Melville's father had done – squandered its post-revolution wealth, and was frequently called on to support the impoverished Melvilles.

became almost a British passport. Instead, the argument in this piece seems to be that, surely, this was too well-written to have come from an *American*?

If *Typee* and *Omoo* had been any other genre, this British reception would not have been a problem – in fact, it would have been ideal. The controversy surrounding his nationality/identity would have continued to attract British critical attention to Melville's subsequent works, but not negatively, and those British reviews would have ensured that American critics took note. Indeed, briefly, Melville managed this dynamic, thanks to his brother Gansevoort who sent British reviews of *Typee* across the Atlantic, including some of those which called Melville's identity into question.[14] On 18 March 1846, Gansevoort sent reviews to his mother and to Herman, as well as to seventeen others, such as Edwin Croswell (editor of the *Argus*) and Nathaniel Parker Willis (editor of the weekly *National Press*). In his biography of Melville, Hershel Parker remarks that this "odd lot of relatives, friends, politician's wives, political allies, and journalists could be counted upon to help, indirectly or directly, with the launching of the Wiley & Putnam edition of *Typee*" (HMB I: 400). These positive British reviews made Melville modestly famous in America, New York's very own literary sensation in London.[15]

Unfortunately, *Typee* and *Omoo* were travel accounts, and Murray, for the sake of his "Home and Colonial Library," needed to silence the critics who doubted both Melville's identity and the veracity of his account, so he insisted again and again on being given proof of Melville's journeys. Melville's response was one of exasperation: "You ask for 'documentary evidences' of my having been at the Marquesas–in Typee.–Dear Sir, how

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[14] In a letter to Murray, written on 2 September 1846, Melville asks his London publisher to send him "any further notices of the book you may see," beyond the ones he had already read in "the Spectator, Times, Sun, John Bull, Athenaeum, Critic, Eclectic, Simmons, Shilling Magazine & one or two others" (HMC 66).

[15] This "London reputation" of Melville's survived him. The editorial eulogy of Melville which appeared in the 2 October 1891 issue of the *New York Times* claimed that "to the ponderous and quarterly British reviews of that time, [Melville] was about the most interesting of literary Americans." In response to this piece, a correspondent signing the initials O.G.H. paid further tribute to Melville by writing: "Despairing of recognition at home, accident led [Melville] to send his manuscript to London, where its merits were seen at once by the renowned "Murray," king of bookmen, and given to the English public with a success which must have astonished the modest author, who awoke and found himself famous" (*New York Times*, 6 October 1891).

indescibably [sic] vexatious, when one really feels in his very bones that he has been there, to have a parcel of blockheads question it!" (HMC 65). Melville then added, rather glibly: "Not (let me hurry to tell you) that Mr John Murray comes under that category – Oh no – Mr Murray I am ready to swear stands fast by the faith, beleiving [sic] "Typee" from Preface to Sequel" (ibid.). At this point in Melville's career, the absence of Gansevoort – who had died of illness quite suddenly in the spring of 1846 – was keenly felt. Melville overplayed his hand with Murray, and lost his connection to the illustrious house.[16]

For Murray, the bottom line was that his house did not publish fiction. British literary critics were happy to praise *Typee* and *Omoo* as clever British invention, but the subscribers of the "Home and Colonial Library" wanted only the "useful and entertaining" non-fiction travel accounts the prospectus had promised. The "taint of fiction" which surrounded Melville's works made them useless to readers seeking edification or investment information, which, in turn, damaged Murray's reputation

[16] Emboldened by the positivity of the British reviews of *Omoo* and by "overtures from a house in London" (HMC 98), Melville wrote to Murray in October 1847, demanding more money and clumsily threatening to take his works elsewhere: "I have recently received overtures from a house in London concerning the prospective purchase of the English copyright of a third book. From this house the offer would be a liberal one [...] With regard to the new book [*Mardi*], let me say that my inclinations lead me to prefer the imprimatur of 'John Murray' to that of any other London publisher; but at the same [time] circumstances paramount to every other consideration, force me to regard my literary affairs in a strong pecuniary light" (HMC 98-99). The editor of Melville's correspondence, Lynn Horth, speculates that the "house" in question was the publisher Richard Bentley, who would become Melville's British publisher after Murray refused *Mardi*. See HMC 93-4, 98-99. Murray's reply was courteous but clear: taken together, *Typee* and *Omoo* had not turned a profit, and while he was "willing [...] nay desirous" to remain Melville's British publisher, the best offer Murray could make for a new South Sea adventure was a hundred guineas on publication, with half-profits on sales. Murray writes: "Of Typee I printed 5000 Copies and have sold 4104. Of Omoo, 4000 and have sold 2512—Thus I have gained by the former 51 – 2. 3. & by the latter am a loser of 57 – 16 – 10 – I do not willingly enter into such details but this is bona fide the state of the Case. I sho[d] not have entered into such details with an Author but that it is evident from your Manner of Writing that you and your friend suppose me to be reaping immense advantages in which you ought to be participating" (HMC 590). Albemarle Street would never again publish another one of Melville's works, despite being offered *White-Jacket* in 1849.

and that of his series (Paston 51).[17] In a letter to Melville, written 3 December 1847, Murray tried to get this point across: "I wish some means could be taken to convince the English Public that your Books are not fictions imitations of Robinson Crusoe – T'is the Feeling of being tricked which impedes their Circulat[n] here" (HMC 591). In January 1848, Murray seems to have suggested that Melville present himself in London, as a way of shoring up the veracity of his books. This, then, was the heart of the matter. Melville's nationality was inextricably linked to the reception of his books. If Murray could show that Melville was indeed an American author, and not some New World persona affected by a British wit (or worse, another MacGregor), the critical perception of *Typee* and *Omoo* as fictions might also have changed.

Melville's response to this request, written on 25 March 1848, was satirical to the point of being insolent:

> Will you still continue, Mr Murray, to break seals from the Land of Shadows – persisting in carrying on this mysterious correspondence with an imposter shade, that under the fanciful appellation of Herman Melvill [sic] still practices upon your honest credulity? – have a care, I pray, lest while thus parleying with a ghost you fall upon some horrible evel [sic], peradventure sell your soul ere you are aware [...] only glancing at the closing sentence of your letter, I read there your desire to test the corporeality of H— M— by clapping eyes on him in London. (HMC 105)

Murray, having dealt with Gansevoort, most likely did not doubt that Melville was who he said he was, and his response to Melville's sarcasm was "Antarctic" (HMC 109). When asked to prove the veracity of his books, Melville's attitude was consistently flippant.[18]

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[17] Murray began receiving complaints from aristocratic subscribers to the Library: Sir Walter Farquhar forwarded a letter from Lord Ashley to Albemarle Street, calling Melville's works "reprehensible throughout," and demanding "some assurance [from Murray] that there shall not appear in his series another volume similar in character, for without such assurance I shall be reluctantly compelled to cease subscribing to the series" (Paston 51).

[18] In a letter to Murray written on 31 March 1847, Melville had joked, "I hope that the sagacious Critic of the London Literary Gazette will hereafter abate something of his incredulity. I can assure him, that I am really in

Even worse than Melville's lack of cooperation, however, was the distaste he expressed for the "stifling" genre requirements of the travel narrative. Melville claimed that he felt "irked, cramped & fettered by plodding along with dull common places" (HMC 106), and proposed a shift from fact to fiction to Murray:

> The truth is, Sir, that the reiterated imputation of being a romancer in disguise has at last pricked me into a resolution to show those who may take any interest in the matter, that a *real* romance of mine is no Typee or Omoo, & is made of different stuff altogether. [...] Well: proceeding in my narrative of *fact* I began to feel an incurable distaste for the same; & a longing to plume my pinions for a flight [...]. (HMC 106)

This letter must have been further proof to Murray that Melville and he were not on the same page. Melville's (potential) value as an author to Murray and the "Home and Colonial Library" series lay in the truthfulness of his pen: that was the scope of the series, and the focus of Murray's firm. By proposing this radical generic shift, Melville was effectively undermining the authorial identity – however problematic – he had already built up. In a subsequent letter, Melville explicitly reiterated his desire to break with his earlier works, requesting that *Mardi*'s title page mention neither *Typee* nor *Omoo*, as he wished to "separate 'Mardi' as much as possible from those books" (HMC 114-15). At this point, negotiations between Melville and Murray broke down irreparably, and Richard Bentley became Melville's British publisher. The British reception of *Typee* and *Omoo*, then, was informed by what Melville's nationality was perceived to be, and when British critics pressganged his first books into British literary tradition, it fundamentally problematized the premise of their genre. Melville's incredulous critics reinterpreted the ostensibly factual travel accounts as elaborate

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existence" (87). He was similarly facetious about the *Blackwood's* review (see fn.66), but Murray was less amused. He insisted on the documentary evidence he needed to silence the skeptics and preserve the integrity of his "Home and Colonial Library." Only in June 1848 did Melville provide Murray with any authenticating documents, in a final bid to establish the factuality of his South Sea adventures: "[b]y this mail I purposed sending you one or two original documents, evidencing the incredible fact, that I have actually been a common sailor before the mast, in the Pacific" (HMC 109).

British pastiches of American authorship and appropriated Melville's literary labor along a transatlantic axis.

At the outset of *Mardi*, Melville's narrator finds himself bound to a contract, the terms of which are not entirely to his liking. Having shipped onto the *Arcturion* to hunt the sperm whale "whose brain enlightens the world" (29), he is appalled to find that the captain, after a fruitless hunt, has set his sights on the "horrid and indecent Right whaling" (32).[19] This, the narrator declares, was "nothing more nor less than a tacit contravention of the agreement between us," adding that "there was something degrading in it" (ibid.). The confrontation is inevitable:

> "Captain," said I, touching my sombrero to him as I stood at the wheel one day, "It's very hard to carry me off this way to purgatory. I shipped to go elsewhere." "Yes, and so did I," was his reply. "But it can't be helped. Sperm whales are not to be had. We've been out now three years, and something or other must be got; for the ship is hungry for oil, and her hold a gulf to look into. But cheer up my boy; once in the Bay of Kamschatka, and we'll be all afloat with what we want, though it be none of the best." (ibid.)

Indeed, by 1849, Melville had been "out" on the literary scene for three years, and his purse, like the ship's hold, was "a gulf to look into." Neither his literary fame – such as it was – nor his family connections to the Democratic Party (then in power) had proved effectual in obtaining a government job at a time when Melville desperately needed financial security in order to marry Elizabeth Shaw.[20] Melville could not afford to

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[19] In *Melville, His World and His Work* (2005) Andrew Delbanco notes that the *Arcturion* sounds suspiciously like the short-lived New York monthly *Arcturus* (1840 – 1842, edited by Evert Duyckinck) which Edgar Allan Poe would later come to describe as "excessively tasteful [...] looking very much like other works which had failed through notorious dullness" (*Godey's Lady's Book* 16). The fact that the *Arcturion*, at the time of narration, has already sunk ("alas! sea-moss is over it now — and rusty forever the bolts that held together that old sea hearth-stone)" (31) may indeed suggest parallels to *Arcturus*, which had "gone under" so soon. If we take Delbanco's point, the narrator's flight from the *Arcturion* in *Mardi* could be a metaphor for Melville's departure from his initial (non-fictional) course.

[20] In 1847, Melville travelled to Washington in hopes of securing one of the jobs created by the New Loan Bill at the Treasury Department (HMC 81). "If I do not succeed in this specific object," Melville had written to his

continue the pretense of the leisured authorship of Washington and Dana. Writing for reputation was all well and good if a political appointment or professional opportunity was forthcoming, but since this was not the case for Melville, he turned to writing professionally.[21]

It is tempting to read the conflict between *Mardi*'s narrator and the captain of the *Arcturion* as a fictional recasting of Melville's own frustration with the terms of his agreement with Murray. Certainly, in the introduction to *Mardi*, Melville tartly wonders whether, given the skepticism surrounding his factual books, his fiction "might not, possibly, be received for a verity: in some degree the reverse of [the] previous experience" (xvii). Contemporary critical reception, however, quickly showed that this would not be the case: the metaphysics of *Mardi* were "different stuff" indeed, and the reviews were almost unanimously damning. Kaenel has pointed out that antebellum critics expected a writer's development to be a coherent and linear progress, and inconsistency was seen as a kind of "falling off", not "[keeping] the promise of his first book" (62). Melville's reluctance to stay within the boundaries of genre irritated contemporary critics. One reviewer, writing in the *London Athenaeum* of March 24, 1849, professes an inability to pin *Mardi* down: "If this book be meant as a pleasantry, the mirth has been oddly left out – if as an allegory, the key of the casket is 'buried in ocean

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uncle Peter Gansevoort before leaving for Washington, "[I will] press such claims [on the Democratic Party] as I have upon some other point" (ibid.). These claims are nebulous at best – Melville had never been directly involved in politics. Gansevoort Melville's efforts in supporting the 1844 Polk presidential campaign had been repaid when Gansevoort was appointed Secretary to the Legation in London. In fact, when Gansevoort died in 1846, the Melvilles could not afford to pay for his medical care or his funeral, prompting Melville to beg President Polk and other dignitaries of the Democratic Party for financial support in the matter. Worse, the family's connections to the Democrats were muddled by an internal conflict. For a full discussion of Melville's failure to obtain a government post, see Hayford and Davis "Herman Melville as Office-Seeker" (1949).

[21] Nor was this as rash a decision as it might seem, given the infamy of Melville's eventual near-total failure in the Anglo-Saxon literary marketplace. His later works – *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre* (1852) and *The Confidence-Man* – all contributed to some extent in destroying Melville's literary reputation and value, but it is worth remembering that initially, his books were fairly well-received and Melville was relatively well-paid. Charvat reminds us that in the first five years of publishing, Melville's overall literary income averaged out at $1,600, a moderate sum, but one which few other American authors commanded at the time (193).

deep' – if as a romance, it fails from tediousness – if as a prose-poem, it is chargeable with puerility" (HMR 193). A review in the September 29, 1849 issue of *Saroni's Musical Times* drives this point home:

> We proceed to notice this extraordinary production with feelings anything but gentle towards its gifted but eccentric author. The truth is, that we have been deceived, inveigled, entrapped into reading a *work* where we had been led to expect only a *book*. We were flattered with the promise of an account of travel, amusing, though fictitious; and we have been compelled to pore over an undigested mass of rambling metaphysics. (HMR 249)

Melville's generic shift, from "factual" travel account to fiction proper, made *Mardi*'s reception problematic. It sold poorly, and in a letter Bentley wrote to Melville on 20 July 1849, the publisher repeatedly noted that he had not sold enough copies of *Mardi* to cover his expenses (HMC 596). Bentley attributed this failure to "the nature of the work," the third volume of which he tactfully described as "not perhaps altogether adapted to the class of readers whom 'Omoo' and the First Volume of 'Mardi' gratified" (596), essentially foreshadowing the criticism in *Saroni's*.[22]

From the British reviews of *Mardi* it is clear that Melville's American nationality was no longer in doubt, and Melville's visit to England late in 1849 settled the matter entirely. Nevertheless, the controversy surrounding Melville's nationality would have a lasting effect on the reception of his works. For example, one reviewer of *Mardi*, writing for the September 1849 issue of the *American Whig Review*, attributed what he called "pedantry and affectation" in that novel to the praise *Typee* and *Omoo* had received in Great Britain (HMR 248). *Mardi*, which becomes increasingly metaphysical as the narrative progresses, proved unpopular on both sides of the Atlantic. British critical response, which had cast Melville's previous books as elaborate (British) pastiches of American authorship in the style of Dana and Cooper, wasted no time in reinscribing the

[22] To make matters worse, in the same letter, Bentley informed Melville of the state of English copyright law after the infamous *Boosey v Purday* case. The best his London publisher could now offer Melville for his next novel was "£100 secured to you on account of half profits," a steep decline from the "Two Hundred and ten Pounds" as an advance on half-profits he had given for *Mardi* (HMB I: 619).

norms that *Typee* and *Omoo* had supposedly been parodying onto *Mardi*. The reviewer for the 19 May, 1849 issue of the London *Morning Chronicle* claims that Melville's writing is "capital all the time he is on the water in his whale-boat" (HMR 229). This reviewer calls the first – and by far the least metaphysical – volume of *Mardi* "exquisite," and exclaims: "[i]f he would but keep to *that* style—" (ibid., original emphasis). The impression that British critics perceived sea-faring stories to be Melville's proper sphere is bolstered by the reviews of *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*. In the November 1849 issue of *Blackwood's*, one reviewer writes that "after a decided and deplorable retrogression [i.e. *Mardi*], Mr Melville seems likely to go ahead again, if he will only take time and pains, and not over-write himself, and avoid certain affectations and pedantry [...] We gladly miss much of the obscurity and nonsense that abound in the former work" (HMR 262).

## 2.2 Prosy Guidebooks and Political Pagans: *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*

In chapter 18 of *Redburn*, the eponymous protagonist Wellingborough Redburn is presented with a dusty copy of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* – a book from which he states, somewhat laconically, that he "expected to reap great profit and sound instruction" (99). From the first, Redburn is frustrated by the dryness of the book – "dry as crackers and cheese, to be sure" – and he gives up after only a few chapters, remarking that "the old backgammon board, [sic] we had at home, lettered on the back, '*The History of Rome*,' was quite as full of matter, and a great deal more entertaining" (100). Not finished lambasting Smith, Redburn wonders whether "anybody had ever read it, even the author himself," before adding:

> At length I fell asleep, with the volume in my hand; and never slept so sound before; after that, I used to wrap my jacket round it, and use it for a pillow; for which purpose it answered very well: only I sometimes waked up feeling dull and stupid; but of course the book could not have been the cause of that. (ibid.)

Redburn seems unconvinced by Smith's self-regulating system of surpluses to be traded or reinvested, never even making it far enough into *Wealth of Nations* to learn about the idea of gross domestic product and the concomitant governmental responsibility towards protecting it.

Indeed, the analogy Redburn makes between *Wealth of Nations* and the "Dream Book" of shipmate "Jack Blunt" seems to reflect poorly on the former work.[23] Blunt's book purports to be a system for "the foreseeing of future events; so that all preparatory measures might be taken beforehand; which would be convenient, and satisfactory every way, if true" (*Redburn* 104). Blunt follows this system devotedly sitting down to it as "if he were casting up his daily accounts" and even though he is "often perplexed and lost in mazes concerning the cabalistic figures in the book," he is persuaded "that between [its] red covers, and in his own dreams, lay all the secrets of futurity" (ibid.). The joke, then, is not on *Wealth of Nations* or on the "Dream Book," but on the readers who expected to reap individual benefit from the application of their respective systems. Blunt's assumption that he can predict the future by entering his dreams into a cypher is not more absurd than Redburn's assumption that he can "apply" Smithian economics to his life in order to "reap great profit."

The problem for Redburn is that a good seventy years after the publication of *Wealth of Nations*, its quarrel with feudal mercantilism was hopelessly outdated, as Smith's system had already come to replace it as the prevailing economic ideology of the global market. It belonged unequivocally to past generations: the copy which is taken from "its dusty shelf" and given to Redburn by Mr. Jones originally belonged to the latter's father. The deceptive fixity of print is revealed to be uniformly problematic: Smithian ideology

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[23] The "Dream Book" is *Napoleon's Oraculum and Dreambook*, a delightful example of early nineteenth-century quasi-occultism, the credibility of which is supposed to stem from its ostensibly long and complicated publication history: from a scroll of papyrus "found in the year 1801 by M. Sonnini in one of the royal tombs near Mount Libycus in Upper Egypt," it was translated by "a learned Copt" in Napoleon's retinue from its hieroglyphic original into German "in order to preserve the matter secret." From the German, then, it was translated into English by "Herman Kirchenhoffer, of the University of Pavia &c. &c. &c." It was debunked almost immediately after its publication in 1822 (apart from everything else, the preface detailing its pedigree is riddled with factual impossibilities).

is as unreliable as Blunt's "cabalistic figures" and as outdated as Redburn's "prosy old guidebook" (165). Significantly, this guidebook, *The Picture of Liverpool: or, Stranger's Guide and Gentleman's Pocket Companion*, with its Romantic images of England as a place of "old Abbeys and Minsters" (169), had also belonged to Redburn's father. This doubling of *Wealth of Nations* and *Picture of Liverpool* is significant, because the effects of Smith's laissez-faire economics are not only partly responsible for the changes that make Redburn's experience with England so disappointing, but also for Redburn's voyage to England in the first place: Redburn is forced into the merchant navy by his family's financial troubles, after his father's genteel importing business had gone bankrupt "in a storm of adversity" (169). This storyline obviously parallels the fate of Melville's father, whose importing business had suffered in the financial crises of the 1820s and went under in 1830. In an 1822 letter to Lemuel Shaw, Melville's father complained that business had been slow as a result of a "general scarcity of money," but he remained hopeful that Europe would become involved in "the anticipated struggle between the Ottoman & the Muscovite," so that American importers like him could "profit by their folly" (qtd. in HMB I: 14).

Although *Redburn* is subtitled "Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service," the novel engages with questions of nationality to such an extent that critics like Christopher Hager have called it a "drama of national identity coming to terms with imperial expanse, the increasingly global links of U.S. trade and [...] America's cultural estrangement from its geographically localized Revolutionary origins" (305-6). At the very outset of Redburn's journey, passing through the New York Narrows on the merchantman *Highlander*, he describes a piece of American martial history, "a great castle or fort, all in ruins [...] built by Governor Tompkins in the time of the last war with England, but [which] was never used, I believe, and so they left it to decay" (43). The last piece of American soil Redburn sees before reaching open ocean is this fortification against America's former colonial oppressor, which is recast in his memory as an American idyll:

> It was a beautiful place, as I remembered it, and very wonderful and romantic [...] On the side away from the water was a green grove of trees, very thick and shady; and through this grove, in a sort of twilight you came to an arch in the wall of the fort, dark as night; and going in, you groped about in long vaults, twisting and

> turning on every side, till at last you caught a peep of green grass and sunlight, and all at once came out in an open space in the middle of the castle. And there you would see cows quietly grazing, or ruminating under the shade of young trees, and perhaps a calf frisking about, and trying to catch its own tail; and sheep clambering among the mossy ruins, and cropping the little tufts of grass sprouting out of the sides of the embrasures for cannon. (*Redburn* 43)

Symbols of regeneration abound inside the "decayed" castle. The young trees, frisky calves and the grass reclaiming the cannon embrasures all point towards how well America weathered British belligerence, implying British impotence on American soil. Ironically, the castle Redburn describes is based on Fort Wadsworth, formerly Fort Tompkins, and initially Flagstaff Fort, a significant British fortification during the Revolutionary War.[24] While it is impossible to say whether Melville was aware of the fort's history – though, given how prominent the New York stage of the Revolutionary War was in the Melville-Gansevoort family history, it is likely that he knew of its British past – Redburn's pastoral recasting of the defensive structure is significant regardless. The passage's oblique triumphalism asserts that the United States is a political superpower in its own right, but more fundamentally, this "Romantic scene" prefigures the archaic, almost Arthurian, England Redburn expects to find on his commercial voyage.

As soon as the *Highlander* anchors off the Lancashire shore, however, Redburn is struck by how similar Liverpool looks to New York:

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[24] While it is true that the masonry fort Redburn describes was built in the early nineteenth century under the supervision of Governor Daniel D. Tompkins, the site already had a long history of fortification by the British. In 1663, a year before Peter Stuyvesant surrendered New Amsterdam to the British, a "small slight wooden Block-house" was erected to protect the Dutch settlers from Lenape attacks (Black 16). When the British navy arrived in 1664, they took the blockhouse without resistance. Over a century later, in 1778 British forces began constructing a redoubt and a line of twenty-six gun platforms on the site of the blockhouse. By 1782, a four-bastion fort and several barbette batteries had been added (23). These fortifications formed the basis on which Fort Tompkins was built, but construction ceased two years *after* the War of 1812 had ended, at which point the fort was still incomplete (46).

> Looking shoreward, I beheld lofty ranges of dingy warehouses, which seemed very deficient in the elements of the marvelous; and bore a most unexpected resemblance to the ware-houses along South-street in New York. There was nothing strange; nothing extraordinary about them [...] to be sure, I did not expect that every house in Liverpool must be a Leaning Tower of Pisa, or a Strasbourg Cathedral; but yet, these edifices I must confess, were a sad and bitter disappointment to me. (*Redburn* 140)

To Redburn's mind, the Liverpool docks are a synecdoche of Great Britain, which is in turn embedded in a European tradition. Everything is familiar, and because the similarities are not uncanny, they disappoint and ultimately bore Redburn. The English pilot who steers the *Highlander* to its anchorage fascinates Redburn at first, but when it turns out this Englishman speaks "a language quite familiar to [Redburn]" (139), he dismisses the Liverpudlian as "common-place" and dull. These similarities serve to disenchant the old world and present America and Great Britain as a homogeneous and consolidated transatlantic space. To be sure, the Atlantic separates the two nations, but when Redburn goes ashore in Liverpool, he finds them joined symbolically in the Baltimore Clipper tavern, an establishment owned and operated by an American and his British wife. The tavern's sign depicts the British unicorn and the American eagle side by side, which Redburn deems a "very judicious and tasty device [...] yet in no way derogating from the honor and dignity of England, but placing the two nations, indeed, upon a footing of perfect equality" (145). Nevertheless, Redburn is evidently disillusioned by the state of British society, as the realities of global trade and transport supersede his more high-minded expectations:

> From the street came a confused uproar of ballad-singers, bawling women, babies, and drunken sailors. And this is England? But where are the old abbeys, and the York Minsters, and the lord mayors, and coronations, and the May-poles, and fox-hunters, and Derby races, and the dukes and duchesses, and the Count d'Orsays, which, from all my reading, I had been in the habit of associating with England? (*Redburn* 148)

The Atlantic as an ideologically charged physical divide between Great Britain and America is largely elided when Redburn realizes that the chasm between him and high society is socio-economic rather than national/geographic. Despite crossing the broad

Atlantic, Redburn, as a sailor in the merchant navy, is no closer to meeting the Queen than he had been in New York. Sailors, Melville writes, are "one of the wheels of this world," and despite, or perhaps because of, their role in powering a global economy, "[n]o contrivance can lift *them* out of the mire; for upon something the coach [society] must be bottomed" (153-54).[25] The mechanisms of trade and economy in a global marketplace demystify national stereotypes in *Redburn* and reposition America and Great Britain along a socio-economic axis.[26]

What drives this point home is Redburn's musings on the statue depicting a dying Nelson in the arms of Victory, surrounded by symbolic representations of the Admiral's principal victories in the form of four chained figures.[27] By the mid-nineteenth century, Nelson's status in Britain was near-mythical, as he had come to symbolize the basis of the Empire: British sea power. Dwelling on the monument to Nelson's memory – significantly located in front of Liverpool's Merchant Exchange, right at the heart of the city's commercial center – Redburn is quick to expose the economic motivation behind the Admiral's heroic exploits (and, by extension, behind the "Britannia Rules the Waves" jingoism Nelson had come to symbolize). Nelson's victories at the Nile, and later at Trafalgar, were appropriately glorious, but the British navy did not want to beat the French in sea battle so much as they wanted to keep the French off the seas. Napoleon had access to the entire European heartland, but Britain, an island nation and trading superpower, needed its dominance over the seas to survive economically. Blockades

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[25] Redburn's shipmate Ned is the ultimate embodiment of the central role which sailors played on the global market, as he personally enacts the importation of foreign commodities: "He [Ned] went to Havre for his woollen shirts, to Panama for his hats, to China for his silk handkerchiefs, and direct to Calcutta for his cheroots; and as a great joker in the watch used to say, no doubt he would at last have occasion to go to Russia for his halter [i.e. hangman's noose]; the wit of which saying was presumed to be in the fact, that the Russian hemp is the best; though that is not wit which needs explaining" (55).

[26] As Paul Giles points out in *Virtual Americas* , this demystification works in both directions, as Redburn has to assure his British companion Harry Bolton that not all "Yankees lived in wigwams" (57).

[27] Alison Yarrington has shown that this is a convention carried over from Renaissance sculpting, being "a traditional means of representing a monarch's dominion over the four quarters of the globe," and refers to the *Monument to Ferdinand I, de Medici* (1615-24, Livorno), with its four Moorish captives as an example (325).

such as the one at Brest (which lasted for almost eight full years) were a dull grind, but they kept the French fleet cooped up, safely away from British trade routes and merchantmen. British sea power, then, existed to safeguard the British economy. By associating the sculpted "woe-begone figures of captives" which surround Nelson's pedestal with "African slaves in the market-place" (170) Redburn makes Nelson and Liverpool complicit in the economic practices of the slave trade:

> And my thoughts would revert to Virginia and Carolina; and also to the historical fact, that the African slave-trade once constituted the principal commerce of Liverpool; and that the prosperity of the town was once supposed to have been indissolubly linked to its prosecution. (ibid.)

As Redburn makes his opinions on the slave trade abundantly clear – he finds it "sordid" and calls its abolition in England "the triumph of sound policy and humanity" – his association of the continued slave trade in the antebellum South with Britain's historical involvement in it works to undermine the moral high ground adopted by the British in the matter of American slavery.[28]

American abolitionism had garnered much British support, and British presses published numerous anti-slavery tracts and narratives for circulation in America. This enraged pro-slavery Americans, who denounced all British involvement in the matter and called British visitors voicing opinions in favor of abolitionism like Harriet Martineau "foreign incendiaries" (Logan 210). In *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900*, Jan Marsh argues that "British eagerness to erase its slave-owning past" informed attitudes of national superiority over America, "both before and during the civil war" (Marsh 16). Global trade and economy level moral power relationships in the Anglo-American transatlantic sphere: by implicating Great Britain in the continued

[28] Liverpool's involvement in the trade triangle between Britain, Africa and America has been well-documented: see for example the collection of essays *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery* (2007), edited by David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz and Anthony Tibbles, and Stephen D. Behrendt's "The Transatlantic Slave Trade" in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*.

practice of slavery, Redburn deflates this British "self-congratulation" in the matter of abolition.[29]

The picture of Liverpool's docks which Redburn paints is – understandably, for a sailor in Britain's largest port – dominated by ships, canals, and warehouses, structures of trade and economy, which are characterized as being similar to the ones in New York's shipping district. These economic structures are imbued with moral values, as they work to equalize the nations involved in global trade. Melville harnesses this same sleight of hand when Redburn moves beyond the docks, remarking on "the humiliating fact, wholly unforeseen by me, that upon the whole, and barring the poverty and beggary, Liverpool away from the docks, was very much such a place as New York" (*Redburn* 222). The similarity of the spatial setting implies a shared quality between those societies at large, but what is striking in Redburn's descriptions of Liverpool "away from the docks," is that here, too, commercial rather than public spaces stand out. The similarities Redburn remarks on hinge on trade and consumption, comparing Leeds Canal to the Erie Canal, St. John's market to New York's Fulton Market, and imaginatively relocating Lord-Street jewelers' shops to Broadway (223). Both Liverpool and New York, then, are characterized as purely commercial spaces, homogenized by the circuit of trade. This legitimizes Redburn's position as an observer of British society – the none-too-subtle insult about "poverty and beggary" indicates that Redburn feels qualified to criticize Great Britain – and tempers the vestigial prestige of Great Britain, but more importantly, this homogenization in *Redburn* installs America as a partner in economic affairs, rather than a peripheral actor.

*Redburn*'s preoccupation with global trade and transnational labor as Anglo-American links which work to level socio-cultural values is supplemented by a declaration of American pan-nationalism and its subsequent insertion into global politics. By claiming all nations as its predecessors, *Redburn*'s America inserts itself into global politics by ontologically implicating every other state:

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[29] De facto abolition in the British Empire came in 1843 (a full decade after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was voted) when territories formerly controlled by the British East India Trading Company became a part of the British Empire. Prior to that, these corporation-controlled territories were exempt from British law.

> There is something in the contemplation of the mode in which America has been settled, that, in a noble breast, should forever extinguish the prejudices of national dislikes. Settled by the people of all nations, all nations may claim her for their own [...] our blood is as the flood of the Amazon, made up of a thousand noble currents all pouring into one. We are not a nation, so much as a world; for unless we may claim all the world for our sire, like Melchisedec, we are without father or mother. (*Redburn* 185)[30]

I read Melville's prose as a self-conscious engagement with the paradoxical fluidity of Anglo-American labor in contemporary processes of nation-building. Margaret Cohen has argued that Melville – like James Fenimore Cooper – "juggled nationalist and internationalist imperatives" to fit the "U.S. sense of its destiny as 'a nation among nations'"(9). Melville takes up this image of America-as-world and explores its implications in *White-Jacket; Or, The World on a Man-of-War*. The eponymous White-Jacket goes into service on the frigate USS *Neversink*, and initially promises to chronicle the vessel's return voyage from Callao, Peru, back to Boston. In reality, the novel is an outspoken critique of working conditions on American navy ships of the early-to-mid-nineteenth century and contains an elaborate allegory which hinges on interpreting the man-of-war as a metaphor for America. In *Empire for Liberty* (1989), Wai Chee Dimock has shown that Melville's attack on naval abuses came too late to be of political consequence: by 1850, the abolition of flogging – *White-Jacket*'s most hotly contested issue – was all but finalized. Dimock claims that the novel's critique of flogging did not create popular support for naval reform as much as it capitalized on it (100). For Dimock, *White-Jacket*'s tardy commentary is an "exercise in patriotic piety" that "marginalizes other problems besetting the nation" (101). When read in the context of the gathering Civil War, the novel's "fiery language" is "oddly soothing," bolstering

[30] These words had special resonance, considering the continued waves of emigration from Europe to America that had started in the wake of the Irish famine as well as the "Year of Revolution." *Redburn* includes a discussion of such European emigrants in Chapter 47 (significantly titled, "Homeward Bound"), and the following two chapters.

Antebellum America's sense of unity by presenting naval flogging as "an isolated problem within a body politic that is otherwise free of abuse" (ibid.).

This reading, valuable and insightful though it is, largely ignores the looming presence of Great Britain in the novel. Despite the ostensibly American political commentary and agenda – ending naval abuse – Great Britain forms a crucial part of *White-Jacket*'s discourse. I argue that even if *White-Jacket* is a cynical piece of "hack propaganda, written with an eye to sales and profits" (Dimock 100) that sought to exploit the American public's support of the abolition of flogging, it is also self-consciously located within the framework of an Anglo-American economic space. As I will show, the incorporation of British labor into the *Neversink* highlights the fluidity of labor along a transatlantic axis, revealing *White-Jacket*'s engagement with problematic national self-imagining in the emergent global marketplace. To be sure, the consistent comparisons between the Old World and the New in *White-Jacket* promote an ambitious project that urges America to take a pioneering role in international politics. The injustice *White-Jacket* identifies renders the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence moot, returning sailors in the American Navy to the yoke of Old World "barbarous feudal aristocracy" (*White-Jacket* 500).[31] For the common sailor serving aboard American ships, White-Jacket declares, "our Revolution was in vain; to him our Declaration of Independence is a lie" (498). There is an important slippage here, an easy appropriation of labor into America's "noble current": being a sailor in the American navy is not the same thing as being an American sailor.

At first glance *White-Jacket* seems to fit into Weisbuch's model of cultural rivalry, as it casts Great Britain as the source of all oppression. The novel represents the American

[31] There is an explicit comparison between the *Neversink* and Europe in Chapter 42, which hinges on the large allowance of water a frigate carries in iron tanks in its hold: "With this huge Lake Ontario in us, the mighty *Neversink* might be said to resemble the united continent of the Eastern Hemisphere—floating in a vast ocean herself, and having a Mediterranean floating in her" (531). Given the North-American association of "this Lake Ontario," it is telling that the *Neversink* is compared to Europe rather than America. The testimonial of the Sing Sing ex-convict "Shakings," which precedes this passage, reveals the real grounds for comparison: the oppression and confinement of "this State Prison's man-of-war" resemble the conditions of that infamous prison so closely, that the *Neversink* belongs to the Old World rather than the New.

navy's rank-based hierarchy in terms of British class-stratification. Melville's narrator satirically explains the absence of American admirals by pointing to "certain vague, republican scruples" (368), before describing the highest-ranking officers of the American Navy in unequivocally regal terms. Captain Claret, for example, is described as "Harry the Eighth afloat" (371) whose "despotism" (ibid.) is enforced by an "aristocracy" (375) of officers, "lords and noblemen; members of that House of Peers" (380) deputized to enforce the navy's power structure. The aptly named Captain Claret – who is fond of keeping "himself in an uncertain equilibrio between soberness and its reverse" (464) – personifies the injustice aboard the *Neversink*. White-Jacket dryly states that "though [Captain Claret] sometimes showed a suspiciously flushed face when superintending in person the flogging of a sailor for getting intoxicated [...] upon the whole, he was rather indulgent to his crew" (527). White-Jacket describes the navy's chain of command as an almost exclusively hereditary power structure similar to monarchy, and he denounces it as un-American, incompatible with the Republican ideals of popular equality:

> [I]n a country like ours, boasting of the political equality of all social conditions, it is a great reproach that such a thing as a common seaman rising to the rank of a commissioned officer in our navy, is nowadays a thing almost unheard-of [...] Is it not well to have our institutions of a piece? Any American landsman may hope to become President of the Union—commodore of our squadron of states. And every American sailor should be placed in such a position, that he might freely aspire to command a squadron of frigates. (467)

According to White-Jacket, then, the abuses in the American Navy are remnants of European – and particularly British – colonial oppression, and therefore intolerable to any of the Republic's patriots, as "in things of this kind" England should "be nothing to [Americans], except an example to be shunned" (505).

In order to support his calls for American reform, White-Jacket cites examples of illustrious British admirals – Robert Blake, Lord Nelson and Lord Collingwood – who allegedly abhorred all forms of corporal punishment and commanded without resorting to flogging (503-4). Given the reputation attached to these paragons of naval command, their inclusion in *White-Jacket*'s anti-flogging discourse is not wholly unexpected. Much more surprising is White-Jacket's assertion that "English officers, as a general thing, seem to be less disliked by their crews than the American officers by theirs," an

observation which he attributes to the fact that British officers, "from their station in life, are accustomed to social command" (495). According to White-Jacket, American naval officers descended from "old Virginians" are more popular commanders, "less severe, and much more gentle and gentlemanly in command, than the Northern officers, as a class" (ibid.). The British – and those (slave-owning?) Americans descendant from the earliest British colonization of America – are identified as superior leaders precisely because of the class inequality which runs counter to the American experiment.[32] The monarchical British, whose hereditary power structure informed the chain of command in the American Navy, are revealed to be, "as a general thing" (ibid.), better suited than Americans when it comes to assuming a position of power aboard ship.

The problem lies in the transposition of British legislation into an American context: American citizens are too accustomed to liberty to rule or be ruled in the way British subjects are. This is illustrated by chapter 59, "A button divides two brothers," in which a young sailor named Frank refuses to be seen by his officer-brother who is in the same harbor but aboard a different ship. "Do you suppose," this young American asks rhetorically, "[that] I want my brother to see me a lackey aboard here? By Heaven, it's enough to drive one distracted" (604). When Frank recognizes his brother, whom he has not seen for three years, he refuses to make himself known, exclaiming: "no! I'd have died first!" (606). This frank young American voices a strong sense of personal independence which is antithetical to the navy's "despotic" hierarchy, a remnant of British legislation. *White-Jacket*, then, calls for an alternative and distinctly American legislation, and euphorically expands America's ideological dominion: "national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we can not do a good to America but we give

[32] This passage problematizes Dimock's reading of *White-Jacket* as essentially centripetal. At first glance, the oblique reference to the North-South divide that would define the Civil War seems soothing (Virginians are more popular commanders because, unlike "Northern officers," they are used to absolute authority). However, the novel denounces the naval system of absolute rule and strict hierarchy as un-American, which implies that the Virginian proclivity for it is wholly problematic for White-Jacket.

alms to the world" (506).[33] For White-Jacket, it is in all things America's responsibility to light the way for other nations, by looking to its own institutions first.

Perhaps the most compelling symbol of the British origins of American naval injustice is when the body of White-Jacket's messmate Shenly – a sailor from New Hampshire who dies of an illness because the officers refuse to "innowate" the ship's sickbay – is covered with a Union Jack, the British flag functioning as a pall for the American dead (705). A powerful image, but problematic in its assumption that sailors aboard an American Navy ship are necessarily American. Indeed, White-Jacket consistently refers to the ordinary sailors manning the vessel and bearing the weight of this oppressive naval structure as "*the people*" (377, original emphasis). This is a textual echo of that most American of texts, the founding fathers' preamble to the United States Constitution.[34] Sailors, however, were notoriously international: even those in service of national navies could be foreign to the country they served. Indeed, the finest sailor aboard the *Neversink*, the "ever-noble [...] matchless and unmatchable Jack Chase" (767) is "a Briton, and a true-blue" (360). This is where a "Weisbuchian" reading of *White-Jacket* starts to break down, as the narrator does not neglect to observe the mercenary fluidity of sailors' national allegiances: "Mix with the men in an American armed ship, mark how many foreigners there are, though it is against the law to enlist them [...] [W]ere it not for the difference of pay, they would as lief man the guns of an English ship as those of an American or Frenchman" (*White-Jacket* 746-48). White-Jacket's

[33] In this way, *White-Jacket* expands contemporary "Manifest Destiny" rhetoric, which held that the American state would inevitably span the continent, and broadens its scope to include the entire world. In what amounts to an explicit bid for American hegemony, White-Jacket calls Americans "pioneers of the world," whose "future inheritance" is "the broad domains of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark" (506).

[34] The American constitution is the ultimate symbol of America's republican ideals, and White-Jacket refers to that document every time he seeks to drive home a point of criticism. "If there are any three things opposed to the genius of the American Constitution," White-Jacket declares, they are "irresponsibility in a judge, unlimited discretionary authority in an executive, and the union of an irresponsible judge and an unlimited executive in one person" (497).

consistently repeated – and italicized – *the people*, then, elides the nationalities of individual sailors into the paid "citizenry" of the USS *Neversink*.

This pay is the point: *White-Jacket*'s sailors are an international body of laborers whose "*esprit de corps*" (362) is determined by the wage labor they perform to power America's war machine. In Chapter 4, "Jack Chase," that spirited Briton self-consciously situates his labor within the context of international relations: "*Here's* [i.e. aboard a man-of-war] the place for life and commotion; *here's* the place to be gentlemanly and jolly! [...] I have sailed with lords and marquises for captains, and the King of the Two Sicilies [sic] has passed me, as I here stood up at my gun" (363). Chase's gun, here, serves as a loaded reminder that the role the *Neversink* plays on the geopolitical stage stems for its capability for violence. Yet, in Chapter 49, "Rumors of a War," White-Jacket notes that "almost to a man, they [i.e. the *Neversink*'s sailors] abhorred the idea of going into action" (565). The sailors work for wages, and wars bring "harder work, and harder usage than in peace," but raise the sailor's wages "not a cent" (ibid.). The labor of Jack Chase and the other "foreign" sailors contributes to America's sea power: being American sailors is their profession. Fortunately for "the people," the *Neversink* never encounters an enemy ship, but there is a clear sense that if it had, depending on the outcome of the conflict, the result would inevitably have been an *American* naval victory or defeat. White-Jacket's casual jingoism belies the internationality of the crew fighting the *Neversink*'s guns, an internationality he himself remarks on.

*White-Jacket*'s awareness of the fluidity and importance of labor in the Anglo-American market is echoed in Melville's review of Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, which appeared a few months after *White-Jacket* was published. Melville's preoccupation with Shakespeare – and other British literary models – in "Mosses" shows the extent to which British literary labor was perceived to dominate America's national literature. Jack Chase's gun becomes Shakespeare's pen, as "Mosses" makes a paradoxical argument regarding American literature while simultaneously highlighting the importance of the work of English authors within American literature. In *White-Jacket*, Melville casts the "descendants of the Old Virginians" as the most closely related to the British. Yet when Melville adopts the oddly convoluted *nom de plume* of "a Virginian Spending July in Vermont" in "Mosses," it is not as a kind of intermediate perspective, but instead an unequivocally American one. As the "Virginian," Melville casts

Shakespeare as intrinsic to British culture, cheekily claiming that a belief in the Bard's "unapproachability" is the fortieth article in the Church of England's doctrinal Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, before rejecting any such conviction as un-American, because un-republican.

Unlike his sleight in *White-Jacket*, Melville does not simply integrate British literary labor into "American literature," though he clearly signals his awareness of its importance. In this review, Melville uses Shakespeare as an Anglo-American touchstone of literary and intellectual quality, claiming that "men not very much inferior [...] are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio," prophesying an inversion of Sydney Smith's inescapable, aphoristic rhetorical question: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" (Smith 79). Melville qualifies the statement in light of the "Republican progressiveness" which characterizes his American exemplarism: "the day will come, when you shall say who reads a book by an Englishman that is a modern?" (1161). "Mosses" stands out as an overt piece of literary nationalism, as it makes an explicitly protectionist argument:[35]

> Let America then prize and cherish her writers; yea, let her glorify them. They are not so many in number, as to exhaust her good-will. And while she has good kith and kin of her own, to take to her bosom, let her not lavish her embraces upon the household of an alien [...] let America first praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises (for everywhere, merit demands acknowledgement from every one) the best excellence in the children of any other land [...] It is the vilest thing you could say of a true American author, that he were an American Tompkins. Call him an American, and have done; for you can not say a nobler thing of him (1162-64)

[35] Dimock has already argued that this resistance to the residual cultural prestige attached to British authors was part of a postcolonial project of cultural liberation, through which Melville sought to construct authorial sovereignty as analogous to American national sovereignty (6-7). Melville's call for "foundling" books, "without father or mother, that so it might be, we could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors" (1154), has been harnessed by such postcolonial readings as well. See also Lawrence Buell's "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon" (1994). Ellen Weinauer interprets this passage as expressive of a concept of authorship "akin to the postmodern 'disappearance' of the author" (704).

In concrete terms, Melville wants more remuneration for American authors, summarizing his case in the closing paragraph of "Mosses": "granting [...] the assumption that the books of Hawthorne have sold by the five-thousand,—what does that signify?—They should be sold by the hundred-thousand, and read by the million; and admired by every one who is capable of admiration" (1171).

This review, then, is not as incongruous in Melville's career as some scholarship has suggested. Many critics – most notably the editors of the authoritative Northwestern-Newberry editions of Melville's writing – have referred to the "Mosses" to establish Melville at this particular point in his career as a literary nationalist, characterizing it as a radical shift away from his earlier works, towards *Moby-Dick*.[36] More recently, in "Reframing Melville's 'Manifesto' 'Hawthorne and His Mosses' and the Culture of Reprinting" (2012), Ida Rothschild is rightly wary of the biographical approach in the editorial notes of the Northwestern-Newberry edition, which places the "Mosses" along a teleology, moving inexorably towards Melville's "master-piece," *Moby-Dick*.[37] Her counter-argument is that the literary nationalism of "Mosses" is entirely uncharacteristic of Melville, and that it should therefore be read as a pastiche, a satirical rendition of the "mutual admiration society" which Melville, Rothschild claims, condemns (320). Rothschild's reading of the "Mosses" as essentially satirical is unconvincing because it hinges on the Northwestern-Newberry editors' belief that this essay is unique among Melville's texts in its preoccupation with literary nationalism,

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[36] See the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *The Piazza Tales*, edited by Harrison Hayford, A. MacDougall, and Thomas Tanselle. For more examples of this interpretation of "Mosses," see Michael T. Gilmore, *American Romanticism and the Marketplace* (1985), Richard Brodhead, *The School of Hawthorne* (1989), Elizabeth Renker, *Strike Through the Mask: Herman Melville and the Scene of Writing* (1996) and Richard Lingeman, *Double Lives* (2006).

[37] In the "Historical Note" section of the editorial appendix to *The Piazza Tales*, the editors of the Northwestern-Newberry editions of Melville's work write that " 'Hawthorne and His Mosses' transmits through its confident tone and eloquent expressions his consciousness of awakening powers that distinguishes it markedly in style from the relatively matter-of-fact writing predominant in the earlier reviews. For by this time his imagination, taking fire from his voracious readings of the past years, disciplined by the failure of *Mardi*, and newly sensitive to creative possibilities of which he had only a dim awareness at the beginning of his career as a writer, was engaged in shaping a master-piece" (471).

and therefore requires hermeneutical reinterpretation. By engaging with this misconception, Rothschild allows *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*, the two novels immediately preceding "Mosses," to escape her notice. In its recognition of the fluidity of labor along an Anglo-American axis, "Hawthorne and his Mosses" joins *Redburn* and *White-Jacket* in legitimizing American culture and society, regarding them as equal to Great Britain's.

*White-Jacket*, like *Redburn* and "Mosses," describes a transatlantic public sphere that is still dominated by Britain, but Britain is cast as an archaic hegemon in decline. Rather than merely bolstering America's claim to nationhood, Melville's explicit and consistent juxtaposition of British and American ideological influence instead claims that America is poised to replace Britain in "the van of the nations [which] must, of right, belong to ourselves" (*White-Jacket* 506). *White-Jacket*'s final couplet reads: "Whoever afflicts us, whatever surround/Life is a voyage that's homeward-bound" (770). For a man as widely travelled as Melville, the apparent cultural relativism in this chapter is surprising, to say the least.[38] By separating cultural context from human experience, Melville echoes his panegyrics on Manifest Destiny from earlier on in *White-Jacket* and foreshadows his explicit claims to American "political supremacy" in "Hawthorne and his Mosses." Samuel Otter has rightly called the final metaphor in *White-Jacket* "intensely conventional," commenting on the stark contrast between its euphoric tone and the criticism of the preceding chapters (Otter 98).[39] Like Otter, I disagree with critical

[38] Throughout the novel, the USS *Neversink* represents the American "ship-of-state," a sovereign and independent vessel among the "world's men of war" (569), one of an international fleet of "flag-ships," each representing a nation. In the final chapter, however, national difference and sovereignty are collapsed into a single "never-sinking world-frigate," crewed by the world's entire population in an explicitly Christian naval metaphor. Political systems are reduced to their shipboard equivalents, from the power structure of the man-of-war, to the justice system of the "brig" and the "cat-o'-nine-tales," and the social organization of the "sick-bay" (769). Melville suddenly elides the kinds of cultural difference which informed his argument surrounding American naval reform, and imposes a problematic image of shared cultural experience upon the "eight hundred millions of souls" (768) which make up the "shipmates and world-mates" (770) of the world-frigate built and commanded by the Christian deity.

[39] Otter's reading of this dichotomy is interesting but problematic in its retrofitting of passages from *Pierre*, *Billy Budd*, *Battle Pieces* and "Benito Cereno" to describe the ending of *White-Jacket* as an intensely self-reflexive authorial critique of composition.

readings that gloss this passage as ironic, such as John Gerlach's, which negotiates the gap in Melville's rhetoric by casting the defense of Manifest Destiny as "a calculated exaggeration which exposes its own foolishness" (quoted in Otter 98). The disparity between the final chapter and those preceding it is the familiar sleight of political performance, which juxtaposes policy and ideology, highlighting both what is and what ought to be. Dimock has already identified that the novel's reform rhetoric – which seeks to "isolate the navy as a seat of [...] 'tyranny' grafted upon American freedom" (Dimock 101) – works to create a sense of unity that sanctions Manifest Destiny as the expansion of an "otherwise exemplary nation" (ibid.). These are valuable insights, but as I suggested earlier, the implications of these reading are limited to America: Dimock treats *White-Jacket*'s "soothing" centripetal discourse as significant only in the context of the Civil War, and keeps the novel's expansionist spatial economy confined to the New World. My claim is that this novel – along with *Redburn* and "Mosses" – also performs in the transatlantic market, in its rhetorical and political preoccupation with labor and its potential to redress a perceived imbalance in Anglo-American power relationships.

## 2.3 Blubber and Clay: Labor and Nation-Building in *Moby-Dick* and *Israel Potter*

The *Pequod*, the whaling vessel at the center of the narrative in *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael tells us, is named after "a celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians, now extinct as the ancient Medes" (867), before describing it as "looking like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor [...:] [a] cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies" (867-68). The name and description of the *Pequod* suggests a reading of it as an American "ship-of-state" seeking to harpoon new territories and fasten onto them.[40]

[40] The ship is owned by an unspecified number of Americans, Nantucketers, chief among which are Captain Bildad and Captain Peleg, while the other shares are held by "a crowd of old annuitants [who] invest their

The text is ostensibly referring to the ship's whalebone decoration, but its true trophy is its name, scalped from the Pequot nation after they were vanquished in one of the earliest violent episodes of colonial America's state-building. In his biographical account of the 1636-37 Pequot War, John Mason, then commander of the Connecticut colonial armed force, rejoiced (rather vulgarly) that the Lord had seen fit to "smite [the Pequot] in their hinder parts, and to give us their land for an inheritance" (21). The Pequot were decimated, and their lands, heritage, and even their name were appropriated by early American settlers. Regardless of whether or not Melville meant to misspell Pequot in the ship's name, or wrongly situate them in Massachusetts rather than Connecticut, these (mis-)appropriations are a powerful symbol of the assimilation of the Pequot's cultural memory.

The *Pequod*, however, is much less cohesive than the rapturous USS *Neversink* of *White-Jacket*'s final paragraph. This is showcased in Chapter 40, "Midnight, Forecastle," where speech-prefixes identify individual whalers through their nationalities, marking them as being Dutch, French, Icelandic, Chinese, Maltese – the list goes on. These self-conscious paratextual elements mark out the heterogeneity of the crew, echoed in some of the "idiosyncratic" exclamations made by the sailors themselves: the Lascar sailor invokes Brahma, the Chinese sailor urges Pip to "make a pagoda" of himself and the Icelandic sailor is "used to ice-floors." The fight which nearly breaks out between the Spanish sailor and Daggoo the harpooner "quarried out of [black]" (980) is racially motivated, as the Spanish sailor calls Daggoo's "race" the "undeniable dark side of mankind – devilish dark" (980) and Daggoo retorts by claiming "white skin, white liver!" (981). National and cultural differences threaten the ship's harmony, but before the altercation escalates, a squall pulls the crew together as it threatens to sink them.[41] In "P(l)aying off Old Ironsides," Mary Isbell notes that "[b]ecause of the storm, the sailors'

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money in whaling vessels, the same way that you do yours in approved state stocks bringing in good interest" (871).

[41] In "A Jonah's Warning to America in *Moby-Dick*," Carolyn Karcher has convincingly read this and other scenes of racial conflict as part of *Moby-Dick*'s political agenda, suggesting that "civil war was one of the consequences Melville apprehended from his nation's pursuit of a white phantasm" (84-85).

labor is tied directly to their survival, making naval discipline necessary and anything that interferes with it irresponsible and dangerous" (25).[42] More fundamentally, however, the squall serves to highlight that it is the men's labor which unites them – their existence as a group, their corporate identity, is motivated solely by the economic necessity of manning the ship.

If the *Pequod*, with its international crew, constitutes a symbol of America, it is interesting to consider that Ahab's authority stems from the ship's "navel." This golden doubloon nailed to the mainmast in chapter 36, "The Quarter Deck," is promised by Ahab to whoever spots the white whale. For the crew, then, the hunt for Moby Dick is financially driven, and the whale reified as an object of trade in "a broad bright coin" (964). The *Pequod*'s "nation" is constituted by the community of laborers working for the gold nailed to the mast and for their economic gain more broadly.[43] That their labor is not for the oil in the whale nor for Ahab's monomaniacal quest for the white whale, is

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[42] However, as the absolute authority aboard his ship, Ahab is both a centripetal and a centrifugal force: the discipline he enforces unites his crew, but obedience to him in his mad quest for Moby Dick endangers them. Ahab may be godlike in his rule, but Pip's description of him as an "anaconda of a man" (982) casts Ahab as the serpent, foreshadowing the *Pequod*'s demise. In his hunt for the inscrutable white whale, Ahab seeks the essence of "all visible objects," to uncover the "unknown but still reasoning thing" which underlies "each event [...:] the living act, the undoubted deed" (967). Moby Dick is the barrier that blocks Ahab's understanding, and so he hunts it, regardless of whether "the white whale be agent, or [...] principal" (967). The "big white God aloft there somewhere in yon darkness" is ambiguously mirrored below, as the pale bulk of Moby Dick looms somewhere in the ocean's depths. Under Ahab, the *Pequod* is on a blasphemous hunt for God.

[43] Hohman has shown that bounties for spotting whales (like the doubloon here) were not uncommon. The pay structure in whaling was slightly more complex than a simple system of wages. Sailors were given a small amount of "advanced wages" when they signed on, but their contract stipulated a lay, or portion of the net proceeds of a voyage. The size of this portion depended on the sailor's skillset, the size of the vessel, and the length of the planned voyage. Melville, for example, shipped aboard the *Acushnet* as a "greenhand" (the lowest rank of seaman, below "ordinary" and "able") for 1/175$^{th}$ of the voyage's net profits. Barring extreme circumstances, whaling vessels tended to stay out until their holds were full, so while the total revenue stayed more or less stable, net profit was determined by how long the ship's working costs had to be defrayed: the sooner the hold was full, the higher the profit. For a full analysis of wages in whaling, see Hohman's "Wages, Risk, and Profits in the Whaling Industry" (1926) and "Risk Sharing, Crew Quality, Labor Shares and Wages in the Nineteenth Century American Whaling Industry" by Davis et. al. (1990).

clear from the way in which the third mate, Flask, motivates his oarsmen, as they pull for a whale:

> "Oh! see the suds he makes!" cried Flask, dancing up and down—"What a hump—Oh, *do* pile on the beef—lays like a log! Oh! my lads, *do* spring—slap-jacks and quahogs for supper, you know, my lads—baked clams and muffins—oh, *do*, *do*, spring,—he's a hundred barreller—don't lose him now—don't oh, *don't*!—see that Yarman—Oh, won't ye pull for your duff, my lads—such a sog! such a sogger! Don't ye love sperm? There goes three thousand dollars, men!—a bank!—a whole bank! The bank of England!—Oh, *do*, *do*, *do*!—What's that Yarman about now?" (1172)

Flask attempts to motivate his men by urging them to consider the huge financial value of the whale before them. This Marxian alienation of the workers from their labor is interesting in its own right, of course, but becomes doubly so when considered in light of Melville's "ship-of-state" metaphor and the *Pequod*'s international crew. What emerges is a kind of *de facto* nationality, contingent on which state benefits from an individual's labor. Literally pulling together, the Dutch, Spanish, African, Chinese, etc. labor of individual hands becomes subsumed into "American whaling."

The whaling industry in *Moby-Dick* is a synecdoche for America, to be sure, but it is also deployed as an explicitly economic marker that puts England and America on an even footing. Indeed, Melville spends several passages defending the dignity and value of whaling, and does so specifically in national terms. Chapter 53, "The Gam," derides a tendency in English whalers to "affect a kind of metropolitan superiority over the American whalers," regarding them as mere "sea-peasant[s]" (1084). Ishmael counters these claims to cultural superiority with explicitly economic claims: "where this superiority in the English whalemen does really consist, it would be hard to say, seeing that the Yankees in one day, collectively, kill more whales than the English, collectively, in ten years" (1084). Despite Ahab's disdain for whaling as a pragmatic, economic activity, the *Pequod*'s voyage has not been altogether unsuccessful – after all, it has enough oil on board to leak "more oil in one day than [the crew] may make good in a year" (1299). Trade and industry are America's answer to English affectations of

superiority, forming the cornerstone of its claims to legitimacy on an international scale.[44]

In Chapter 89, "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish," the metaphorical connection between whaling and international politics is made explicit. The chapter outlines the informal code of whaling: a whale physically connected to a whaling party by any means (a "fast-fish") belongs to that party, while a whale which has not been fastened upon (a "loose-fish) is fair game for whoever can catch it first. Melville's narrator (by now, barely identifiable as Ishmael) applies this code to historical and contemporary geopolitical conflicts:

> What to that redoubted harpooneer, John Bull, is poor Ireland, but a Fast-Fish? What to that apostolic lancer, Brother Jonathan, is Texas but a Fast-Fish? And concerning all these, is not Possession the whole of the law? [...] What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish. (1219)

England and America are cast as the principal actors in an international contest of staking territory: whoever can "fasten their line" first, and keep it fastened, takes possession of the prize. The whaling industry takes on a positively martial aspect in this metaphor, given the violence concurrent to the claims struck into the territories listed as "Loose-Fish."[45] In *Heartless Immensity: Literature, Culture and Geography in Antebellum*

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[44] In Chapter 24, Melville has Ishmael bandy numbers about, boasting of America's economic prowess in terms of cost, revenue and profit: "the whalemen of America now outnumber all the rest of the banded whalemen of the world; sail a navy of upwards of seven hundred vessels; manned by eighteen thousand men; yearly consuming 4,000,000 of dollars; the ships worth, at the time of sailing, $20,000,000; and every year importing into our harbors a well reaped harvest of $7,000,000." (909).

[45] Chapter 81, "The *Pequod* meets the *Virgin*" is an international whaling contest between Americans and the Dutch/Germans. Despite once being "the greatest whaling people in the world," the *Virgin* is beaten to a "hundred barreler" by the *Pequod*, despite having a head start. The message is easy to comprehend: American whaling (and, by extension, American industry in general) has made it a contender in international power relations.

*America* (2006), Anne Baker argues that "Melville portrays the whale [...] in terms that suggest either geographical space in general or, more specifically, the American continent" (111), citing a passage from chapter 76, "The Battering Ram," as reminiscent of Manifest Destiny rhetoric: "you will have renounced all ignorant incredulity, and be ready to abide by this; that though the Sperm Whale stove a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, and mixed the Atlantic with the Pacific, you would not elevate one hair of your eye-brow" (1155). If whaling is a metaphor for territorial expansion here, then America is cast as being more successful in that regard than its European competitors, its dominion spreading across the continent. This discourse is also echoed in the characterization of America in chapter 89 as an "apostolic lancer," quoted above: "Brother Jonathan" is a "fisher of men" spreading a republican message. Like *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*, *Moby-Dick* works to legitimize America as a nation that can and will replace Britain as the global hegemon.

Aside from the explicit comparisons between the American and British whaling industries, there are countless (and often very elaborate) other connections drawn between these two nations. In Chapter 31, perhaps not insignificantly entitled "Queen Mab," the *Pequod*'s second mate, Stubb, rationalizes the insult of being kicked by Ahab's ivory leg by remarking: "[i]n old England the greatest lords think it great glory to be slapped by a queen, and made garter-knights of" (932). Stubb casts the whaling captain here as actually surpassing English royalty in dignity, bestowing wisdom on those he "knights" with his "beautiful ivory leg" (932). In chapter 82, "the Honor and Glory of Whaling," another reference is made to the "Most Noble Order of the Garter," claiming that "harpooneers of Nantucket" should all "be enrolled in the most noble order of St. George" since that "tutelary guardian of England" was himself a whaler (1181).[46] This appropriation of England's patron saint is cheeky, but hugely relevant to my discussion here. Ostensibly, this chapter is a defense of the dignity of whaling as a profession,

[46] This allegation stems from Ishmael's professed belief that St. George's dragon was in fact a whale, claiming that "in many old chronicles, whales and dragons are strangely jumbled together," off-handedly remarking that "it would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle with the great monster of the deep" (1181).

regardless of nationality. After characterizing Saint George as a whaleman, it becomes clear that nationality is very much at stake, as Ishmael concludes:

> [T]herefore, let not the knights of that honourable company [i.e. the Order of the Garter] (none of whom, I venture to say, have ever had to do with a whale like their great patron), let them never eye a Nantucketer with disdain, since even in our woollen frocks and tarred trowsers we are much better entitled to St. George's decoration than they (1181)

Whaling, then, seems to have become the sole dominion of "we harpooneers of Nantucket" (even though Ishmael is neither a harpooneer nor a native of Nantucket), and as a consequence, the "honor and glory" of the chapter's title are America's to claim.[47] Rather than actually seeking to induct American whalemen into the highest British order of chivalry, Ishmael casts them here in their tar-stained uniform in order to answer British haughtiness with American labor and industry. This reading of *Moby-Dick* reveals it as a novel preoccupied with redressing the cultural, economic, and political power imbalances which existed between Great Britain and America.

Where *Moby-Dick* differs from the two novels that preceded it is that it not only presents America as being (at least) equally puissant as Britain in its drive for territory and power, but it also charts the dangers of the political course taken by the American "ship-of-state" in the late 1840s and early 1850s. In chapter 24, "The Advocate," Ishmael concedes that whalers are "butchers." He then asserts that "all Martial Commanders whom the world invariably delights to honor" have been "butchers of the bloodiest badge," rhetorically asking whether the "unspeakable carrion of those battlefields" is comparable to the gore of whaling (908).[48] Slaughter is cast as an integral part of whaling and geographic expansion alike: as whales are killed to be "harvested," quashing any opposition from local populations *manu militari* is made a prerequisite to

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[47] The distinctly American nature of whaling is emphasized when Ishmael, claiming Hercules as a whaleman, characterizes him as "that antique Crockett and Kit Carson" (1182).

[48] Melville's association between military power and economic prowess was deeply-rooted. In *Redburn*, Melville had already implicated one of the world's most honored "Martial Commanders," Admiral Nelson, in the slave trade; see above.

newly acquired territory becoming truly profitable. Here, too, Moby Dick proves disruptive. The white whale is no commodity, but a prize, the object of desire for Ahab (out of vengeance) and crew (vicariously, as a token of the gold reward). Other whalers, like Ahab's double, Captain Boomer, have stopped lowering for Moby Dick, despite the "shipload of precious sperm in him," with Boomer prophetically warning that "Moby Dick doesn't bite so much as he swallows" (1264). The elusive whale not only evades being commodified but also actively resists the commodification of other whales, as his "old trick" is "free[ing] the fast-fish" by "snapping furiously at [the] fast-line" (1261). Within the paradigm of whaling in *Moby-Dick* as a metaphor for geopolitical expansion, the wildly independent white whale – both natural and supernatural, wild animal and avatar – is a symbol of resistance to imperialist expansion, the social menace concomitant with aggressive geographic expansion and violent subjugation. Moby Dick actually limits the "Manifest Destiny" doctrine, annihilating the would-be conquerors who had pursued him for so long.

The chapter following "The Advocate," entitled "Postscript," continues in the same vein, with Ishmael attempting to show that whaling is an honorable occupation, but this time he addresses himself directly to his British readers. His custom-made argument is that whalers supply England with the oil that is used in the coronation of monarchs: "Think of that, ye loyal Britons! we whalemen supply your kings and queens with coronation stuff!" (913). The implications are clear: the spoils of expansionist policy are vestiges of power, bestowing authority and influence on those it "crowns." Great Britain, then, is shown to be deeply invested in the butchery of Empire building, as one of its most sacred rituals is caught up in the repulsive constitutive slaughter. In the context of the novel, this reads less like an indictment of Great Britain and more like a way of exposing British pomp as being rooted in prosaic toil, deflating Britain's sense of superiority. Certainly, there is more than a touch of irreverence in the assertion that "a king's head is solemnly oiled at his coronation, even as a head of salad" (913).

A similar preoccupation with labor-dependent nationality and its importance in the context of state building is present in *Israel Potter* (1854), Melville's penultimate novel. Israel Potter is a patriotic and incredibly unfortunate American born in 1754. The hospital ship on which Potter was convalescing after being injured fighting for independence on Bunker Hill (1775) falls into British hands, making him a prisoner of

war. Transported to England, Potter escapes his captors, thrice, the final time finding refuge and work at the Kew Royal Gardens. There, he meets and speaks to King George III, before moving on into the service of sympathizers of the American cause, ferrying letters from Britain to Benjamin Franklin in Paris. Eventually, Potter finds himself resourceless in London, lingering there for decades, before eventually crossing the Atlantic again in 1823. These are the facts of Potter's long career, related in the style of a *testimonio* in Henry Trumbull's *Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel R. Potter* (1824). Melville seized on this work, adapting Potter's story to make for some of his most remarkable prose on the relationship between Great Britain and America.

In *Monumental Melville*, Edgar A. Dryden argues that *Israel Potter* constitutes "Melville's counterversion of the dominant national narrative of the American Revolution" (34). To be sure, the now infamous dedication to the Bunker Hill monument ironically deploys the rhetoric of old-world royalty in its praise of the monument of American independence, and voices national reproach in tones of cheery nationalism. There is more than a hint of bitterness in the description of Israel Potter as a deserving object of tribute, as the "faithful service" of the Bunker Hill "private" is rewarded with a promotion to "a still deeper privacy under the ground, with a posthumous pension, in default of any during life, annually paid him by the spring in ever-new mosses and sward" (*Israel Potter* 425). Significantly dating his preface 17 June 1854, the "obsequious editor" reproaches America for failing to reward its faithful servants, wishing "Your Highness," the monument, "many returns" of its anniversary, adding: "and that each of its summer's suns may shine as brightly on your brow as each winter snow shall lightly rest on the grave of Israel Potter" (426). Dryden interprets this dedication and *Israel Potter* as a whole as a sign of a "personal and artistic crisis, [Melville's] loss of faith in the possibility of a literary vocation [and] his growing alienation from his homeland" (34).[49] This reading overlooks the novel's preoccupation with a labor-dependent fluidity of nationality along an Anglo-American axis.

[49] Parker notes, "it would be easy to attribute Melville's interest in [Israel Potter's story] to his defeated mood," but Melville had been contemplating rewriting it at least as far back as 1849 (HMB II: 224).

Indeed, much of the story hinges on Israel's ability to pass for an Englishman rather than the American "rebel" he really is. Immediately after landing on British soil, Israel attempts a first escape, but is chased down for a British naval deserter and thief, before confessing himself a prisoner of war. This results in Israel becoming thoroughly Othered, as this revelation stirs a renewed interest in him. Crowds gather as the "honest rustics" of the British countryside surrounding Spithead "seemed to think that Yankees were a sort of wild creatures, a species of a 'possum or kangaroo'" (443). Escaping once more, Israel manages to avoid notice in the English countryside by exchanging most of the sailing garb that had marked him as a potential deserter for beggar's rags. This attire hides him from any would-be pursuants, as Israel travels towards London relatively unhindered. The symbolic payload of this pragmatic act is clear: in order to escape notice, the respectable vitality of the young American is disguised as the squalor and old-age of a British ditcher.

Neither language nor behavior betray Israel as he moves largely unchecked through the British heartland and eventually obtains a post as gardener at the Kew Gardens. Significantly, the only characters to recognize Israel's nationality are Sir John Millet and King George III. The former dryly states: "My poor fellow [...] I perceive that you are an American" (454), while the latter notices something about Israel's "air," prompting him to remark: "You ain't an Englishman,—no Englishman—no no [...] You are a Yankee—A Yankee" (459). These spontaneous recognitions are rooted in the social faux-pas Israel makes – failing to properly address Sir John and neglecting to remove his hat in the presence of the monarch – which are perhaps more striking to those accustomed to being "Sir Johnned," but are ultimately harmless, as Israel is left unmolested on both occasions. Israel is hunted first and foremost as a potential deserter, and once he removes the tell-tale blue collar from his sailor's shirt, he is no longer at immediate risk of being apprehended. Britain's primary interest in Israel is not in his nationality, but in his potential labor for its war machine, and more broadly, its economy. Indeed, it is noteworthy that each time there is a shift in Israel's nationality, from American to British or vice versa, it is accompanied by an occupation.

In chapter 13, "His Escape from the House," Israel is seized by a press gang, and to avoid having to serve in the British Navy, he reveals his nationality once again:

> "I'm no Englishman," roared Israel, in a foam. "Oh! that's the old story," grinned his gaolers. "Come along. There's no Englishmen in the English fleet. All foreigners. You may take their own word for it." To be short, in less than a week Israel found himself at Portsmouth, and, ere long, a fore-topman in his majesty's ship of the line, "Unprincipled." (520)

Israel's captors are being facetious, jokingly suggesting that all of the sailors in the British navy claim to be foreign in an attempt to nullify their duty, but the indiscriminate way in which they press Israel into service is indicative of the importance of Israel's labor over his nationality.[50] This point is driven home in (the wholly fictitious) chapter 20, "The Shuttle," where Israel finds himself inadvertently aboard a British ship after overzealously attempting to board her from the *Ariel*, captained by John Paul Jones – the Scottish-born sailor who gained notoriety by serving in America's infant navy.[51] After a comic round-robin of the ship, in which Israel under the assumed name "Peter Perkins" is chased from each section of the ship, the British officers dismiss the conundrum of his pedigree and simply put "Peter Perkins" to work, as he has proved himself a prompt and able sailor. Ultimately then, the division between American and British is determined here by which nation benefits from an individual's labor.

As much of *Israel Potter* is based on Potter's autobiography, ghost-written by Trumbull, concerns could be raised about reading too much into the symbolism

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[50] During the War of Independence, George III considered all American forces to be *British* traitors, so Israel's defense on that head would have been futile (though, by rights, he should have been made a prisoner-of-war). This passage was probably meant to invoke America's outrage over British impressment of its citizens during the Napoleonic wars. Particularly the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair, where a British vessel had fired a broadside into an American ship, forcing it to surrender before taking a number of its crew on board into its service (and hanging one of them for desertion), had caused indignation among Americans.

[51] John Paul Jones is regarded as one of the founding figures of the U.S. Navy: his body holds pride of place in an ornate crypt beneath the chapel of the U.S. naval academy in Annapolis, and is always flanked by an honor guard of midshipmen. A short piece in the 25 January 1913 *Washington Times* entitled "Simple Services for Jones' Funeral," calls Jones "America's first naval hero," before boasting that the chapel in Annapolis is the "architectural crown of the Naval Academy," and that Jones's crypt in it cost an impressive $75,000 (5).

surrounding national fluidity present in Melville's book. Yet the fictional doubling of Israel in the figure of John Paul Jones warrants this reading. To be sure, Jones is a historical figure who is far better known than Israel Potter, but the two never met, and they certainly never interacted as they do in Melville's novel. Jones, here, serves to highlight the permeability of nationality, as the Brit renders his services to the American cause by assuming "command of an armed ship in the British waters; a ship legitimately authorized to hoist the American colors; her commander having in his cabin-locker a regular commission as an officer of the American navy" (532). Though Jones declares himself "an untrammelled citizen and sailor of the universe" (489), he is described in unambiguously American terms: "a disinherited Indian Chief in European clothes," a "Sioux," an "Iroquois," a "brave." In chapter 19, "They Fight the Serapis," Melville's editor even casts Jones as a symbol of America:

> There would seem to be something singularly indicatory in this engagement. It may involve at once a type, a parallel, and a prophecy. Sharing the same blood with England, and yet her proved foe in two wars; not wholly inclined at bottom to forget an old grudge: intrepid, unprincipled, reckless, predatory, with boundless ambition, civilized in externals but a savage at heart, America is, or may yet be, the Paul Jones of nations. (561)

By making Jones emblematic of America the narrator throws the Anglo-American entanglement into relief, the inference being that the American drive for imperial expansion during the middle part of the nineteenth century stemmed from its British roots. The importance of England in American self-imagining here is undeniable, characterized as it is first and foremost by sharing (bad) blood with its former colonizer, unwilling to forget that "old grudge." This editorial aside, with its reference to two wars with England, necessarily describes America after 1815 (when the second war with England ended); most likely, it is describing America in 1854 – the date of the preface. Melville's prose, then, is critical of the contemporary "Manifest Destiny" rhetoric: the comparison with John Paul Jones does not reflect all that well on this America, as it echoes the warnings against unbounded geographic expansion implicit in *Moby-Dick*.

As Jones is invested in the nation-building of America, so is Israel in that of Great Britain, albeit on a more basic level. After nine chapters of nautical, fictional flight of fancy, Melville's narrative rejoins Trumbull's account of Israel's life, placing him in the

countryside surrounding London. Chapter 23, titled with the almost inevitable pun referring to Exodus, "Israel in Egypt," describes Israel's wearisome toil as a brick maker. His labor contributes to the supply of the London market, and by extension, the British economy:

> Sometimes, lading out his dough, Israel could not but bethink him of what seemed enigmatic in his fate. He whom love of country made a hater of her foes—the foreigners among whom he now was thrown—he who, as soldier and sailor, had joined to kill, burn and destroy both them and theirs—here he was at last, serving that very people as a slave, better succeeding in making their bricks than firing their ships. To think that he should be thus helping, with all his strength, to extend the walls of the Thebes of the oppressor, made him half mad. Poor Israel! well-named—bondsman in the English Egypt. (602).

The ultimate irony of Israel's fate is summarized neatly in this passage, the bricks lending themselves well to suggesting an almost literal nation-building. In an attempt to cope with his position as a "slave" working for his sworn foes, Israel asks philosophically: "'What signifies who we be, or where we are, or what we do?' Slap-dash! 'Kings as clowns are codgers—who ain't a nobody?' Splash! 'All is vanity and clay'" (602). These rhetorical questions echo Ishmael's line of reasoning at the beginning of *Moby-Dick*, implicating everyone and everything in a system of economic servitude: "Who ain't a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way" (798). The product of his labor, the bricks are "carted off to London [...] to be set up in ambitious edifices" but to Israel these new constructions are "little less transient than the kilns" (602). I argue that in "all is vanity and clay," clay is short-hand for Israel's labor. What is at stake is the value and the importance of American labor to British nation-building. Labor is not only a leveler of kings with clowns, but becomes the only factor in Israel's rationalized, non-essentialist approach to nationhood.

In light of the novel's preoccupation with international labor in the context of nation-building, it is interesting to consider its publication history. Despite the fact that Melville had no British publisher for *Israel Potter*, it still found itself competing with British novels. Before it was published as a book by Putnam in 1855, it was serialized in

*Putnam's Monthly Magazine* between July 1854 and March 1855, making it the only one of Melville's novels to have been published serially.[52] Significantly, Melville seems to have offered *Israel Potter* to the rival *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* first, with the express intention of having it serialized there, only to have the work rejected by the editors. As Phegley shows in "Literary Piracy, Nationalism, and Women Readers in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1850-1855," *Harper's* intended to harness British literature to the establishment of an American literary identity:

> [*Harper's*] focus on British authors was rhetorically constructed as nationalistic. The editors theorized that by providing the public with these examples of "excellent" high cultural texts, the magazine would raise the standards of American readers, and, in turn, raise the quality of American literature. (64)

Harper's, who had been Melville's regular publishers since *Omoo*, may have rejected the novel entirely, may have disliked the idea of serialization, or may just have shown insufficient enthusiasm in their correspondence: whatever the case, *Israel Potter* did not appear in their monthly. Given the nationalist project *Harper's* claimed to pursue, its indifference to an American text with as patriotic a theme as the adventures of a veteran of the War of Independence is noteworthy, to say the least. From the extant correspondence between Melville and the publishers, it seems unlikely they were deterred by his track record of unprofitability, as they were willing in early December 1853 to offer Melville $300 in advance on a half-profits agreement for a book on tortoise hunting (HMC 251).[53] Moreover, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* had already published

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[52] That is not to say Melville had never published prose serially before: the short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" as well as the novellas *The Encantadas* (1854) and *Benito Cereno* (1855) were all published in installments in *Putnam's*.

[53] This "Tortoise Hunting Adventure," as Melville called it in a letter dated 24 November 1853 never materialized. While Harper's did advance Melville 300$, the only prose on tortoise hunting Melville ever published, appeared in "The Encantadas," printed in *Putnam's*. Harper's, however, never asked Melville to return this advance, "possibly because of the fire of 10 December 1853 at the Harper's Cliff Street establishment (which destroyed, among other things, 2,300 bound and unbound copies – but not the plates –

some of Melville's short stories, such as "The Happy Failure" (1854) and "The Fiddler" (1854), and would do so again, after their rejection of *Israel Potter*, with "The 'Gees" (1856) and "I and my Chimney" (1856).

Since Harper's believed Melville's novels were worth investing in and were willing to publish his short prose in their monthly, their reluctance to serialize one of his novels can only point towards their privileging novels over other forms of prose for the magazine's "nationalist" project. Serialization in *Harper's* was markedly and unabashedly British: all of its major serials during its first five years of existence were British reprints. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine to what extent this choice was motivated by politics or economics. To be sure, its editorial rhetoric cast this practice of reprinting as unquestionably republican by stressing its affordability, making available a wide array of literature to "any class of reader" and "every intelligent citizen of the United states" (2), but the distinction between (British) serialized fiction and (American) shorter pieces points to an attempt to cash in on the "vestigial high cultural value" of British literature (perhaps linked to perceived reader expectations) and the lack of international copyright protection. Though rival publications attacked *Harper's* paradoxical literary nationalism, the magazine remained extremely popular. America's literary self-imagining in mid-century, then, was considerably influenced, and even in large part constituted by British literary labor. Like Israel's brick-making labor is appropriated along transatlantic vectors, taken from one milieu in order to contribute to the establishment of another. Fittingly, *Israel Potter* suffered another British appropriation, as Routledge reprinted it a few months after its American publication in book form.

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of Melville's books)" (HMC 256). If Harper's surrendered the $300 as recompense for Melville's losses in the fire, the "Tortoise Hunting" novel would not have been a consideration against publishing *Israel Potter*.

## 2.4 Epilogue: "Melville," the canon, and Great Britain

In the opening chapters of *Moby-Dick* – specifically the "Spouter Inn" and "The Counterpane" – Melville constructs one of the book's most well-known scenes, in which Ishmael shares a bed with Queequeg, the "'dark complexioned' harpooner" (808). These passages have been the focus of valuable queer readings, but they also amount to a humorous episode, a situational comedy set up around the negotiation and amicable resolution of cultural differences.[54] After a comically tense moment, in which a surprised Queequeg brandishes a tomahawk in bed, demanding "who-e debel" Ishmael is, they are reconciled, as both men acknowledge their shared humanity, with Ishmael philosophizing: "he has just as much reason to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him [...] [B]etter sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian" (818-19). The gag also functions paratextually, as Melville signals his awareness of his authorial identity as "the man who lived among cannibals." During his life, and certainly during this period in his career, Melville's reputation was as intimately entwined with South-Sea "savages" as Ishmael is with Queequeg at the beginning of the fourth chapter.[55] Murray's imprint on *Typee* and *Omoo*, with the circulation throughout the British Empire it guaranteed, had left its mark on Melville's career.

As the New York Times editorial eulogy to Melville shows, Melville's popularity in Great Britain may have waned, but he was never as fully forgotten as he was in America:

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[54] See for example, Christopher Looby's "Strange Sensations: Sex and Aesthetics in 'The Counterpane'" (2011) and Laura M. André's "We Weren't Queer Yet" (2011).

[55] In a letter to Hawthorne, written sometime in the early summer of 1851, Melville wrote: "What 'reputation' H.M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a 'man who lived among cannibals'! When I speak of posterity, in reference to myself, I only mean the babies who will probably be born in the moment immediately ensuing upon my giving up the ghost. I shall go down to some of them, in all likelihood. 'Typee' will be given to them, perhaps, with their gingerbread." (HMC 193). Melville, here, accurately gauged the relative popularity of his books, as the early successes of *Typee* and *Omoo* had in essence clinched his reputation.

> Yet forty years ago the appearance of a new book by Herman Melville was esteemed a literary event, not only throughout his own country, but so far as the English-speaking race extended. To the ponderous and quarterly British reviews of that time, the author of Typee was about the most interesting of literary Americans, and men who made few exceptions to the British rule of not reading an American book not only made Melville one of them, but paid him the further compliment of discussing him as an unquestionable literary force. Yet when a visiting British writer a few years ago inquired at a gathering in New-York of distinctly literary Americans what had become of Herman Melville, not only was there not one among them who was able to tell him, but there was scarcely one among them who had ever heard of the man concerning whom he inquired, albeit that man was then living within a half mile of the place of the conversation.[56] (*New York Times* 2 October 1891)

Even though the concentration of critical attention to Melville in the 1920s which is collectively referred to as the "Melville Revival" involved many American scholars, such as Raymond Weaver and Carl Van Doren, their work took its cue from late-nineteenth-century British critics such as H. S. Salt. Indeed, as Hershel Parker has argued in the editorial appendix to the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *Moby-Dick*, "the revival of Melville's reputation was almost exclusively a British affair until after all the hard work had been done" (732).[57] Lauter has noted in "Melville Climbs the Canon" (1994) that what emerged from this process of valorization and reclamation was "a distinctively masculine, Anglo-Saxon image of Melville [...] deployed as a lone and powerful artistic beacon against the danger presented by the masses" (6). British critics such as H. M. Tomlinson cast Melville as the "supreme test" of a reader's worth, as if *Moby-Dick* were a

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[56] The British writer in question was probably Robert Buchanan, who wrote in the 15 August 1885 issue of *The Academy* that he had "sought everywhere for this triton [i.e. Melville], who is still living somewhere in New York," adding that "no one seemed to know anything of the one great imaginative writer fit to stand shoulder to shoulder with Whitman on that continent."

[57] Fittingly, the critical texts which clinched Melville's canonized status may have been written by Van Doren, but they appeared in Cambridge University Press's monumental series *The Cambridge History Of English and American Literature* (1907-1921).

universal graduation exam, for, according to Tomlinson, if that book "captures you, then you are unafraid of great art" (qtd. in Lauter 16).

This British modernist construction of Melville amounts to an inversion of the relationship between book and reader (product and consumer): the reader's literary worth is determined by her appreciation of it, rather than the other way around. This conception of Melville is essentially apologetic, as it recasts him as a visionary author, whose literary aspirations were "a type of ambition which aimed too high for a man or a generation to finish in a lifetime" (HMB II: 57). To be sure, Melville's work invites such interpretations, for example in "Cetology," chapter 32 of *Moby-Dick*:

> Small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience! (157)

To be sure, the continued critical tendency – stemming from this early-twentieth century tradition – to interpret Melville's contemporary failure as a part of an authorial agenda supplies a "copestone" to his career, glossing it in its entirety as a rational and consistent process.[58] The invitation to posterity in "Cetology," if accepted, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Melville's gambit succeeds not because of any controlled strategy or objective inherent quality of writing but through inestimably complex,

[58] In his 1992 work *Words are Things: Herman Melville and the Invention of Authorship in Nineteenth-Century America*, André Kaenel posits that Melville rationalized the limited success of his books by devising what Kaenel calls a "poetics of failure," characterized by an inverse correlation between sales and prestige (34). In Kaenel's interpretation, Melville's disappointing sales become symbolic of a resistance to the literary marketplace. This is an escalation of the Romantic ideal of the Genius, where the Author is not only independent from society but also in contempt of it, "scorn[ing] the conventional audience" (Silverman 346). Kaenel's reading inscribes Melville's trajectory through the nineteenth century literary marketplace with a strong agency and forces a problematic teleology onto the reception of his works. The Modernist idea of Melville, then, continues to inform Melville's authorial aura. Indeed, even very recent work, like David Dowling's *Literary Partnerships* (2012) seemingly accepts the notion that nineteenth-century audiences somehow were responsible for Melville's lack of success, with Dowling describing *Moby-Dick* as "a novel positively 'too good to enjoy extensive popularity'" (40).

minute and numerous processes of re-inscription and canonization. By arguing that Melville failed because he aimed to fail, his non-performance is reclaimed. This is problematic in its own right, but doubly so when there is evidence to suggest that Melville was trying to cater to the transatlantic marketplace.

From *Typee* – "calculated for popular reading" (HMC 39) – over *Redburn* and *White-Jacket* written "almost entirely for 'lucre'" (160) to *Pierre: Or, The Ambiguities* – "very much more calculated for popularity than anything which you [i.e. Richard Bentley] have yet published of mine" (226) – Melville consistently assured his English publishers he was writing for popularity and profit. He seems to have been aware of diverging tastes and expectations on either side of the Atlantic and agreed to have *The Whale* expurgated by Richard Bentley's editor in an effort to appeal to British readers. The precariousness of Bentley's legal hold over *The Whale* may well have affected him in his decision to let an editor alter or excise passages deemed unsuitable for the British audience from Melville's proof sheets. It is possible that Melville was unaware of Bentley's intervention until after *The Whale* was published, but at the very least, Melville did not resist Bentley's interference. This becomes clear from the correspondence between them in early 1852, when Melville offered Bentley what would become *Pierre*.[59]

[59] Melville wrote to Hawthorne's wife in January 1852 that his next book would not be a whaler's "bowl of salt water," but rather a "bowl of rural milk" (HMC 219). The genre of the domestic novel was hugely popular on either side of the Atlantic, as Beecher-Stowe's wildly successful anti-slavery novel would prove that year. The requirements for a domestic novel were heavily codified, and, as with the genre requirements of the travel accounts which had started his career, Melville failed to satisfy the generic expectations. Monumentally so, as the story which begins as a seemingly innocent narrative of a young aristocrat turned writer, quickly devolves into a tragic tale of lost family honor, disgrace and despair, with occasional oblique references to incest, culminating in murder, death and a double suicide. As Melville's first book which did not have a London publisher (though some copies found their way onto the English market through Harper's London agents), *Pierre* received dramatically virtually no British critical attention: the only known London review of *Pierre* came comparatively late, in the 20 November issue of the *Athenaeum*. The *Athenaeum*'s review of *The Whale* had largely set the tone for the ribbing *Moby-Dick* got in the American press, and this review of *Pierre* is similarly negative. The American reviews of *Pierre* were damning, with the New York *Day Book* stating baldly (and boldly) "Herman Melville Crazy" (436) and the critic for the New York *Herald* laconically summarizing Melville's latest: "desperate passion at first sight, for a young woman who turns out to be the hero's sister, &c.,

By then, Melville was aware of the alterations that had been made to his whaling book, yet, in offering his next novel to Bentley, Melville assured his publisher that, if he agreed to the terms, he could go ahead and publish *Pierre* "without further hearing from me" (HMC 227).[60] This continued cordiality and trust was a far cry from the resentment Melville showed when John Wiley had demanded a revised version of *Typee* in 1846 (Melville had acquiesced, but made sure to offer his next work elsewhere).[61]

I read this offer of *Pierre* to Bentley as Melville's retroactive sanctioning of the considerable editorial interventions in *The Whale*. Bentley's editor dropped entire chapters from *The Whale*, expunging or at least watering-down Melville's thundering, blasphemous streak.[62] Many of the work's finer points are lost in this way, and the English version is rife with alterations made in the name of Victorian "good taste." The author's "genius," then, is modified to better suit the requirements of commercial success, adapted to better suit the socio-cultural network in which it is set to perform.

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&c., &c."(419). By March 1853, it was clear that *Pierre* was a commercial as well as a critical failure. Of the 2310 copies Harper's had printed, 1877 remained on hand, even after 150 review copies had been given out, leaving Melville with almost $300 due to his publishers (HMB II: 150).

[60] In September 1851, Bentley acknowledged an order from Melville for "six copies of the Whale" (615), which would have arrived some time that winter. Certainly, by November 1851, Melville could not have failed to notice the (unintentional) absence of the crucial epilogue in Bentley's edition, either from these copies or from the widely reprinted *Athenaeum* and *Spectator* reviews of *The Whale*.

[61] Melville's relationship with Richard Bentley remained cordial to the end, as the British publisher had been very kind to Melville. Even with the uncertainty surrounding copyright for foreigners in Britain, Bentley continued to make generous offers for Melville's works. In July 1851, Melville received an advance of £150 for *Moby-Dick*, with an agreement for half-profits to be paid at three and six months. This is somewhat less than the £200 Melville had negotiated from his British publisher in December 1849 for the first thousand British copies of *White-Jacket*, but given that opportunists such as Routledge had seized on the ambiguities in the *Boosey v Purday* ruling to encroach on Bentley's American authors by publishing (among others) unauthorized editions of *Typee* and *Omoo*, Melville did well to get anything at all (Barnes 157).

[62] *The Whale* includes alterations and corrections made by Melville to the original proofs of *Moby-Dick*. The American version had already been put in print, and as a result, Melville could only make changes at an expense (Hayford and Parker 475). This means that, while the American *Moby-Dick* is untainted by editorial censorship, the English version is closer to what Melville intended to write, save for the interventions of Bentley's editor, making *The Whale* a revised and finalized – albeit corrupted – version of *Moby-Dick*.

This is obviously not the willful rejection of the marketplace which has traditionally been read into Melville's whaling novel. If anything, the discrepancies between *The Whale* and *Moby-Dick*, as well as Melville's interactions with his London publisher, point towards a flexible approach to the transatlantic marketplace. Melville was not above pleasing target audiences, allowing public taste and editorial intervention to restrict his authorial autonomy. He knew his work would perform differently in a British context and adjusted (or at least, allowed Bentley's editor to adjust) his text accordingly.

Initially, his strategy seems to have paid off, as *The Whale* was relatively well received. The *Athenaeum* may have called it "an ill-compounded mixture of romance and matter-of-fact" written by one "not so much unable to learn as disdainful of learning the craft of an artist" (HMR 356-57) and the *Spectator* may have pointed out that, without the epilogue, the book is strictly a narratological impossibility (360), but these reviews are far outnumbered by positive ones.[63] The critic writing in the *Leader* of 2 November 1851 even cites *The Whale* as evidence of a "commencement of American literature," calling it "fascinating" and "daring," adding that "Herman Melville [is] assuredly no British offshoot" (370).[64] However, the usual American reprinting of British reviews was extraordinarily erratic for *Moby-Dick*. The damning *Athenaeum* and *Spectator* reviews

[63] In the American version, the epilogue, with its biblical quote from Job ("And I only am escaped alone to tell thee" (1408)) and its explanation of Ishmael's survival forms the "key in the lock" to the entire story (Beaver 44). No such explanation is present, however, in the English version, which gives the impression that the Pequod was taken down with all hearts alive, making the entire narrative impossible, as some British critics pointed out (Bryant and Springer 609). This does not appear to have been an intended alteration from Melville or the English editor. The epilogue is crucial to the entire work, and it is neither blasphemous nor disrespectful enough to warrant expunction. The editors of the Northwestern-Newberry editions of Melville's works have suggested that the loss of the epilogue in *The Whale* stems from the heedless way in which Melville appears to have treated his proofs. The epilogue was sent to the English editor, but for reasons unknown, it was sent separately from the rest of the manuscript, and was lost.

[64] Despite this (mild) critical success, sales were slow to follow: in Britain, even though Bentley had only printed 500 copies on the initial run, two years after publication, 217 of these remained unsold (Gettman 173). In America, the book fared little better. The accounts of Harper & Brothers on 25 November 1851 showed 1535 copies of *Moby-Dick* sold, but in the words of Parker "the figures showed that Melville's reputation and any new praise for *Moby-Dick* had not stimulated sales to equal those of *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*" (HMB II: 30).

were quoted at length in American periodicals, while none of the many positive British reviews received any attention (HMB II: 21). British critical opinion had largely made Melville's career with *Typee* and *Omoo*, but this time around, critical America's deference to Great Britain conspired against him.

Once again, Melville's relationship to Great Britain proved constitutive for his career trajectory. Not even two years after Melville had been attacked in both Powell's *The Living Authors of America* and in the American periodical press for his alleged traitorous servility to British publishers, *Moby-Dick* was gleefully dismissed by American critics who seemed to have latched onto these two negative British reviews as a kind of authorization for more damning reviews. The oscillation between cultural independence from – and cultural reverence for – Great Britain, which determined America's cultural horizon, created a shifting backdrop, and Melville struggled to tailor his authorial performance to it. Melville, and the American critical scene in general, was unaware of how positive most British reviews of *The Whale* were, and as Higgins and Parker have shown, the negative *Athenaeum* and *Spectator* reviews had a major impact on Melville's next book, *Pierre*. Halfway through the writing process, Melville grafted the authorship sub-plot of *Pierre* onto the original narrative as a reaction to his skewed view of British critical reception of *The Whale* (*Reading Melville's Pierre* 144-45). It proved impossible for Melville and Bentley to come to an agreement over *Pierre*, and Bentley would never again publish any of Melville's works.[65]

This episode of editorial intervention in *The Whale* not only works to deconstruct the modernist conception of Melville as an author in contempt of the marketplace, but it also serves to highlight my overall argument. Melville's career is inseparable from the

[65] Bentley's response to Melville's initial offer of *Pierre* was apprehensive. In this note, dated 4 March 1852, Bentley expressed interest but sought to lower Melville's expectations by listing the accounts of his books, which amounted to an estimated overall loss of £350 (HMC 618). This time, Bentley would offer no advance at all, but suggested publishing *Pierre* on joint account instead, yielding half-profits to Melville when (or, more likely, if) they arose, adding: "no publisher can do more for it than I can" (618). Given the amount of debt Melville was in at the time (HMB II: 92), and the preoccupation with profit clear from his last business-related letter to Bentley (HMC 226-28), it may well have been Bentley's refusal to advance any money at all which stopped negotiations.

transnational market in which it took place, and much of his prose reflects that. Great Britain loomed large in Melville's creative consciousness, not (or not simply) as an intimidating cultural model that has to be overcome, a "colonialist hangover" (Weisbuch 9). Instead, as this interaction with Bentley shows, it was a part of a problematic market which Melville sought to exploit. Paradoxically, the transatlantic literary market was so open, literary labor so easily transportable across the Atlantic, that Melville's ability to negotiate it was restricted. The modernist construction and canonization of Melville glosses over the transnational process of rejection, adoption, and adaptation I have described in this chapter. Yet, as I have shown, this process fundamentally shaped Melville's career and informed the contemporary reception of his work. Like Israel Potter, Melville (perceived as an American sailor, British wit, and American author, respectively) and his texts were paradoxically harnessed to national projects and made to work on both sides of the transatlantic axis.

# Chapter 3

*This is to certify that the undersigned [is the] innocent victim of a periodical paragraph-disease, which usually breaks out once in every seven years (proceeding from England by the overland route to India and pr. Cunard Line to America where it strikes the base of the Rocky Mountains and, rebounding back to Europe, perishes on the steppes of Russia) (Dickens to F.D. Finlay P.XI 419)*

When the eponymous main character announces his intentions to go to America in chapter 12 of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, one of his friends, Tom Pinch, is exceptionally concerned about Martin's safety: "'No, no,' cried Tom, in a kind of agony. 'Don't go there. Pray don't. Think better of it. Don't be so dreadfully regardless of yourself. Don't go to America!'" (212). Tom's depth of feeling here is somewhat incongruous: there has been nothing in the novel thus far to suggest that the New World is dangerous in any way – in fact, this is the first mention of America in the narrative. A few paragraphs later, however, we learn what it is that makes America so threatening. In a brief exchange with a coach driver, Martin learns of the fate of one "Lummy Ned," who emigrated to the United States "without a penny to bless himself with" (217), made a fortune and "lost it all the day after, in six-and-twenty banks as broke" (218). When Martin criticizes Ned for "not [taking] care of his money when he had it," the coach driver laconically agrees, adding that, as Ned's fortune was "all in paper," he "might have took care of it so very easy, by folding it up in a small parcel" (ibid.). This is another "American notes" joke: Ned's bankruptcy had nothing to do with whether or not his money was parceled up, and everything to do with America's turbulent banking system. Worse even than its potential to ruin emigrants is the fact that America's unstable finances directly affect British citizens: as a result of his son's speculations, Lummy Ned's father ends up in the workhouse (ibid.).

In this chapter, I investigate Charles Dickens's actual as well as imaginative engagement with America throughout his career. I argue that Dickens's authorial and editorial choices with regard to America should be read in the context of changing conceptions of national identities within the Anglo-American cultural horizon, prompted by changing financial regulations and an increasingly globalized economy. *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens's earliest authorial engagements with America, fit into the well-established tradition of British travel writing. These books – and the genre of British travel writing more broadly – commodified the New World, counting on its appeal to British audiences to generate sales on the domestic market. A decade later, however, in his capacity as editor of *Household Words* and later *All the Year Round*, Dickens showed considerably more regard for the American market, sacrificing topicality in order to compensate for the distribution lag that was still inherent in transatlantic publishing. At the time of his death in 1870, much of Dickens's fortune

stemmed from the exploitation of the American market, despite the lack of international copyright.[1] Dickens's career, then, not only reflects the changing socio-economic dynamics of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American cultural field, but can also be used to tease out the financial superstructure which motivated these shifts. Laurel Brake and Meredith McGill have contributed thoughtful considerations on Anglo-American cultural exchange to the field (the former identifying and discussing a "vestigial high-cultural value" attached to British texts on the American marketplace, and the latter examining the political basis for America's "culture of reprinting").[2] I will add to the critical conversation on nineteenth-century transatlantic relations by considering (representations of) its financial framework.

First, I will discuss Dickens's American novels, showing that in both the traditional travel narrative of *American Notes* and its imaginative counterpart *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens's engagement with the dangers of a fluid transatlantic financial market seems intended to encourage British protectionism. With the growing importance of global finance, national ties become attached to both geography and to the ability to negotiate transatlantic financial waters. As British monies extended across the Atlantic, Britishness and citizenship become equated not only with cultural loyalty but with financial and economic loyalty as well. What was presented and perceived as a clash of national cultures was in essence a clash of national industries, as either side feared being on the ebb tide of international financial currents. While Dickens and many of his fellow British authors were indignant at American "piracy" of their work, American opponents of international copyright were equally vocal about what they perceived to be British financial imperialism. Even as British labor was supplying its markets without recompense, America resented the idea of huge streams of dollars flowing to British

[1] At the time of the execution of his will, Dickens's total estate was estimated at £93,000. Over a fifth of that is accounted for by his six-month American reading tour alone. Between November 1867 and April 1868, Dickens held seventy-six readings, almost exclusively in cities on the northeastern seaboard. The readings netted Dickens an astonishing £19,000 (P.XII 730-33, 101).

[2] See McGill's *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting 1834-1853* (2003) and Brake's *Subjugated Knowledges* (1994) and *Print in Transition* (2001).

literary "mercenaries."[3] During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, these "mercenaries" were largely paid in pounds sterling, not dollars.[4] Countless contemporary British travel writers capitalized on British interest in the New World by publishing accounts of their American tours, largely shunning the American markets which they could not fully exploit anyway, due to the lack of an international copyright. The two books which Dickens published in the aftermath of his 1842 American tour, however, go beyond simple commodification of America, instead promoting what I will call "financial patriotism." These books present the New World as a site of explicitly British financial possibility; America becomes a kind of fiscal periphery for Britain, rather than an economic center in its own right.

Next, I will investigate the impact America had on Dickens's editorial policy for his weeklies *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Early proposals for *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Dickens's first periodical venture, had already featured suggestions of visiting America, specifically to gather material for publication.[5] By the 1850s, however, Dickens was beginning to revise his strategy on America, back-tracking on his resolution not to

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[3] American copyright opponents cast British authors as both wealthy and rapacious. In the February 1843 issue of the *United States Democratic Review*, one critic wrote: "Mr. Dickens [...] has written his books for the large and liberal reading public of his own country [...] how is he injured by the reproduction and diffusion of the same in another country three thousand miles across an ocean, a distinct political body? He has certainly been richly enough paid at home" (Vol. 12 (56), 120). A piece entitled "Loose Leaves by a Literary Lounger," published in the very next issue of the *Review*, contributed to this perception by making the wildly exaggerated claim that Dickens had accumulated "by his inimitable satiric fictions, full £30,000, independent of his recent 'American Notes,' which his liberal English publishers, we hear, cashed in full for £1,000 before they could even receive endorsement on this side of the ocean" (Vol. 12 (57), 297).

[4] As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, some American publishers did pay gratuities to the British authors whose works they reprinted, but these voluntary sums tended to be small tokens of goodwill, a polite formality rather than a sustainable form of income.

[5] In a letter to Forster, written 14 July 1839, Dickens briefed his friend and advisor – in preparation for upcoming negotiations with Chapman and Hall – to pitch the idea of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, adding: "In order to give fresh novelty and interest to this undertaking, I should be ready to contract to go at any specified time [...] either to Ireland or to America, and to write from thence a series of papers descriptive of the places and people I see, introducing local tales, traditions, and legends, something after the plan of Washington Irving's *Alhambra*" (P.I 564).

deal with American publishers and going to considerable lengths to collaborate with American republishers. I will show that Dickens's repositioning towards the American market was part of a wider adjustment of British attitudes towards a shared Anglo-American economic space. In his capacity as editor, Dickens exerted himself on behalf of his journal's contributors, even going so far as to negotiate prices with American publishers for American editions of stories published serially in his weeklies. This, I argue, not only allowed British authors to benefit to some degree from the American sales of their works, despite the lack of legal protection, but actually contributed to sustaining the demand for British literature in the American marketplace, by regularly introducing new talent. As a result, Dickens's weeklies became more valuable as commodities on the American market, prompting reprinters to seek arrangements with Dickens for advance copies in order to get a head start on their competitors. Eventually, these impromptu arrangements evolved into formalized agreements, with Dickens effectively licensing his periodicals to American publishers like the Harper Brothers and, later on, Ticknor & Fields. By this point, then, America was no longer a mere imaginary to be exploited, but a legitimate market, lucrative enough to consider in its own right.

Finally, I will discuss Dickens's 1867-68 American reading tour. This six-month *tour de force*, I argue, is Dickens's most remarkable engagement with America. Recognizing that there were no barriers in personal financial transactions similar to the ones that were preventing him from profiting fully from published material, Dickens shifted the value and appeal of his works away from their materiality, and onto himself as their source and authenticator. Dickens's reading tour, I will argue, was a canny manipulation of economic structures, as the author entered the marketplace both geographically and in a more abstract sense: Dickens became a personified commodity, eliding the gap between his authorial persona and his writing. The appeal of the readings lay in Dickens's authority over his texts, as though hearing Dickens read "his" texts and characters definitively settled the matter of their interpretation. Yet, Dickens varied his performances, reading different texts and even modifying stories on the fly, so that no two readings were the same. By stressing the changeability of stories at the discretion of their author, Dickens linked authority to production. During these readings, Dickens was in essence short-circuiting a Lockean notion of property, as his labor and its

product were immediate to his audience. Without the material object of a book to obfuscate the authorial agency behind the text, Dickens and his characters became inextricably entwined. Dickens capitalized fully on the American market by situating the value of his texts within himself, cleverly marketed to a mass-audience through what scholars such as Juliet John and John Drew have called a "personal mode." Dickens cast the relationship between his authorial persona and his readers as one of intimate friendship, thus eliding cultural and political differences – which Dickens dismissed as "the little official passion, or the little official policy, now, or then" – into one consolidated economic space. By holding up these three key moments of engagement with America as case studies, I will demonstrate how Dickens's career gradually transitioned away from engaging with national divides – both in imaginative and actual terms – towards a unified cultural-economic transatlantic space as a result of the increased international financial flow.[6]

At the outset of this chapter, Dickens's involvement in the International Copyright question requires some commentary. From the very beginning of his career, Dickens was aware that his works were selling in America, and selling well.[7] Indeed, during his 1842 tour of America, Dickens was notoriously vocal in the international copyright debate, as he recognized the potential income he could derive from America by the sales of his works. The lack of legal protection for his writing in the American marketplace

[6] It is important to note, however, that this process was slow and difficult, and, at times, perhaps not entirely genuine. Despite the chronological arrangement of my case studies, I argue that Dickens's approach to the New World was a nuanced and complex dynamic rather than a simple teleology.

[7] The First Series of *Sketches by Boz* were reprinted in Philadelphia as early as May 1836, just months after their publication in London by Macrone (Patten 95). Dickens's works sold well enough that by June 1837, American reprinting publishers like Carey, Lea & Blanchard were offering him sums of money, unsolicited, in return for his goodwill. In his late reply of 26 October, Dickens wrote: "it affords me great pleasure to hear of the popularity of the Pickwick Papers in America," and agreed to enter into any arrangement for the transmission of early proofs which the publishing house might see fit (P.II 322). Dickens's impression of his popularity on the other side of the Atlantic was bolstered by his 1841 correspondence with Washington Irving, whose letters "very strongly revived" the idea of visiting America, which Dickens had first proposed in the initial proposal for *Master Humphrey's Clock* (P.II 267).

was the circumstance which prompted Dickens to adopt each of the strategies I am concerned with in this chapter. Nevertheless, I feel that the purpose of Dickens's 1842 visit is too often overshadowed by the undue importance contemporary scholarship has given to the ensuing copyright controversy. Dickens's visit was not, as scholars such as Catherine Seville and Burton R. Pollin have presented it, a concerted "campaign" in favor of international copyright, even though it was quickly perceived and presented that way by British and American periodicals alike.[8]

To be sure, Dickens was in favor of international copyright – out of self-interest or otherwise – and he spoke in favor of it during two speeches at public dinners held in his honor. However, it is clear from his correspondence that he only started to gather pro-copyright support from other British authors to publish in various American periodicals *after* these remarks provoked an attack from the American periodical press.[9] The copyright debate was entirely secondary to Dickens's visit: Dickens was needled into his vocal but utterly inefficient defense by the allegations that made him out to be a "mercenary scoundrel" (P.III 83).[10] Further evidence of the undue importance attached

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[8] See for example Seville, *The Internationalisation of Copyright Law: Books, Buccaneers and the Black Flag in the Nineteenth Century* (2006) and Pollin "An Unnoticed Satirical Poem Reviewing Dickens's 'American Notes' in a Major American Magazine" (2000). In the January 1843 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, one critic cast Dickens as "a kind of missionary in the cause of International Copyright; with the design of persuading the American public to abandon their present privilege, of enjoying the produce of all the literary industry of Great Britain without paying for it" (Suthersanen 50). Dickens vehemently denied these allegations in a letter to the T*imes*, prompting an apology and retraction from the *Review*'s critic (Kitton 96).

[9] Dickens touched on the issue of international copyright in his speeches at the 1 February 1842 Boston dinner and the 8 February Hartford dinner. The first mention of the memorial on copyright and letters of support comes more than two weeks later, in a 24 February 1842 letter to Forster where Dickens asks his friend to procure "a short letter addressed to me, by the principal English authors who signed the international copyright petition, expressive of their sense that I have done my duty to the cause" (P.III 86). Similarly, the "petition for an international copyright law, signed by all the best American writers with Washington Irving at their head," which Dickens handed to pro-copyright senator Henry Clay in March 1842, is first mentioned in a letter by Dickens, written to Forster on 27 February 1842 (P.III 92).

[10] McGill calls Dickens's efforts to garner support for his statements regarding copyright an "attempt to stage his disinterestedness" (113) which was "excessive and self-indicting" (304). By continuing to speak on the

to Dickens's participation in the copyright debate is the fact that Dickens, for the most part, ceased to engage with it almost immediately after returning from his American tour.[11] Despite his grandstanding in the 1842 circular on copyright which was sent to British authors and journals, Dickens's private correspondence at the time indicates the pessimism he felt in regard to Anglo-American copyright, such as in a letter to poet and novelist Horatio Smith, written 19 July 1842: "I have no hope, whatever, of stopping American Piracy in this Generation" (P.III 275).[12] The copyright controversy has in large part skewed our perception of Dickens's first American visit, crowding out its contractually-bound fact-finding nature.

When Dickens first made up his mind – in September 1841 – to go on this visit to America, he only did so after his publishers agreed to his proposal for the travel narrative that would become *American Notes* (383).[13] On 7 September 1841, in what is now known as "the Chuzzlewit Agreement," Dickens's publishers Chapman and Hall agreed to advance him £1,800 in monthly installments over "the interval of twelve months which will elapse between the publication of the last number of Master Humphrey's

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subject, and drumming up support from other British authors, Dickens fuelled American suspicion of a concerted British effort to exploit the American market (113).

[11] In 1852, Dickens was part of another, much more discreet scheme, headed by Robert Lytton and his father Bulwer, intended to create political traction through Washington lobbyists. Dickens, despite pledging £100, was reluctant, echoing Richard Bentley's feelings that "he felt moral scruples, that it was a dirty transaction and that he wouldn't be a party to bribery and corruption" (Barnes 223).

[12] In the circular, Dickens cast himself as the lone hero, working tirelessly for the cause: "I lost no opportunity of endeavouring to awaken the public mind to a sense of the unjust an iniquitous state of the law in that country [i.e. America], in reference to the wholesale piracy of British works [...] my advocacy of [international copyright], single-handed, on every occasion that has presented itself during my absence from Europe, form my excuse for addressing you" (P.III 256-59). The circular, however, sought merely to rally support for his resolution not to deal with American publishers at all – a resolution which obviously did little to promote the necessity of international intellectual property legislation, as it changed nothing at all for American republishers who were already "pirating" material without seeking the author's permission.

[13] Dickens's letter of 14 September 1841, which first proposes *American Notes* to William Hall, he used Irving as a guarantor of success, writing: "Washington Irving writes me that if I went, it would be such a triumph from one end of the States to the other, as was never known in any Nation" (P.II 383).

Clock and the first number of the new work herein specified" (P.II 480). A week after this contract was signed, Dickens wrote to Hall, suggesting the idea of an American tour from which he might return with "a One Volume book – such as a ten and sixpenny touch" (P.II 383). The publisher agreed with Dickens that this would be "an excellent employment of a part of the interval" (ibid.), and by 19 September 1841, Dickens was resolved to go to America (CDP 128). It is important to remember that at this point in time, Dickens was still at the advent of his career, carving out a name for himself in his domestic marketplace. Regardless of the American hype which surrounded his visit, Dickens went to America in 1842 not as a literary conqueror, but as a chronicler reporting back to British audiences with his impressions and experiences.

## 3.1 The First Tour: *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*

Louie Crew is almost apologetic in calling *American Notes* "an honest record of [Dickens's] culture shock," but America's Otherness was the point of Dickens's visit: by commodifying America as an imaginary, Dickens could cash in on the New World by publishing his travel book – as well as its fictional recasting in the form of *Martin Chuzzlewit* – at a time when demand for these kinds of narratives in the British literary marketplace was relatively high.[14] The 1842 visit famously turned horribly sour, and undoubtedly contributed to some of the criticisms in both the *Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but for Dickens America was always, at bottom, a site of British financial

[14] Indeed, as Patten notes in *Charles Dickens and his Publishers*, travel accounts were "one of the few categories of books whose sale held up" in the slump which hit the British book trade in the 1840s (136). Conservative estimates of the amount of American travel accounts published in Britain between 1815 and 1860 puts their number around 200 (Ingham xi). That number may well have been much higher, as the Bentley catalogue alone carried nearly 80 travel accounts in that period.

possibility.[15] As Nancy Aycock Metz points out in "Dickens and America (1842)" Dickens himself was hoping to use the New World as a catalyst to recreate himself professionally (217). Afraid of going the way of Walter Scott, who had hurt his own popularity because he "never left off," Dickens welcomed the chance to visit America and revitalize his inspiration (CDP 120-21). Disappointed though Dickens was by the reaction of the American press to his remarks on international copyright, his American tour did achieve its main goal, which was to provide Dickens with new material. For Dickens, the New World's value lay in its appeal to British readers.[16]

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, countless British travelers to America published narratives of their experiences there. The genre soon settled into a predictable, almost formulaic pattern, as these travelers followed the same itineraries as their predecessors, and uttered more or less the same criticisms of Americans and their society. These travel accounts were popular enough that even though they were all first published in Great Britain, many found their way across the Atlantic, into the very nation which they described, thereby relaying the sense of British cultural hegemony they expressed. A cross-section of an American city, particularly one of the cities of the

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[15] The reverse was equally true: Dickens's texts in an American context were hotly contested commodities, with multiple reprinters trying to profit from their popularity (McParland 53). The republican ideals of popular education promulgated by these reprinters were supplemented with a labor-centric rhetoric, weighing the relative importance of intellectual property against the effects it might have on the laborers involved in book production and reprinting. They cast international copyright as a British encroachment on American industry and its economy, as copyright opponents cited "the many female laborers who would be 'thrown idle by the passage of the bill,' arguing that the misery of working women would be 'poorly compensated for by any display of ultra sympathy towards those who stand in no need of it." (McGill 95).

[16] In the text of *American Notes* especially, this is clear from the near-constant comparisons and references to Great Britain, often preceded by collective pronouns through which Dickens addresses his readers (e.g. "I am now going to state three facts, which will startle a large class of readers on this side of the Atlantic [i.e. British readers] very much" (75), "our own land" (77), "These countrymen of ours" (121), " [...] has rather inclined me to doubt that general proficiency with the rifle of which we have heard so much in England" (132), "Deeming it possible that my readers may not object to know what kind of thing such a gipsy party may be at that distance from home [...] " (187)). These addresses all show that Dickens was writing about America for a specifically British audience.

North-Eastern seaboard (which were the most frequented by British travelers for reasons of proximity and accessibility), would have looked like a cross-section of many British (port) towns, have spoken the same language, and have read the same publications. And yet, culturally, Americans were considered "provincial" by British observers. This is illustrated by a letter Dickens wrote to Forster on 17 February 1842, giving an account of the coverage by the American press of the "Boz Balls" held in the author's honor:

> Another paper [...] winds up gravely expressing its conviction that Dickens was never in such society in England as he has seen in New York, and that its high and striking tone cannot fail to make an indelible impression on his mind! For the same reason I am always represented, whenever I appear in public, as being "very pale;" "apparently thunderstruck;" and utterly confounded by all I see. [...] You recognize the queer vanity which is at the root of all this? I have plenty of stories in connection with it to amuse you with when I return. (P.III 72-73)

In spite of Dickens's bemused response there is a sense of shared cultural experience here. Dickens's condescending attitude towards the American newspapers, dismissing as "queer vanity" their accounts of him as an impressionable, wide-eyed rube, almost exactly mirrors their rhetoric. What is at stake here is which side of the Atlantic boasted the more refined high society. Even though the idea that the members of New York society could rival, let alone surpass British society in refinement was apparently laughable to Dickens, there is no sense of a fundamental cultural divide. This points to a residual view of America as imperial periphery. Denys Hay, in formulating his concept of "the idea of Europe," posits a positional identity, a collective "us" against a collective "them." In this case, there is a tacit understanding that the "us" of the British reader, and the "them" of the American subject are both subsets of a larger collective "us."[17]

[17] This collective "us" is recognizable today in the Anglo-American Atlantic Axis of power, bound together by what Winston Churchill, in 1946, called the "special relationship" between Great Britain and America. This phrase has since been used by countless politicians – both American and British – as shorthand to denote the exceptionally close diplomatic, economic and military collaboration between these nations, couched in vague and populist notions of historical and cultural belonging.

Indeed, British views of American society recognized it as similar, yet different: America was seen as an as-of-yet immature iteration of British society mapped onto a different geography. This is cultural relativism, to be sure, and British authors tended to be explicit in their discourse on the matter, apparently taking the adjective in "New World" to mean "underdeveloped." Captain Marryat, for example, in his 1839 travel account *Diary in America*, after claiming that there was very little difference between "the city of New York and one of our principal provincial towns" (3), summarily dismisses the idea of America as a fully grown nation: "[Americans] are not yet, nor will they for many years be, in the true sense of the word, a nation—they are a mass of many people cemented together to a certain degree, by a general form of government; but they are in a state of transition."[18] The implication is that Britain and America still constituted one culture, not two, even though the latter was ostensibly "provincial." This view often manifested itself in British travel writing through contrasting descriptions of America's "primeval" landscapes (the word "antediluvian" is a favorite here) and the cities and settlements which dotted them. The latter failed to impress British travel writers, who decried the newness of every man-made structure in America, which made even cities seem flimsy, insubstantial, and indeed almost immaterial in the eyes (or at least words) of these critical observers.

*American Notes*, as a part of this long British tradition of travel narratives, deploys these same tropes. Boston, one of the biggest cities of America at the time of Dickens's visit, seemed "slight and unsubstantial" to him, "exactly like a scene in a pantomime" because everything was so very new (34). Dickens goes on to describe New England's

[18] Similarly off-hand remarks about man-made America can be found in for example Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), where the author says there is little in the city of New Orleans to "gratify the eye of taste," but thankfully "the occasional groups of wild and savage looking Indians, the unwonted aspect of the vegetation, the huge and turbid river, with its low and slimy shore" could be of interest to the visiting European.

towns and villages as an uncanny double of "Old England," made uncomfortably sharp and hard and cold by their lack of history:[19]

> There was the usual aspect of newness on every object, of course. All the buildings looked as if they had been built and painted that morning, and could be taken down on Monday with very little trouble. In the keen evening air, every sharp outline looked a hundred times sharper than ever. The clean cardboard colonnades had no more perspective than a Chinese bridge on a tea-cup, and appeared equally well calculated for use. The razor-like edges of the detached cottages seemed to cut the very wind as it whistled against them, and to send it smarting on its way with a shriller cry than before. Those slightly-built wooden dwellings behind which the sun was setting with a brilliant lustre, could be so looked through and through, that the idea of any inhabitant being able to hide himself from the public gaze, or to have any secrets from the public eye, was not entertainable for a moment. Even where a blazing fire shone through the uncurtained windows of some distant house, it had the air of being newly lighted, and of lacking warmth; and instead of awakening thoughts of a snug chamber, bright with faces that first saw the light round that same hearth, and ruddy with warm hangings, it came upon one suggestive of the smell of new mortar and damp walls" (79).

Dickens's language and imagery constructs a sense of unpleasant immaturity, as even familiar sights and scenes (such as a lit hearth) somehow become hauntingly different because of their lack of history. *American Notes* reaffirmed the idea that Great Britain was a culture matured and America was that same culture still in the throes of childhood.[20] In "A Body without a head" (2007) Juliet John has shown the extent to with Dickens

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[19] Weisbuch calls this "[t]he strong British sense of history," and argues that this is what led British critics to dismiss the idea of American literature, as the New World "lacked a sufficiently full history" (xiii-xv).

[20] The immaturity of America comes to the fore especially in Dickens's description of the Boston suburbs, which, Dickens claimed, "are [...] even more unsubstantial-looking than the city [...] The white wooden houses [...] are so sprinkled and dropped about in all directions, without seeming to have any root at all in the ground; and the small churches and chapels are so prim, and bright, and highly varnished; that I almost believed the whole affair could be taken up piecemeal like a child's toy, and crammed into a little box" (34-35).

engaged with the genre, remarking that in the text of *American Notes*, Dickens tends to compare "scenes with previous expectations [...] gleaned from the travel books he had read," noting that Dickens had found "America and the prairie [...] worse than expected, Canada better" (191). Through a meticulous close reading of Dickens's American books, Nancy Metz has come to the conclusion that "Dickens constructed dialogue, description and even entire scenes implicitly as 'conversations' with other travel writers" (78).[21] The America Dickens was describing in *Notes* (as well as in its fictionalized counterpart *Martin Chuzzlewit*), was thus to some extent a textual entity from the outset, a hybrid of Dickens's actual and his textual experiences with it: "[t]extual encounters with the New World were often [...] determinants of experience, shaping what Dickens *could* see and what remained in the end invisible to him" (79). Patrick McCarthy, for his part, has pointed out just how much Dickens insisted on the veracity of his *Notes*, teeming as it is with protestations of factuality (69).[22] If we take Metz's point, however, these

[21] Metz shows how traditional views on the "relationship between 'fact and fiction'" in Dickens's American books, while recognizing the influence of canonical travel accounts, tend to privilege the importance of Dickens's experiences, despite frequent instances of intertextuality. For Metz's identification and discussion of such moments of intertextuality, see "*The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*: Or, America Revised" (1999).

[22] McCarthy finds that terms like "real," "truth," and "fact" riddle the book's "dedication, prefaces and final pages" especially, in an effort by Dickens to pre-empt charges of hyper-critical chauvinism: "The dedication is offered to 'those friends of mine in America' who 'can bear the truth,' and the first preface asks readers to find the 'fact' that will prove him right or wrong (46, 48). In the preface to the cheap edition, he says rather more assertively that he has 'nothing to defend' and then pounds out, 'The truth is the truth.' Worried that he will be charged with prejudice, he braces up his truthfulness with assertions of good will and denies he has written with 'ill-nature, coldness, or animosity' (47). In the last pages he seeks to spike the unfavorable reception he expects, again with a bow to his New England friends: 'I have written the Truth in relation to the mass of those who form [American] judgements and express their opinions' (292). His letters to both American and English friends are just as insistent in claiming that his book is 'true,' 'honest' and 'honourable' (III, 270, 315, 345)" (70). However, as Tim Youngs points out in his introduction to *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, "travel writing is not a literal and objective record of journeys undertaken. It carries preconceptions that, even if challenged, provide a reference point. It is influenced, if not determined, by its author's gender, class, age, nationality, cultural background and education. It is ideological" (2-3). Dickens's preconceptions were incontrovertibly and obviously British, and they informed much of the text's subject matter and tone; most notably in the "Slavery" chapter, where Dickens's collective British "we" is made to

protestations are revealed to be problematic in their pretense of objectivity, as Dickens's America was heavily inflected by its earlier representations in British travel writing. Dickens recognized the genre's economic potential in the domestic market, and went to considerable lengths to align the *Notes* with well-known examples of travel accounts.[23] In *American Notes*, the New World is not only commodified as an imaginary to appeal to British readers, but also rewritten – to fit a pattern of expectation created by previously successful travel narratives. That genre is not only influenced by the author's preconceptions, but also by its own basic premise, its fundamental condition: stories, set abroad, domestically told.

At this point in his career, then, Dickens was clearly shunning America as a market, exploiting it instead as an imaginary to boost British sales. This was a sound strategy, considering that only those sales were remunerative for Dickens, but his texts found their way across the Atlantic with seeming inevitability, meaning that the subjects of British travel writing frequently became its audience. Given how critical Dickens's American books were, they were unlikely to be well-received in the New World. From Dickens's letter written to Macready on 22 March 1842 we get a sense of the resentment American audiences felt towards British travel writing:

> Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean and paltry and silly and disgraceful than any country ever knew,—if that be its standard, here it is. But I speak of Bancroft, and am advised to be silent on that subject, for he is "a black sheep–a democrat". I speak of International copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties–slave upholders and abolitionists; Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats, shower down upon her a

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contrast with the "American taskmasters" of "Republican slavery" (Vol. 2, Ch. 9, 265). It is equally important to note, however, that *American Notes* fits into a strong tradition of British non-fictional travel narratives, a genre which was as invested in shaping British national identity as it was in actually describing other societies.

[23] Among them were Frederick Marryat's *A Diary in America* (1839), Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), and Harriet Martineau's *Society in America* (1837), some of the best-known exponents of this kind of travel narrative. In his 1952 biography of Dickens, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph*, Edgar Johnson discusses Dickens's engagement with these source texts in *American Notes*.

> perfect cataract of abuse. "But what has she done? Surely she has praised America enough!"—"Yes, but she told us some of our faults, and Americans can't bear to be told of their faults. Don't split on that rock, Mr. Dickens, don't write about America–we are so very suspicious (P.III 157-58)

Dickens's satirized rendition of an American expresses a sensitive, defensive, and ultimately paralyzing patriotism, effectively sacrificing "freedom of opinion" to a democratic conformity enforced by the American press.[24] Dickens's America, here, is suspicious of any kind of concerted attempt to control its image. Indeed, American resistance is specifically directed against *writing* about America – Dickens having already expressed his criticisms by "speaking of" Bankcroft, copyright, and Martineau, is given the advice: "don't *write* about America – we are so very suspicious" (ibid., emphasis mine). This is an important slippage, and indeed, a revealing one. Implicitly, the issue at stake here is less the criticism, and more the (written) reportage – so key to the genre of travel writing – which fixes and circulates an image of America over which Americans have no control. Despite signaling a keen awareness of the American resentment of British travel narratives on the subject of the New World to Macready in this letter, it is exactly this sensitivity which he goes on to lampoon in both of his American books.

One particularly interesting passage in this regard is the scene in *American Notes* in which an American passenger, upon learning that "Boz" was aboard the same steamer,

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[24] Dickens drives his point home by imagining his career in an American context, claiming that his career would have failed in the New World had he been born an American. He attributes this in part to the social criticism which characterized some of his earliest novels like *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Notably though, Dickens qualifies this statement by adding the condition of "producing them with no stamp of approval from any other land," signaling an awareness of the importance of foreign – and specifically British – influence on the American marketplace. Dickens, then, seems to have understood that, whatever the cultural differences between Brits and Americans were (in his opinion, chiefly spitting and slavery), his Britishness was a huge signifier in his American reception. In *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, Meredith McGill has argued that "Americans looked to Dickens and to other foreign travellers to represent a nation that was fragmented and rapidly changing," as non-Americans, unconcerned with its domestic self-imagining mosaic, conceived of America as a much more coherent and homogenous space (20, 23). Even Dickens's critical representations in *Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, then, served the reprinter's nationalist purpose, as they took all of America as their scope, consolidating it as a nation between their covers.

expects to be included in one of Dickens's books as the inevitable consequence of being a fellow passenger of "*that* Boz." There is more to this passage than just the comic irony of this man being included in the *Notes* exactly because of his objections against being the subject of a book. Dickens is poking fun at the presumptuous self-importance of this man, and yet he does feature in the *Notes*, despite Dickens dismissing the American's fear of being included as "imaginary." This disavowal by Dickens is significant, because rather than presenting the passage as an ironic self-fulfilling prophecy, Dickens denies the legitimacy of the American's claim even as he proves it. In the context of the entire passage, the implications become even more problematic:

> There was a gentleman on board, to whom, as I unintentionally learned through the thin partition which divided our state-room from the cabin in which he and his wife conversed together, I was unwittingly the occasion of very great uneasiness. I don't know why or wherefore, but I appeared to run in his mind perpetually, and to dissatisfy him very much. First of all I heard him say: and the most ludicrous part of the business was, that he said it in my very ear, and could not have communicated more directly with me, if he had leaned upon my shoulder, and whispered me: 'Boz is on board still, my dear.' After a considerable pause, he added, complainingly, 'Boz keeps himself very close;' which was true enough, for I was not very well, and was lying down, with a book. I thought he had done with me after this, but I was deceived; for a long interval having elapsed, during which I imagine him to have been turning restlessly from side to side, and trying to go to sleep; he broke out again, with 'I suppose *that* Boz will be writing a book by-and-by, and putting all our names in it!' at which imaginary consequence of being on board a boat with Boz, he groaned, and became silent. (Vol. 2, Ch. 6, 219)

The American passenger expresses a deep unease about the proximity of Dickens, whom he imagines to be an unrelenting, almost inevitable observer. If Dickens's protestations of not knowing *why* he was the cause of uneasiness to his neighboring passenger are genuine, he is apparently oblivious to the irony of eavesdropping and reporting on this man's misgivings, in essence escalating the level of observation beyond the passenger's wildest fears. The American passenger not only identifies but also clearly resents

Dickens's intention of exploiting him (and by extension, all of America) for his own financial gain.

Obviously, we are forced to take Dickens's word for the existence of this worried American passenger, but regardless of its factuality, this passage reveals a preoccupation with capitalizing on British interest in American subjects. It can be read as a straightforward satire of self-important Americans, or a coy joke in which Dickens confirms his authorial intentions of tapping into America as an imaginative commodity. In either case, Americans are the butt of the joke, while Brits are its partakers. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens achieved a similar satirical effect by creating and ridiculing American characters who assume minor American journals enjoy wide circulation in Great Britain as a matter of course, essentially equating publication with pure, unrestrained circulation. Foremost among these characters is the self-important editor of the *Watertoast Gazette*, Mr. La Fayette Kettle, who assumes his journal has found its way into the hands of Queen Victoria. Dickens compounds our sense of Kettle as a misguided self-centered provincial by having Kettle declare (to Martin's astonishment) that the Queen lives in the Tower of London (Ch. 21, 345-49). The air of superiority with which General Choke and La Fayette Kettle (mis-)inform Martin and Mark about the Queen's place of residence speaks to the cultural authority attached to narrative representation. General Choke, one of Kettle's associates, patronizes Martin and Mark in response to their protestations that the Queen does not, in fact, live in the Tower:

> "Hush! Pray, silence!" said General Choke, holding up his hand, and speaking with a patient and complacent benevolence that was quite touching. "I have always remarked it as a very extraordinary circumstance, which I impute to the natur' of British Institutions and their tendency to suppress that popular inquiry and information which air so widely diffused even in the trackless forests of this vast Continent of the Western Ocean; that the knowledge of Britishers themselves on such points is not to be compared with that possessed by our intelligent and locomotive citizens"[...] "Have you been in England?" asked Martin. "In print I have, sir," said the General, "not otherwise. We air a reading people here, sir. You will meet with much information among us that will surprise you, sir." (Ch. 21, 346-47)

Humorously arrogant and presumptuous, Choke's confidence in correcting these "Britishers" indicates the importance attached to visiting a place "in print," as his familiarity with printed "accounts" of Great Britain seemingly grants Choke authority which supersedes that of first-hand knowledge.[25] As confident as he is misguided, Choke deploys the fixity of printed accounts as the ultimate fount of information on and authority over its subjects. No wonder, then, that the steamship passenger in *Notes* is so terrified of being included in a book by "*that* Boz," resentful of being offered up as subject matter, to be rewritten, fixed, and recast helplessly. Dickens's American characters engage with the way in which (fictional) representation affects processes of cultural appropriation. To be sure, there is evidence that Dickens genuinely encountered American opposition to being written about, yet both *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* are heavily invested in exploiting America as an imaginary that would appeal to domestic British markets. It is hard, then, to shake the impression that characters like General Choke and the resentful passenger are avatars of Dickens's uneasy engagement with the commodification of America by British authors.

The American reviews of *Notes* were every bit as virulent as Dickens had anticipated in his unpublished 1842 preface (withheld on Forster's advice), where he claimed to know "perfectly well that there is, in that country, a numerous class of well-intentioned persons prone to be dissatisfied with all accounts of the Republic whose citizens they are, which are not couched in terms of exalted and extravagant praise" (Appendix I, 276). The patriotic pride of American reviewers prompted them to condemn Dickens in the strongest possible terms, dismissing the *Notes* as "trashy" and its author as a "flash reporter" who "[ate] his daily bre[a]d at 'cold vittal [sic]' shops supplied from the refu[s]e garbage of hotels and the table of gentlemen" (qtd. in Ingham xxvii). However, the fact that the *Notes* were not well received in Great Britain came as more of a surprise. In *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (1971), Collins argues that the British criticisms were motivated by the literary establishment's willingness to "cut down to

[25] The irony of poking fun at the "American" tendency of drawing from print sources to establish national stereotypes, in the context of British travel narratives and their fictional recasting, seems largely lost on Dickens here.

size this uneducated and Radicalish young writer of uncertain social origins" (118). There were certainly some reviews like that, such as the one in the December 1842 issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*, written by the supercilious Samuel Warren (using the pseudonym Q.Q.Q.):[26]

> It is again very obvious that Mr Dickens, as he has a perfect right to be if it so please him, is a man of very 'liberal' opinions in politics. We are as strong Tories as he is Whig or Radical; but we earnestly advise him not to alienate from himself the affections of his readers, by indulging, in such works as his, in *political* allusions and dogmas. We greatly doubt whether he has read or thought sufficiently long and deeply on such matters, to enable him to offer confident opinions on them. (800)

Warren was perhaps the most outspoken critic in politicizing the *Notes*, but his preoccupation with British political ideology reduced America to a "great democratic experiment," significant only insofar that its failure might prove the superiority of British Tory ideology.[27] The *Quarterly Review*, too, put the boot in, with a review in its March 1843 issue written by John Wilson Croker, "a Tory politician, essayist, editor and historian [...] famous for his slashing style" (Collins 136). Croker was ruthless, wondering how Dickens "could publish such trash," but remarkably, considering his reputation as a Tory bruiser, Croker did not simply dismiss Dickens's book on purely political grounds, as Warren had done before him. There is some level of condescension towards Dickens's political beliefs, as well as a cavalcade of backhanded compliments regarding Dickens's style, but the problem which Croker identifies at the core of *Notes* is that it has "very little of Mr Dickens's peculiar merit" (qtd. in Collins 137). This is snide reviewing at its finest, as what follows is an impressive combination of put-downs: a delicacy, wholly

[26] In an unbelievably conceited letter on the topic of the *Notes* written on 28 October 1842 to John Blackwood, Warren exclaims: "Oh what a book I could have written!!! I mean I who have not only observed but *reflected* so much on the characters of the people of England and America" (qtd. in Oliphant 232).

[27] For more on the ways in which America was cast as an "experiment" in order to signify as a contested political marker in British politics, see Brent Kinser, *The American Civil War in the Shaping of British Democracy* (2011) and David Gelernter *Americanism: The Fourth Great Western Religion* (2007).

uncharacteristic of him, "has forced Mr Dickens to eke out his volumes with such common and general topics as we have had over and over again from other travelers, and by most of them, we think, better handled" (qtd. in Collins 137). Croker is harsh, yet there is a grain of truth to what he says about Dickens's travel narrative. Many (if not most) of the topics which Dickens touches on in the *Notes* had been dealt with in earlier British travel narratives, and Dickens's treatment of the subject was hardly original.

McGill has remarked on the prevalence of travel and modes of transportation as a structuring device in the *Notes*, and argued that this is indicative of an uneasiness of the narrator persona which reflects Dickens's struggle to come to terms with the uncanny foreignness of American society. She notes that "in his conclusion, Dickens turns to the figure of narrative-as-vehicle to absolve himself of the responsibility to have offered a more sustained analysis" (123). She attributes this to "Dickens's difficulty in establishing a stable perspective from which to describe what he has seen" (122), due to his inability to find an American cultural core (132). These claims are not unproblematic, given that the genre of travel writing was aimed at domestic audiences, both economically and ideologically, and that thus Dickens's perspective was inescapably, stably British.[28] The self-exoneration of the narrator in Victorian travel literature and sketches is a trope which Dickens cannily deployed throughout his career whenever he engaged with the genre. The persona of the "objective" travelling author/reporter which Dickens assumed in *American Notes* was similar to that of *Sketches by Boz*, and yet no one would argue that Boz's professed dutiful neutrality stemmed from an inability to analyze the scenes he relates.[29]

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[28] In *Society in America*, for example, Harriet Martineau explains that she refrains from mentioning the "nauseous subject" of tobacco chewing "and its consequences" (by which she means spitting), because mentioning it in a travel book would do nothing to stop it (103): her intended audience was British, and they were not the ones doing the spitting.

[29] In his earliest pieces, written between 1833 and 1836 – collected and reprinted in the latter year as *Sketches by Boz* – Dickens skillfully constructed such a "reporter," the figure who connects the reader with what can be seen on the streets. "Boz" is a shifting everyman, an incognito agent ostensibly in the service of the reader, and consciously performs his duty to earn a living. E.g. "Our duty as faithful parochial chroniclers, however, is

I argue that the uneasiness underlying *American Notes*, which McGill characterizes as a cultural conflict, is the result of Dickens's attempt to negotiate the paradoxical pairing of a now-well-known author with his neutral, everyman narratorial persona. For the first time since *Sketches*, Dickens was presenting his audience with sustained non-fiction, apparently both written and narrated by Dickens. While the pieces which would later make up *Sketches by Boz* were being published in *The Monthly Magazine* and *Bell's Weekly Magazine*, "Boz" was an unpaid, largely anonymous writer (Douglass-Fairhurst 126). By the time Dickens wrote *American Notes*, however, the popularity of *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* had established an authorial identity which informed the perception of the travel account's "autobiographical" narrator. The tension in the *Notes*, then, stems from Dickens's attempt to reconcile his narratorial voice with his public persona. In the first paragraph of Dickens's conclusion to his travel narrative, he attempts the same sleight he had used for *Sketches*, by presenting his narrator as an employee doing his duty to the reader. The authority, then, stems from the reader, who has implicitly granted it to the narrator:

> There are many passages in this book, where I have been at some pains to resist the temptation of troubling my readers with my own deductions and conclusions: preferring that they should judge for themselves, from such premises as I have laid before them. My only object in the outset, was, to carry them with me faithfully wheresoever I went: and that task I have discharged. (Vol 2, Ch. 10, 266**)**

The sketch perspective of the everyman which had been, for his earliest works, a hugely successful way to hold up a mirror to society at large, had been robbed of some of its efficacy by Dickens's loss of anonymity. What audiences wanted from the narrator of the *Notes* was no longer a cypher or a mirror: it was Dickens they wanted.[30] That it was

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paramount to every other consideration" (17) and "We would willingly stop here, but we have a painful duty imposed upon us, which we must discharge" (231).

[30] In the unpublished preface of 1842 Dickens signaled a deeper awareness of the problematic nature of attempting a sketch "in the old model" as a famous author, recognizing that the unique selling point of the *Notes* was (in part, at least) his specific point of view: "Very many works having just the same scope and range, have already been published, but I think that these two volumes stand in need of no apology on that account.

Dickens's fame that gave *Notes* some of its appeal is clear from the remark which James Spedding made in his review in the January 1843 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*: "We have looked forward with considerably interest to a work on America by Mr Dickens;– not as a man whose views on such a subject were likely to have any conclusive value, but as one with whom the public is personally acquainted through his former works" (qtd. in Collins 125).

The closing paragraphs of the last chapter of the *Notes* – which starts with the Victorian reporter's trope of self-exoneration – addresses this disconnect between Dickens's narratorial and public personae:

> [A]s I have written the Truth in relation to the mass of those who form their judgments and express their opinions, it will be seen that I have no desire to court, by any adventitious means, the popular applause. It is enough for me, to know, that what I have set down in these pages, cannot cost me a single friend on the other side of the Atlantic, deserving of the name [...] I have made no reference to my reception, nor have I suffered it to influence me in what I have written; for in either case, I should have offered by a sorry acknowledgement, compared with that I bear within my breast, towards those partial readers of my formers books, across the Water [...]. (Vol 2, Ch.10, 274)

The tension between Dickens-the-author and Dickens-the-narrator lies just beneath the surface in this passage: having written the capital "T" truth, supposedly uninfluenced by the wildly extravagant but ultimately exasperating reception he had received, Dickens is still fretful about the effect the resulting book might have on his name, his authorial brand. Despite clearly being aware of the fact that his celebrity status was largely responsible for any popular interest there might be for his take on America,

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The interest of such productions, if they have any, lies in the varying impressions made by the same novel things on different minds [...] therefore I take [...] the plain course of saying what I think, and noting what I saw; and as it is not my custom to exalt what in my judgment are foibles and abuses at home, so I have no intention of softening down, or glozing [sic] over, those I have observed abroad" (Appendix I 275-77). The authority which Dickens had, by this point in his career, gathered to his name proved a double-edged sword and he was having difficulty wielding it. On the one hand, it boosted the salability of the *Notes*, but on the other, it exposed him to allegations and criticisms, both in America and in Great Britain.

Dickens disavows his popularity. The result is a curiously unsteady narratorial development as Dickens self-consciously tries to reconcile his celebrity status and his everyman narrator.[31] By not telling the story as his celebrity persona, Dickens had effectively undermined the sale value of his *Notes*.

> A year after Dickens's (in)famous travelogue, *Martin Chuzzlewit* began its serial run. Dickens first announced the book that was to become *Martin Chuzzlewit* to his readers in the 9 October 1841 "Address" in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.[32] In the "Address", Dickens assured his readers that his "new book in monthly parts, under the old green cover, in the old size and form, and at the old price" would commence from the first of November, 1842 (it would, in fact, be delayed for a few months, with the first number appearing in January 1843). Returning to the subject a few weeks later, in the farewell "Postscript" to the "Address" published on 27 November 1841, Dickens elaborated on the theme of this new book, promising them "another tale of English life and manners." This echoed his letter of 21 October 1841 to Macvey Napier, in which Dickens wrote: "I don't go with any idea of pressing the Americans into my service. In my next fiction, and in all others I hope, I shall stand staunchly by John [Bull]. I *may* write an account of my trip, but that is another matter" (P.II 405).

Dickens's claims, in this letter as well as in the "Postscript," are fascinating for a number of reasons. First, as discussed above, Dickens already knew full well that he

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[31] Patricia Ingham, in her introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of *American Notes* has traced this almost schizophrenic tendency in the body of the text, remarking on the way in which Dickens twists and contorts his narratorial perspectives, in an attempt to detach himself from it. Ingham notes that while the opening passage of *Notes* conspicuously refers to Dickens in the third person, throughout the rest of the book, the narrator oscillates between what she calls the persona of "an innocent abroad," and that of a "visiting VIP, beset by those anxious to shake his hand or offer him pews in churches; who calmly turns down an invitation with the president, John Tyler" (xxiii). Indeed, at the end of the book, for much of the infamous "Slavery" chapter, Dickens even trades in his role as author-narrator for that of editor-compositor, as large parts of that chapter are reprinted from Weld's abolitionist pamphlet, with Dickens making only minor interventions, such as adding emphasis and removing markers of locality from the advertisements for runaway slaves.

[32] In this "Address", Dickens announced the end of the *Clock*, as the strain of weekly publishing was starting to take its toll, and revealed his intentions to use the respite which it would afford him to go to America.

would – not *might* – write an account of his American journey by October 1841, having agreed to as much with his publishers by the middle of September of that year. It is remarkable then that Dickens is being coy about his intentions for the *Notes* (and difficult if not impossible to say why), but he would continue to be so until 26 July 1842, when he finally reveals to Napier that he had "resolved to describe my American journies [sic], in a couple of volumes" (P.III 289). Perhaps his discretion can be attributed to business considerations, though it is equally possible that it speaks to an unease Dickens felt about pandering to popular interest in himself as a celebrity author, as well as in the New World. Second, these disavowals on Dickens's part of having any intention of writing any *fiction* about America installs a wholly arbitrary distinction between his approach to the New World in his fiction as opposed to his non-fiction. The implication is that a fictional representation of America is exploitative ("pressing the Americans into my service"), whereas a non-fiction account of his experiences with America is not (or less so).[33] This line of reasoning lends credence to John Forster's claims that Dickens only decided to incorporate the crucial American episodes in *Martin Chuzzlewit* into his narrative a few months into the serialization. According to Forster, Dickens did so with the express intention of harnessing the controversy surrounding the *Notes* in order to boost the disappointing sales of the earliest installments.[34] Pressing the Americans into his service, indeed.

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[33] This is obviously a false divide, as from an economic, material point of view, there is no difference between a book which thematizes Dickens's experiences with America, and a book that thematizes a fictionalized representation of the same. Both books commodify America, hawking representations of it on the British marketplace.

[34] According to Forster, the early numbers sold only a little over twenty thousand copies, comparatively little to the forty and fifty thousands of *Pickwick* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, causing Dickens to change tack, and direct young Martin to America, betting on *American Notes* having whetted popular appetite (Forster Vol. 2 64). At least one American periodical was of the same opinion, claiming in October 1843 – midway through *Chuzzlewit*'s serialization – that Dickens had hoped that "abuse of America would rally his market; and the more bitter and biting, the better" (P.III 70n). Even if we give credence to Forster's claims, given the relatively poor reception the *Notes* had both in America and in Great Britain, this was a dubious decision, and it certainly did not pay off. In the summer of 1843, William Hall would enrage his star author by mentioning that, if sales continued to disappoint, a clause in the *Chuzzlewit* agreement would come into effect, which stipulated that if

Unlike *American Notes*, which like so many nineteenth-century travel narratives struggles to fit within any one genre, *Martin Chuzzlewit* is unquestionably a novel. It is centered on the conflict between Martin Chuzzlewit and his namesake grandson, who is self-absorbed and stubborn but intrinsically a good man. Young Martin's place as heir to Martin senior's fortune is preyed upon by Mr. Pecksniff, whose manipulation and hypocrisy at first seem to effect a permanent rift between the two Chuzzlewits. Young Martin sets off to America to make his own fortune, ostensibly striving for independence from his wealthy grandparent. He fails in his endeavors, as he falls prey to one of the endless parade of hucksters and con-men that people Dickens's America. Financially ruined by his speculation on Eden, and changed by malaria, Martin returns to England a humble and compassionate man, finally deserving of his grandfather's love and fortune and the two Martins are reconciled. What interests me here is the fact that young Martin returns. As it stands, America serves as a proving ground for him, eventually granting him the emotional maturity and independence he needed to become a worthy heir. I want to suggest that even if there had been an alternative narrative progression in which Martin's American adventure made him both emotionally and financially independent, he still would have returned to Britain: the return from the New World is crucial to the resolution of the plot.

In the context of emigration and the concurrent fluidity of citizen subjectivity, "home" is shorthand for a dense matrix of identities drawing on markers of geography, genealogy and nationality. The American episode in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is dominated by the idea rather than the practice of American settling. Much has been written about Dickens's decision to send Martin to America, not least as a result of Forster's subsequent claim that Dickens made this decision in an attempt to boost sales by attracting some of the attention the *Notes* received to his new work. In *Charles Dickens's Quarrel with America*, Sidney Moss builds on Forster's idea, arguing that the acerbity of

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the first five numbers indicated lower total profits than initially anticipated, Dickens's monthly pay would be reduced by £50. In theory, Hall was fully justified in his observation, but it proved to be impolitic in the extreme, as it exacerbated the frustration Dickens already felt with regard to the *Notes* as well as *Chuzzlewit*, and caused the rift which would see Dickens (temporarily) change publishers.

Dickens's attacks on America was calculated to chime with British anti-American sentiment, while also making trouble for American reprinters in the middle of the novel's serialization (28-52). However, when we consider *Martin Chuzzlewit*'s circumstances of production, Dickens's use of America demonstrates an explicit authorial deployment of the contemporaneous British political practices of economic expansion. Young Martin Chuzzlewit is taken in by Scadder, head of the Eden Land Corporation, and invests all of his finances in that cynically-named settlement, hoping to make his fortune by providing his services as an architect. Martin does not intend to till the soil but hopes to sell plans for American urban development projects. In one passage Dickens signals the speculative nature of architectural plans, such as the one in Scadder's office (so reminiscent of the one in MacGregor's Poyaisian Legation):

> A flourishing city, too! An architectural city! There were banks, churches, cathedrals, market-places, factories, hotels, stores, mansions, wharves; an exchange, a theatre; public buildings of all kinds, down to the office of the Eden Stinger, a daily journal; all faithfully depicted in the view before them. [...]
> "But I'm afraid," said Martin, glancing again at the Public Buildings, "that there's nothing left for me to do."
> "Well! it ain't all built," replied the agent. "Not quite." (353-54)

The "architectural" city is not at all built but turns out to be nothing more than "a hideous swamp" (375). Thwarted in their attempts to speculate on American soil, Mark and Martin set about improving their settlement, but soon the act of settling ruins them financially and physically. Forced to abandon their claim, Martin and his faithful companion Mark return penniless from their transatlantic endeavors.

The New World is instrumental in transforming the young Martin, but he does not reap any rewards from his American adventure. Amanda Claybaugh, in *The Novel of Purpose*, deftly argues that in the context of social reform, America "has nothing to teach" young Martin and instead "offers much to endure" (82). In the context of financial reform, however, America teaches Martin much about the perils and potential benefits of transatlantic financial adventure. Early on in the novel, America is represented as a realm for exploitation, albeit a dubious one. In chapter 12, John Westlock's hints of income to be had "abroad" prompt Martin's decision to head to America to make his fortune, despite Tom Pinch's objections. The failure of Martin's

enterprise is foreshadowed by his grueling passage to America, with the "unchecked liberty" (246) of the Atlantic Ocean seemingly bent on sinking any ships that braves it:

> [A]t [the ship's] boldness and the spreading cry, the angry waves rise up above each other's hoary heads to look [...] they press upon her [...] high over her they break; and round her surge and roar; and giving place to others, moaningly depart, and dash themselves to fragments in their baffled anger. (247)

The dangers of the passage are reinforced by the narrator's bafflement at people asleep on board such an ocean-tossed ship, "as if no deadly element were peering in at every seam and chink, and no drowned seaman's grave, with but a plank to cover it, were yawning in the unfathomable depths" (ibid.).

When their initial speculative venture falls through, and they attempt to tame the wilderness, both Mark and Martin are defeated by the hostile environment and are forced to retreat back to Britain. Penniless, it appears they will have to rely on Mr. Bevan, a kind and generous gentleman from Massachusetts, to lend them their fare home. Martin grudgingly accepts: "'I am truly sorry and ashamed,' said Martin, 'to have begged of you. But look at us. See what we are, and judge to what we are reduced!'" (543). What is Martin hoping Mr. Bevan makes of them, when he implores him to "see what we are"? Beggars, rash young men, foolhardy immigrants? Or perhaps Martin is invoking their Britishness as a testament to their innocence and decency, proof that they are proud men who would not ordinarily beg but for the destructive influence of the American landscape. Martin's American experience is cathartic, but, according to Metz in "'Fevered with Anxiety for Home': Nostalgia and the 'New' Emigrant in *Martin Chuzzlewit*," his tragic error is his participation in nation-building, not his willingness to cash in on American development. No American money finds its way onto English soil through Martin's attempted settlement: Mark manages to secure a position as ship's cook, and thus pays for both their passages, without having to impose on Mr. Bevan. Martin intends to use the global financial market not to re-create a new, capitalist empire abroad but instead to exploit the central tenets of capitalism to fill British coffers. In a global financial market, Martin's speculative nation-building is not for America. Instead, *from* America, he works to reconfigure the notions of British

citizenship to accommodate increased geographic movement for Britons and their money.

From Charity Pecksniff, who is only interested in any new pupil of her father's in terms of premiums, through Mrs. Todgers' "commercial" gentlemen – not agents of commerce, but objects of it – to Tigg Montague's gleeful exaltation of making "a devilish comfortable little property" out of each customer, calculating commodification is the prime evil in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Tigg Montague's conflation of the individual with property mirrors what Raymond Baubles Jr. in "Displaced persons: The Cost of Speculation in Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*" sees as the result of a "concern with disembodied profit" that results in "the displacement of persons" (246). In *Martin Chuzzlewit* as in the tumultuous period of banking reform between 1825 and 1855, the lack of geographic and regulatory stability results in a destabilized sense of self for Britons. No longer represented as individuals but instead considered "properties" who exist within a framework that is now primarily economic, Britons are defined by their ability to maneuver within the world of global finance. The commodification of the individual problematizes Martin senior's claim that "the curse of [the Chuzzlewit] house [...] has been the love of self; has ever been the love of self" (800), as the commodification is not restricted to others, but replaces the self too. The economic vocabulary used to describe Major Pawkins is a case in point:

> But, in trading on his stock of wisdom, [Pawkins] invariably proceeded on the principle of putting all the goods he had (and more) into his window [...] It must not be supposed, however, that the perpetual exhibition in the marketplace of all his stock-in-trade for sale or hire was the major's sole claim to a very large share of sympathy and support [...] In commercial affairs he was a bold speculator. In plainer words he had a most distinguished genius for swindling, and could start a bank, or negotiate a loan, or form a land-jobbing company (entailing ruin, pestilence, and death, on hundreds of families) [...] This made him an admirable man of business. (268-69)

Dickens's biting satire reduces speculating characters to the sum of their capital: "All their cares, hopes, joys, affections, virtues and associations, seemed to be melted down into dollars [...] men were weighed by their dollars" (273-74). Even Pawkins's wisdom – another intangible – is described as "stock." His success in business is outside of the

material world, as it is entirely based upon his ability to anticipate imagined desires and negotiate the systems that benefit from these imaginings.

In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the narrator spells out the connection between literary publishing and financial speculation, by comparing the danger which besets uninformed investors to that which threatens readers:

> And in the window were the spick-and-span new works from London, with the title-pages, and sometimes even the first page of the first chapter, laid wide open; tempting unwary men to begin to read the book, and then, in the impossibility of turning over, to rush blindly in, and buy it! Here too were the dainty frontispiece and trim vignette, pointing like handposts on the outskirts of great cities to the rich stock of incident beyond; and the store of books, with many a grave portrait and time-honoured names (70)

The materiality of these books, with their "whiff of russia leather [...] and all those rows on rows of volumes neatly arranged [...] the spick-and-span new works from London" (70) is their siren's call, luring people into blindly, rashly buying any book. The aura of material respectability of "the dainty frontispiece and trim vignette" and "russia leather" is shown to be treacherous, capable of putting a decent, reputable face on moral or qualitative penury.[35] Tom Pinch, Dickens's narrator assures us, "would have given mines" to possess the books in the Salisbury bookshop, concluding dramatically: "What a heart-breaking shop it was!" (ibid.). Puffing was blatant and widespread in both the literary and financial markets, and a prospective reader was as likely to be swindled as a prospective settler or speculator. Book-buying is cast as a risky venture, equally perilous as land-speculation. This precariousness facilitated what Eric Hobsbawm, in

[35] Dickens deploys this idea of the deceptiveness of materiality to great effect later on in *Martin Chuzzlewit* in the description of the offices of the "Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Insurance Company": "On the doorpost was painted again in large letters, 'offices of the Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company,' and on the door was a large brass plate with the same inscription; always kept very bright, as courting inquiry; staring the City out of countenance after office hours on working days, and all day long on Sundays" (430).

*Industry and Empire* (1968), calls "the emigration of capital," as print could convincingly keep investors uninformed:

> [B]usinessmen and promoters (contemporaries would have said 'unsound businessmen and shady promoters') were now better able to raise capital not only from potential partners or other informed investors, but from a mass of quite uninformed ones looking for a return on their capital anywhere in the golden world economy. (118)

The ways in which the imaginary North American world translates into real-life economic gain for land agents and distributors is mirrored in the circumstances of production of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The novel does not promote emigration as a venture that should be undertaken lightly. However, Dickens demonstrates how professional authors can utilize the increasingly familiar mechanisms of joint-stock speculation to promote their own literary work.[36]

In his American books, Dickens represents America not as a geographic locale wherein book sales and land settlement might offer alternative economic opportunities but instead as a landscape available for financial and symbolic British exploitation. Much like Dickens himself, who truly discovered his "Englishness" while in the United States (Ackroyd 365), young Martin explains to Mark Tapley that "most people who travel have become more than ever attached to [their] home and native country" (278). In spite of geographic distance providing a fresh perspective that allows for critique of the home country, national affiliation and ties are strengthened through travel. Furthermore, using America as an imaginary geography rather than a material one

[36] The importance in legal and financial milieus of Dickens's representations of joint-stock ventures in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is clear when investigating the legal history of corporations . In L.C.B. Gower's foundational legal textbook, *Gower's Principles of Modern Corporate Law*, he argues that between 1837 and 1855, "some 50 companies did in fact form under [the Charter Companies Act of 1837], but most still preferred to rely on the *de facto* protection from personal liability conferred by suing and levying execution on the members of a fluctuating body. Many of these were from their inception fraudulent shams, particularly the bogus assurance companies such as those pilloried by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and it was primarily the existence of these which led the Board of Trade to secure the appointment in 1841 of a Parliamentary Committee on Joint Stock Companies" (38).

allows Dickens to tailor his representations to best reflect the economic, political, and literary landscapes of their moments of publications. Finally, the act of using America as a means to an end is one that speaks directly to the increasing professionalization of authorship. Indeed, if Dickens had found his 1842 visit to America more agreeable, *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* might have been very different books, but their intended audience would still have been incontrovertibly British. Considering the idealistic views of America Dickens held before ever crossing the Atlantic, these books – which are now read as harsh critiques of crass New World capitalism – could very well have been exemplifications of America, holding it up to Great Britain as a model to aspire to.[37] Even so, America would have been an imaginary, a country reduced to a marker, set to signify domestically. For Dickens, America was a British financial periphery, a site for British capitalism to exploit for British fiscal gain.

## 3.2 "The Autographic Hand": Dickens's periodicals and America

At first glance, the twenty-five-year period between Dickens's first and second American visit seem to have little relevance to a discussion of Dickens's interaction with the New World. No further American novels were forthcoming, and while copyright debate simmered on, Dickens's involvement in it was minimal. Dickens, for one, seemed loath to forget about the "smart dealings" his writings and his person had been subjected to. Between 1842 and 1852, Dickens refused to break his high-handed resolution to "never from this time enter into negociation with any person for the transmission, across the Atlantic, of early proofs of any thing I may write; and forego all profit derivable from such a source" (P.III 258). In 1852, however, Dickens returned to

[37] There is some degree of that in the *Notes*, as Dickens praises America's educational institutions, its asylums, and its campus model of factory work.

the fold, agreeing to send early proofs of *Bleak House* to be published serially in *Harpers' New Monthly Magazine*, in return for £360, or roughly $1720 (Exman 310, McParland 57).[38] Yet to limit Dickens to his novels, or even to his prose, is to neglect his role as editor, an aspect of his career which was gaining in importance. In 1850 Dickens launched *Household Words*, the flagship weekly which he "conducted," sharing its proprietorship with John Forster and sub-editor H.W. Wills – both holding an eighth share – its publishers Bradbury & Evans, who held a quarter share, leaving Dickens with the remaining half. As majority shareholder, Dickens took his editorial duties very seriously, with the Pilgrim editors calling him "a hard taskmaster" in this context (P.VI viii).[39] *Household Words* was a success in Great Britain, its medley of original fiction and instructive (though entertaining) non-fiction proving popular with a wide audience. American reprinters and publishing houses picked up on this success almost immediately, mining *Household Words* for content.

Perhaps the most voracious American reprinters of material from *Household Words* were the Harper Brothers, whose *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* started in June 1850, three months after the launch of Dickens's weekly. *Harper's* was successful from the start: by the end of 1850, 50,000 copies of each number were in circulation (Phegley 63).The inaugural issue featured an editorial piece entitled "A Word at the Start," which described *Household Words* in terms of extravagant praise: "Dickens has just established a

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[38] In March 1852, Harpers distributed flyers to announce their triumph in securing the author "whose writings surpass those of all others, not more in the genius they display, and the absorbing interest by which they are marked, than in the steady and consistent devotion to the interests of morality and of the great masses of the people of every country," trumping Rufus Griswold who had been announcing *Bleak House* for his *International Magazine*, and claimed to have paid Dickens roughly double what Harpers eventually did. In these flyers, Harpers modestly claimed to "refer to this fact simply as indicating their purpose to spare no expense necessary to render their Magazine in every respect deserving of the unparalleled success it has achieved" (*Inside Narrative* 398-400). From 1852 on, Dickens made arrangements with several American publishing houses for the transmission of early proofs of almost all of his novels. See also Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers* (1978) and McParland *Charles Dickens's American Audience* (2010).

[39] For more on *Household Words* and Dickens's editorial practices in general, see John Drew's *Dickens the Journalist* (2003), Anne Lohrli's *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859* (1973) and John Hollingshead's "Fifty Years of *Household Words*" (1900).

weekly journal of his own, through which he is giving to the world some of the most exquisite and delightful creations that ever came from his magic pen" (1). This panegyric to "the national villain of 1842" (*Inside Narrative* 402) was surprising, especially coming from the company which benefitted more than any other from the lack of the kind of copyright legislation Dickens had spoken up for.[40] When considered in the light of the content of that first issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, however, the reprinter's strategy emerges. As Jennifer Phegley points out in "Literary Piracy, Nationalism, and Women Readers in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*," this inaugural issue contains no fewer than eight articles copied from *Household Words* (67). The editors, in their "A Word at the Start," seem outspoken about their intentions, writing: "The magazine will transfer to its pages as rapidly as they may be issued all the continuous tales of Dickens, Bulwer, Croly, Lever, Warren, and other distinguished contributors to British Periodicals." The praise lavished on its British sources naturally redounded back onto *Harper's*, and was calculated to convince American consumers of its quality. The July 1850 issue of *Harper's* found the editors true to their word, especially where reprinting Dickens was concerned, as it contained a colossal fourteen items lifted from Dickens's weekly. The August issue informed its readers that "the English literary

[40] Indeed, Harpers "was and had long been opposed to international copyright," and would continue to oppose any efforts to install any such legislation. In a brief submitted to Congress in 1868, Harpers warned against the negative consequences of international copyright, and lamented the fact that Congress would even consider such an "abstract question," given the "existing business and financial difficulties of the country" (Everton 45). Hershel Parker has given some indication of the efforts Harpers went to, even outside of their own periodical, to "rehabilitate the national pariah of late 1842," by drawing attention to the piece they had printed in the *New York Times* of March 16, 1852, entitled "Dickens—the Reformer." This piece was intended to create interest for the serialization of *Bleak House* in *Harpers* which would start a month later, in April 1852. As "Dickens—the Reformer" would have it, *Bleak House* was to be "the demolition of abuses and reform of institutions which impede the progress and crush the energies of the race." Dickens, for his part, was hailed as "a stalwart champion of Democracy, of the rights of the People [...] one of the means by which God works, to bring about the equality of man, and level all distinctions" (qtd. in *Inside Narrative* 402).

intelligence of the month is summed up in the Household Narrative [the monthly supplement to *Household Words*], from which mainly we copy" (qtd. in Phegley 67).[41]

By 1851, however, none of the pieces taken from *Household Words* are identified as such in *Harper's*, though Dickens and other well-known authors continued to receive credit, in order to harness whatever saleable prestige those names might have. *Harper's* policy of "transferring" was not limited to serials by prominent British authors, meaning that fiction by lesser-known authors and (often anonymous) non-fiction pieces were reprinted in *Harper's* without any kind of attribution, be it through author name or publication title (McParland 55). [42] Current scholarship has considered the ramifications of this kind of unattributed American republishing where authors are concerned, but given how involved Dickens was in *Household Words*, I argue that Dickens's editorial persona should also be considered in this context. Robert Patten, John Drew and the editors of the Pilgrim letters have convincingly shown Dickens's extraordinary level of editorial involvement in "his" periodicals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Dickens wanted to educate the readers of his weeklies while also entertaining them, dolling up whatever tidbits of useful knowledge were on offer with illustrative anecdotes, allegories, dialogue and similar devices. In a 31 October 1852 letter to *Household Words* staff-writer Henry Morley, Dickens posits the "indispensable necessity of varying the manner of narration as much as possible, and investing it with some little grace or other" (P.VI 790). The creative and fanciful approach *Household Words* took to useful information was a corner-stone strategy, calculated to set the publication apart from rival weeklies such as the "cast-iron and utilitarian" *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*. As a consequence of this "indispensable necessity," Dickens kept a close eye on pieces of this kind, commissioning contributions and editing them carefully, sometimes even rewriting or interposing whole passages.

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[41] For more on *Household Narrative*, see Claes, "'Serviceable Friends': The Two Supplements to *Household Words*" (2013).

[42] By Drew's estimates, original fiction and poetry only constituted roughly a third of *Household Words*, the remainder being anonymous non-fictional, informative pieces on science, economics and politics presented on the "spoonful of sugar principle" (*Dickens the Journalist* 110, 115).

The effect was a kind of blended authorship, blurring the lines between anonymous authorship and editorial intervention.[43] In an 1850 letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, Dickens explained that this use of anonymity in *Household Words* allowed all of its contents to "seem to express the general mind and purpose of the journal" (P.VI 21-22).[44] Despite stressing unity and collaboration, Dickens alone was credited with their contents.[45] As early as July 1845, a full five years before *Household Words* appeared, Dickens showed himself supremely aware of the opportunities to influence his readership a prominent editorial persona like the "Conductor" offered him, writing to Forster in July 1845: "you know exactly how I should use such a lever, and how much power I should find in it" (P.IV 328).[46] Dickens's name imbued the periodical and accumulated whatever value the contents of its pages had, even that which was provided by anonymous contributors. Though remunerated for their efforts, most contributors were denied their "hic fecit," in order to (in the words of Forster) "relieve [Dickens's] own pen," while "retain[ing] always the popularity of his name" (P.IV 328). Richard Altick has pointed out that it was the "prestige of Dickens's name [which] helped break down further the still powerful upper- and middle-class prejudice against cheap papers" (347). On the British market,

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[43] Scholars such as Harry Stone and Daragh Downes have remarked on the effects of Dickens's overbearing and micromanaging editing style, with the latter claiming that contributors like Morley were "emasculated" by the overwhelming influence of the journal's "Conductor" (Downes 195). For more on Dickens's editorial practices in the context of *Household Words*, see Harry Stone's notes in *The Uncollected Writings* (1968).

[44] Dickens was by no means alone in this plea for a common identity. As Laurel Brake has pointed out, many Victorian periodicals "adopted a policy of anonymity which [...] supports the corporate identity of the journal as a journal, and mitigates the differences of its individual contributors [...] such periodicals [...] present themselves to the reader as a whole, as a book does" (Brake 4).

[45] When challenged on this policy of anonymity, Dickens, ever sensitive about his brand, responded tartly by claiming that any "confusion of authorship [...] would be a far greater service than dis-service" to contributors (Drew 118).

[46] Dickens had been conceptualizing this type of editorial persona for much of his career, gradually evolving from the old Master Humphrey in 1840, over a cricket in 1845, which could approach readers "in a more winning and immediate way [...] which people would readily and pleasantly connect with *me*" (P.IV 328), to the much more abstract "SHADOW. . . a kind of semi-omniscient, omnipresent, intangible creature . . . a cheerful, useful and always welcome shadow . . . everyone's inseparable companion" (P.V 622-23).

the difference between Dickens's weekly and cheap publications like *Chambers's* or *Howitt's Journal* was clearly more than the single penny in price.[47] Dickens's publications were respectable, finding their way into aspiring working-class homes and middle-class drawing rooms alike, while cheap papers stayed in the sphere of "the poor man."

Superimposing the ubiquitous Conductor over all of the anonymous pieces in *Household Words* was a keen and highly successful editorial strategy, which allowed Dickens's magazine to occupy a niche in the tightly stratified British periodical marketplace. When American periodicals such as *Harper's* lifted contributions from *Household Words* without identifying it as a source, they were effectively removing whatever sale value Dickens's editorial brand might have brought them. This seems counterintuitive – why not take advantage of the popularity of Dickens's name whenever possible? – but considered in the specific context of the American market, this decision to obfuscate the provenance of those pieces becomes much more logical. Not only was the class sensibility which informed Dickens's editorial policies in Great Britain much less of a factor where American publishing was concerned, but concurrent with the international copyright debates, American literary nationalism was also on the rise.[48] *Harper's* needed to weigh the popularity of Dickens's brand against the dangers

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[47] Rival weeklies like *Chambers's* were marketed at the "willing consumer of the 'useful and agreeable mental instruction' dispensed by the journal" (Huett 68), but presented their information through "bland paternalism and anodyne imagery" (*Dickens the Journalist* 110). In an 1844 letter to Mrs. Hall, Dickens likened *Chambers's* to "the brown paper packages in which Ironmongers keep Nails" (P.IV 110-11). Dickens remained well aware of the crucial brand difference which separated his publications from the competition, something which becomes clear from the note he wrote to Wills in 1853, reminding him that to "KEEP 'HOUSEHOLD WORDS' IMAGINATIVE! is the solemn and continual Conductorial conjunction" (Drew 110-111).

[48] An article entitled "A Letter to John Bull," published in *Putnam's Monthly* in February 1853 shows the fundamental differences between British and American periodical publication, as its writer criticizes British papers and magazines for being "too costly to be taken by the poorer classes." This piece draws on both nationalist and anti-classist discourses, and illustrates that there was no need for the "Conductor" brand to differentiate *Household Words* from its cheap press competitors in the American market, as the cutthroat competition meant that prices were mostly low across the entire spectrum of publication; and that the "almost universal circulation" of periodicals which resulted from this inexpensiveness contributed to America's superior "popular intelligence" and the "elevation of the masses" (225, 229).

involved in laying themselves open to charges of being unpatriotic.[49] One of *Harper's* main competitors, *Graham's*, derisively referred to it as "a good foreign magazine," while another, *The American (Whig) Review* accused it of being "utterly destitute of regard for the literary talent of [its] own countrymen" (qtd. in Phegley 68-69). In response to these charges, from its second volume onwards, *Harper's* began making efforts to bolster its image as an American periodical. One of the more cynical measures the editors took was simply eliminating the attributions at the head of each reprinted piece which credited its source, for all but the serial fiction.[50]

As a result, Dickens's editorial persona for *Household Words*, the "conductor," had little to no presence in America. While Dickens's name continued to be attached to (most of) the American reprints of his novels, the "omnipresent shadow" which Dickens envisaged as crucial to the success of his periodical venture was lost in the fragmented, uncredited nature in which it was reprinted. *Household Words* was arguably the most important aspect of Dickens's career at this point in time, allowing him to manipulate readers' perception of him more efficiently and consistently than novels ever could.[51]

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[49] In a piece on international copyright published in the *New York Tribune* on March 17, 1852 Horace Greeley makes the copyright issue one of national honor, claiming that America is "shamed" by its tolerance of unauthorized reprinting, and calling Harper's "pirates upon the sea of mind [...] buccaneers with the black flag of absolute confiscation." The fact that British publishers like Bentley were already securing the rights of their American authors under British law made the issue all the more galling to Greeley, prompting him to wonder in conclusion: "Are we to continue to suffer under this most odious stigma of repudiation of men's rights to their inventions? Do we mean always to submit to this world-notorious brand of meanness – to recognize every right but that of genius?" (4).

[50] Phegley has shown that this was part of a much broader process, as *Harper's* also introduced a policy of payment for reprints (as with *Bleak House*) and announced that it would be incorporating original work by American authors as well. By the summer of 1852, the editors were claiming that "the most gifted and popular authors of the country write constantly" for *Harper's*, claims which Phegley thoroughly nuances. For a more detailed account of *Harper's* patriotic PR campaign, see Phegley 69-70.

[51] *Household Words* was a hub, providing Dickens with a platform his own fiction (notably *Hard Times*) and allowing him to develop the wildly successful Christmas numbers. This resembles Dickens's initial theorizing on his editorship of *Master Humphrey's Clock*. In a letter to Forster, written 14 July 1839, Dickens concedes that he would need "assistance" in putting together a weekly periodical, but stipulates that "this assistance is

Considering the amount of critical attention that has been paid to Dickens's objections to unauthorized American reprinting of his novels in the early 1840s (and particularly in the context of his first American tour), it is remarkable that current scholarship has made nothing of Dickens's relative silence about the deconstructed reprinting of his periodical in the 1850s. One argument that might be made to explain Dickens's silence on this matter is that Dickens realized that the fragmented nature of American periodical reprinting devalued the "Conductor" by fundamentally undermining its premise. As an author of prose in *Household Words*, Dickens could commandeer sums of money from American reprinters, even without any legal obligation; but as an editor, no such gratuities were forthcoming. Putting aside the biographical improbability of Dickens quietly allowing his labor to be appropriated without recompense rather than "[battling] it to the death, and [dying] game to the last" (P.III 254), there is evidence to suggest that the editor of *Household Words* managed to establish a remunerative foothold in the United States marketplace for periodical publishing.

I want to suggest a connection between the inception of *Household Words* in 1850, and the concurrent rapprochement between Dickens and America, epitomized by Dickens's acceptance of the £360 gratuity from *Harper's* for Bl*eak House* in 1852. My contention is that while Dickens's editorial persona – the Conductor – did not (and indeed, could not)

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chosen solely by me, and that the contents of every number are as much under my own control, and subject to as little interference, as those of a number of *Pickwick* or *Nickleby*. [...] That those who assist me, and contribute the remainder of every number, shall be paid by the publishers immediately after its appearance [...] [o]r if the publishers prefer it, that they agree to pay me a certain sum for the *whole* of every number, and leave me to make such arrangements for that part which I may not write, as I think best" (P.I 564-65). The reality of the *Clock* had been a different thing entirely for Dickens, as he was forced to "write it all" (P.II 46). [52] John Drew writes that in America, "a competitive market developed for *Household Words*," pointing to an unpublished PhD thesis by Gerald G. Grubb enumerating "a string of other New York houses" republishing Dickens's weekly. Drew points out, however, that these reprints sold far fewer copies than expected, with one disappointed reprinter blaming the lack of "pictures," while another blamed the low circulation on "over-pricing" (*Dickens the Journalist* 131). As Barnes shows in *Authors, Publishers and Politicians*, the competition of "eclectic magazines" like *Harper's* and the *International* tended to be too much for single magazine reprinting, as any one magazine would struggle to rival the eclectic's promise to draw on only the best which British periodicals had to offer (44). For more on American "editions" of *Household Words*, see Grubb "Charles Dickens: Journalist" (1940).

succeed in the American marketplace, in his capacity as editor Dickens managed to enter American periodical publishing by developing close ties to several American reprinters. John Drew has pointed out that, apart from the occasional documentary glimpse, "the fate of Dickens's *Household Words* in America is still [...] 'almost absolutely dark'" (*Dickens the Journalist* 131). There is no documentary evidence to suggest that Dickens ever made any arrangements for simultaneous American publication of *Household Words*, something which he had negotiated with publishers in continental Europe before that weekly even started (ibid). What we do have is a series of negative responses from Dickens and Wills to overtures from smaller American firms regarding an authorized American reprint of *Household Words* (ibid.). This kind of wholesale reprinting of *Household Words* by an American publisher could have preserved Dickens's editorial persona, so these refusals indicate that Dickens was not committed to deploying the "Conductor" in the New World.[52] In their steadfast rejection of authorized transatlantic cooperation, these negative responses could also be read as undermining my argument regarding the rapprochement between Dickens and America in the early 1850s. However, there is evidence to suggest that the importance of *Household Words* in America for Dickens lay not in any immediate sale value, but in the journal's ability to open up American periodical publishing. An intricate editorial strategy and persona like the "Conductor" is premature in a market where there is no way to guarantee remuneration or even the integrity of the journal. I will argue that the impressive way in which Dickens launched *Household Words*'s spiritual successor *All the Year Round* onto the American market in the 1860s, when considered in conjunction with a tantalizing

[52] John Drew writes that in America, "a competitive market developed for *Household Words*," pointing to an unpublished PhD thesis by Gerald G. Grubb enumerating "a string of other New York houses" republishing Dickens's weekly. Drew points out, however, that these reprints sold far fewer copies than expected, with one disappointed reprinter blaming the lack of "pictures," while another blamed the low circulation on "over-pricing" (*Dickens the Journalist* 131). As Barnes shows in *Authors, Publishers and Politicians*, the competition of "eclectic magazines" like *Harper's* and the *International* tended to be too much for single magazine reprinting, as any one magazine would struggle to rival the eclectic's promise to draw on only the best which British periodicals had to offer (44). For more on American "editions" of *Household Words*, see Grubb "Charles Dickens: Journalist" (1940).

epistolary clue from 1857 that hints at a "regular connection" (P.IIX 298n.) between *Household Words* and Ticknor & Fields, points towards a degree of behind-the-scenes dealings with American publishing which would help explain Dickens's silence on the American "piracies" of his periodical in the 1850s.

John Drew has shown that by the time *All the Year Round* started its run in 1859, Dickens held an "unrivalled position as publisher and editor," uniquely capable of giving authors serializing their novels in his weekly "exposure in America, and ensur[ing] that they received additional payment for it" (*Dickens the Journalist* 146). Drew explains this sudden mastery of the American periodical landscape as follows:

> This was due to the complex series of arrangements Dickens and Wills entered into with American agents and publishers for the sale of foreign 'rights' in the journal, and the strong business relationships which Dickens himself was pioneering, in arranging first for *A Tale of Two Cities*, and then *Great Expectations*, to be published (rather than pirated) by American houses. (ibid.)

These insights by Drew are invaluable, but I want to draw attention to the "strong business relationships" mentioned here. Legally, nothing had changed in the years between the start of *Household Words* and that of *All the Year Round*, so the fact that Dickens was able to secure these contracts points to an impressive professional network. As I will show later on, Dickens's manipulation of the American periodical marketplace through diversification of American "copyrights" for *All the Year Round* shows a level of mastery and comfort rivaling his business prowess in Great Britain. To be sure, by the 1860s Dickens was at a point in his career where he could (and often did) throw his weight around. Nevertheless, the way in which Dickens, in his capacity as owner/editor of *All the Year Round*, managed to harness the lacunae in legal protection for intellectual property and made them work to his advantage, points incontrovertibly towards a kind of apprenticeship period in the *Household Words* years, during which Dickens managed to establish the impressive network of business connections that allowed him to successfully authorize the American publication of *All the Year Round*, as well as embark on his American Readings.

As alluded to above, documentary evidence regarding Dickens's policies for *Household Words* in America is scarce. But, occasionally, there is a tantalizing glimpse. In March or

April of 1857, Dickens, through his British publishers Bradbury & Evans, sent an intriguing message to Ticknor & Fields, hinting at a hitherto unexplored business connection between his weekly and that Boston-based publishing house. It read:

> Mr Wilkie Collins the author of the story called The Dead Secret now publishing in Household Words, and which will probably be completed at about the end of May, has communicated to Mr. Charles Dickens that he has received a proposal from Messrs Harper of New York (through their agent here) 'to be supplied with the last two or three chapters in MS., so that the American Edition may be completed in book-form, about the time it is completed here.' For this accommodation £25 is offered to Mr. Collins.| Mr Dickens deems it both courteous and honourable – and we quite agree with him – that you should be asked whether you have any desire to make a similar offer to Mr. Collins. In that case, Mr. Dickens would represent to that gentleman that *your regular connection with Household Words* gives you prior title to the concession on the same terms. (N, II, 841 and *n.*) (P.IIX 298n., emphasis mine)

Not only is Dickens interceding on Collins's behalf here, as he would do later for (among others) Bulwer-Lytton's *A Strange Story*, but he mentions a "regular connection" between *Household Words* and Ticknor & Fields. The exact nature of this connection is difficult to gauge, both because of the dearth of documentary evidence on the fate of *Household Words* in America and because there is no extant correspondence between Dickens and Ticknor & Fields before 1858.[53] The most likely scenario would have been a standing agreement between Dickens and the American publishers regarding the reprinting rights of serials in *Household Words* in book form, similar to the arrangement Dickens struck with the Harpers for *All the Year Round*.[54] *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-*

[53] The sole exception is a letter from Fields written to Dickens during his first American visit in order to obtain an autograph, to which Dickens responded on 4 February 1842 (P.III 49).

[54] From a letter written by Margaret Emily Gaskell to her mother's American friend Charles Eliot Norton on 27 January 1859, however, it is clear that any such an agreement between Ticknor & Fields and *Household Words* was not common knowledge, and that not all contributors were as fortunate as Collins. Mrs. Gaskell's *My Lady Ludlow* had been "pirated" by Harper's, prompting her to break off all further dealings with Harper's and to

*Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields* (1995), Michael Winship's study of the business practices of Ticknor & Fields makes no explicit mention of an arrangement between *Household Words* and the Boston-based publishers, but the figures Winship presents do show a marked increase in the firm's publication of foreign works in the latter half of the 1850s. In 1850, they had instructed their London agent to look into purchasing advance sheets of British books, but Ticknor & Fields apparently only succeeded in doing so after Fields had visited Great Britain in 1852 (Winship 222). In 1855 the firm opened a "foreign authors" group account in their ledgers (31), marking the transition from an emphasis on American authors to one on foreign authors (overwhelmingly British), as is reflected by the production figures.[55] This increase in production, along with payments to British authors, is a strong indication that Ticknor & Fields had succeeded in forming business ties across the Atlantic, and possibly with the offices of *Household Words*. The timing certainly fits with the message Bradbury and Evans passed on to the Boston publishers.[56]

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seek an American publisher for her next story. Her first choice was Ticknor & Fields, promising to furnish them with "a copy of the story in time for them to have the start of any other American publisher" in exchange for "a certain sum of money," on the condition that "the 'Household Words' people will allow of its publication in America before its conclusion in their paper," about which, her daughter added, "she will enquire" (*Letters of Mrs. Gaskell's Daughters* 53). No reference is made to any kind of existing agreement between *Household Words* and Ticknor & Fields, and from the content and tone of this letter it is clear that this was Mrs. Gaskell's own initiative.

[55] In Tables 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9, Winship shows us the annual production figures of regular publications, new works, and reprints respectively, distinguishing between US and Foreign (again, overwhelmingly British) works. In the period between 1850 and 1854, Ticknor and Fields published 104 regular, 69 new, and 66 reprinted US works, compared to 50 regular, 45 new, and 19 reprinted foreign works. Between 1855 and 1859, the US numbers stayed relatively even at 91 regular, 43 new, and 65 reprinted works, but the foreign works had overtaken them, with 132 regular, 109 new, and 80 reprinted foreign works being published (Winship 60-65).

[56] Another factor which may support the hypothesis that Ticknor & Fields enjoyed a privileged relationship with *Household Words* was the fact that they were heavily involved in the same circles as Dickens's Boston-based coterie "the Five of Clubs," described in the first chapter of this dissertation. Ticknor & Fields were Longfellow's main publisher throughout the 1850s, and published Charles Sumner's *Recent Speeches and Addresses* (1856).

If the 1857 letter from Dickens to Ticknor & Fields is representative, and there was indeed a regular connection between *Household Words* and the Boston firm, then Dickens played a much more active role in 1850s American publishing than previously thought. The fact that he was interceding on behalf of a contributor of serial fiction like Wilkie Collins suggests that Dickens was taking pains to ensure that the content of his periodicals enjoyed the widest possible circulation in America. By giving regular contributors maximum exposure, Dickens was working to increase their popularity and, in turn, their exchange value. As a consequence, his periodical became more valuable as well. To be sure, the continued lack of international legal protection meant that Ticknor & Fields were not the only American publishers reprinting from Dickens's periodicals, but this lack of legislation also freed Dickens up to bargain with multiple American reprinters at once.

The extent of Dickens's involvement with American publishing at this time is illustrated in the exchange of letters with Bulwer-Lytton between August and December of 1860. Inviting Bulwer-Lytton to contribute a story to the newly-launched *All the Year Round*, Dickens boasts "we could get a price for the proofs from week to week in America, that I doubt your being quite prepared for." In a later letter, Dickens goes on to say that he could negotiate terms with "an unimpeachable publisher," citing a respectable £1200 as Bulwer-Lytton's likely fee in exchange "for the right of re-publication in a collected form for two years" of what was to become *A Strange Story* (*The Life of Edward Bulwer First Lord Lytton* 340-42). This "unimpeachable" house was Harper Brothers, who paid Dickens £250 annually in exchange for early proofs of *All the Year Round* (two weeks before the date of publication) and the right to publish any item in their own publications (Oppenlander 52). These reprinting arrangements did not extend to serials which ran for three months or more – like Bulwer-Lytton's *A Strange Story* – as the contract explicitly stated that the Harpers could not publish them "unless such story be the subject of a separate agreement between them and the writer or proprietor" (Oppenlander 52).[57] As a result, Dickens could promise Bulwer-Lytton an

[57] In this way, Dickens was able to secure an additional £1000 for *Great Expectations* (*Dickens the Journalist* 147).

additional £300 in exchange for the early transmission of weekly proofs to America, remarking glibly that his "American transactions are on a very good footing" (*The Life of Edward Bulwer First Lord Lytton* 343).[58] Dickens's observation is a barely concealed boast of just how profitable his American connections for *All the Year Round* were.

The way in which *All the Year Round* burst onto the American market, commanding considerable sums through differentiated contracts, strongly suggests that Dickens had spent the *Household Words* years working hard to develop business relationships with American publishers he could trust to honor courtesy agreements. Dickens made sure that *All the Year Round* had a strong start in both Great Britain and America simultaneously by selling initial American publication "rights" to Thomas C. Evans in 1859, as well as contracting *Harper's* for the American serial republication of *A Tale of Two Cities*, a week behind its run in *All the Year Round*. These "rights" were extra-legal, ensured only through early shipping of proofs or copies of each number's stereotype plates across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, Evans and Harpers paid Dickens an extraordinary £1000 each for the privilege.[59] Though his business plan seems to have been sound, Evans lacked sufficient working capital and was forced to default on a

[58] There is evidence that there was some level of professional goodwill between Dickens and Harper's beyond the letter of the contract. In January 1863, when Harper's could no longer afford to pay for advance sheets, Wills and Dickens agreed to continue supplying them free of charge, citing the "liberality" of the American publisher as their motivation. Apparently, this privilege was not extended to all publishers, as there are letters to suggest that Ticknor & Fields bought the republication rights for *All the Year Round* in 1867 (for a much reduced fee of £60 annually, down from £250 annually), though the full terms of any such contract are unknown (Oppenlander 53).

[59] Oppenlander has argued that the contract with Evans was largely opportunistic, as the entrepreneurial agent cold-called Dickens, offering attractive terms – by Drew's estimates, £1000 was roughly "60% of the whole annual profits in the last years of H*ousehold Words*"– which turned out to be too good to be true, though Dickens was none the worse for it. In the words of Oppenlander, this exorbitant sum "seems to be the only logical explanation for Dickens's choice of T.C. Evans over the reputable publishers who expressed interest" (50). Dickens did lose £500 pounds in gambling on Evans, but this early contract seems to have provided Dickens with some leverage. Months after signing with Evans, Dickens sold the serial rights of *A Tale of Two Cities* to *Harper's* for £1000, which should have decreased the value of Evans's contract – yet when Evans proved insolvent, the terms of the contract Dickens signed with Emerson & Co. were equally generous.

payment of £500. Dickens's American venture did not suffer much, however, as Evans sold his rights to Emerson & Co., who agreed to essentially the same terms, except that they would publish monthly rather than weekly (*Dickens the Journalist* 146-47). The American house, in addition to paying Dickens £200 monthly, carried all of the shipping as well as the American production costs. This arrangement, Wills thought, was on balance "rather a good thing" (qtd. in Oppenlander 52).[60]

Despite the satisfactory nature of his contracts with Harpers and Emerson & Co., Dickens was also making overtures to James T. Fields, of the Boston-based publishing company Ticknor & Fields. In October 1860 Dickens wrote to Fields, seeking to share the rights to a serial story to be solicited from Charles Reade. Reade was contractually bound to publish in Fields's *Atlantic Monthly*, and feared that simultaneously publishing in a monthly and a weekly would damage the value of his story. Desirous of having Reade's story appear in *All the Year Round*, Dickens sought to reconcile the two publishing schedules so that "Mr. Reade could be published, in these pages in England, and in your pages in America, as an original work" (P.IX 324). Despite the existing agreement between Reade and the American publisher, Dickens proposed to have Reade's story start its run in *All the Year Round* two weeks before its start in *Atlantic Monthly*, offering Fields "the right of priority in America" (ibid.). The offer was made politely, but its audacity was almost breathtaking: butting into the previously existing agreement between Fields and Reade, Dickens not only sought to strike a deal privileging his weekly, but in a caricature of magnanimity also offered Fields a "priority" in publishing the story Fields himself had already commissioned from the author (a priority which, Dickens coolly added, the Harpers "purchase [...] at a large price" (ibid.)). To sweeten the deal, Dickens promised Fields "complete mastery of Harpers" (as a long serial, Reade's story did not form a part of the regular agreement between Dickens and Harpers), and "a similar mastery over Emerson & Co.," because their shipping arrangements with *All the Year Round* were such that "their republication would be a month, or more, behind [*The Atlantic Monthly*]" (324-25). Fields –

[60] The fact that Emerson & Co. seem to have remained the American publisher of *All the Year Round* for the journal's entire lifespan would support that assessment by Wills.

understandably perhaps – declined this offer, but this exchange did not sour the relationship between Dickens and the American publisher: a few years later Ticknor & Fields became Dickens's main American publisher. These are Dickensian dealings at their finest, playing publishers against one another, drawing up contracts which are in breach (or quasi-breach) of earlier engagements and getting away with it. Indeed, this episode calls to mind the bravado with which the young Dickens managed to convince Chapman & Hall in 1836 to deviate from their original plan and let him take the lead on *The Pickwick Papers*, or the flurry of contracts to which Dickens committed only to break them when the next opportunity knocked in the late 1830s and early 1840s, juggling Macrone, Bentley, Easthope and Chapman & Hall – always driving hard bargains and always making sure the new publisher was fully committed to defending his own interests against the previous publisher's claims.[61]

Dickens worked his American "copyrights" hard, diversifying them whenever possible. As an editor and owner of *All the Year Round*, he managed to effectively license the weekly to Emerson & Co. in America, commanding considerable sums for the reprinting rights, despite the continued lack of legal protection. As an author, he was selling his own prose to Harper Brothers – who were already paying for American reprinting rights of the periodical in which most of that prose appeared in the first place – by excluding it from their regular contract. Dickens's American diversification did not end there, however. His best-selling commodities were the Christmas Numbers of *All the Year Round*, forming a nexus for all of Dickens's identities. Every year Dickens arranged separate negotiations for the American sale of these collaborative pieces for which he was co-author, editor and publisher all at once. Letters by Dickens and Wills attest to the high level of demand from American publishers that existed for these Christmas numbers. In November 1866, for example, a Mr. Gilmore – tentatively identified by the Pilgrim editors as the representative for R. B. Gilmore & Co., Boston-based commission merchants – proposed arrangements for advance sheets of that year's

[61] For more on the arrangements between Dickens and Chapman & Hall regarding *Pickwick*, see chapter 3 of *Dickens and His Publishers*. For more on Dickens's penchant for overcommitting to contracts and breaking them, see chapter 2 in that book.

Christmas Number. Dickens declined, explaining that the American rights for what would become "Mugby Junction" had been "purchased in anticipation, long ago" (P.XI 265n) (Dickens does not specify in this letter, but in the event, Ticknor & Fields had secured them). A few days earlier, Wills had written on Dickens's behalf to another American correspondent, Edmund Kirke, to say that the "right of republication [...] had already been disposed of" (266n).

Dickens's business acumen, however, was only one part of the equation which allowed him to successfully conquer the American market with *All the Year Round*. As an editor, he had to fundamentally reconsider his approach to the content of his weeklies, sacrificing topicality to compensate for the time it took to ship advance sheets across the Atlantic. In 1863 the arrangement with Harpers concerning the early proofs changed, allowing for just one week (rather than two) of delay in publication: a change which Dickens welcomed as he thought "the perpetual sliding away of temporary subjects at which [he] could dash with effect [...] a great loss" (P.X 202 ). In order to be equally accommodating to readers on either side of the Atlantic, Dickens had to find a middle ground between local allusions, confusing to an American, and redundant explanation jarring to a Brit. As John Drew has shown, *All the Year Round* featured considerably more pieces on international affairs, indicating that Dickens in his editorial capacity was aiming for a wide readership (*Dickens the Journalist* 149). In *Figuring Authorship in Antebellum America* (1997), Michael Newbury has argued that a growth in readership almost necessarily leads to alienation between the author and his audience (82). To be sure, Newbury is talking about authorship specifically, but for *All the Year Round*, perhaps even more so than for *Household Words*, Dickens consciously and unequivocally blended his editorial and authorial personae. The "Uncommercial Traveller" sketches were critical in this regard. Between 1860 and 1869, Dickens published thirty-six such sketches in *All the Year Round*. These sketches ran in three series, with the first sixteen published in 1860, the next twelve in 1863, and the final eight in 1868-69. These short, independent pieces, despite not being a serial in the traditional sense of a sustained narrative in time, lent themselves well to the formation

of the kind of textual communities described by Hughes and Lund.[62] They were held together by the recurrence of the traveler as an eponymous narratorial entity and, crucially, by Dickens's marking them specifically as his own, prompting Drew to describe them as a "new and labour-free form of serialisation, adapted to his semi-nomadic lifestyle in the 1860s, encouraging the illusion that the public journal was his traveller's journal" (*Dickens the Journalist* 152).

The idea that the sketches, and *All the Year Round* as a whole, were private letters passing from Dickens to the reader reinforces the Dickensian illusion of a close personal community between reader and narrator—what Juliet John has called Dickens's "personal mode." The opening paragraphs of the first "Uncommercial" sketch, later entitled "His General Line of Business" (1860) in the collected editions, shows the difficulties inherent to writing for a huge, heterogeneous audience. It reads: "I am always wandering here and there from my rooms in Covent Garden, London – now about the city streets: now about the country by-roads – seeing many little things, and some great things, which, because they interest me, I think may interest others" (2). The superfluous geographical marker "London" is a clear indication that non-British readers were part of the intended audience of "The Uncommercial Traveller." After all, Dickens had gone to considerable trouble to ensure that *All the Year Round* was widely available in America. In order to be equally accommodating to those readers, Dickens had to incorporate potentially jarring elements into his text, revealing the tension between his personal facade and the mass-market business prowess that lay beneath it. However, Dickens managed to avoid any awkwardness in the mention of London by presenting the entire place name, "Covent Garden, London," in a way that was reminiscent of the address one would find at the top of a letter. In doing so, he hinted at a correspondence between himself and his readers.

Dickens makes this connection between author and reader explicit in the sketch entitled "The Shipwreck," when he remarks on the state of the documents retrieved

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[62] In "Textual/Sexual Pleasure and Serial Publication," Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund point out that extended serial publications "could become entwined with readers' own sense of lived experience and passing time" (146).

from the pockets of the drowned, claiming that they were "carefully unwrinkled and dried [...] little less fresh in appearance that day, than the present page will be under ordinary circumstances, after having been opened three or four times" (8). Here Dickens conflates his "present page" with his reader's page, denying the mass-reproduction that came with the printing of *All the Year Round* and thereby forging a material connection between author and reader. In their extraordinary position within Dickens's weekly as the only pieces of writing besides fiction serials that were not anonymous, the sketches served to reassert Dickens as the identity pervading *All the Year Round*, explicitly blending his authorial and editorial personae. The connection of the sketches to Dickens's name – which was already on the magazine's masthead – brought it clearly to the reader's attention once more that *All the Year Round* was not only conducted by Dickens but also, at least in part, written by him. This strengthened the branding of the magazine as "Dickensian," adding the prestige of his authorship to the respectability of his editorship. Dickens managed to balance the prestige of his many personae—author, editor, entertainer, and public figure—making him seem familiar and approachable, despite the mass-production and mass-marketing of his writing.[63] This strategy of personal appeal served Dickens well in the transatlantic marketplace, as it allowed him to gloss over the countless economic processes involved in the publication and distribution of *All the Year Round*, presenting them as an almost intimate conversation with a distant, but well-loved friend, warmly "holding out his hand autographically [...] over the broad Atlantic" (P.II 267).

[63] This process was not unique to Dickens; Trollope's "An Editor's Tales," published between October 1869 and May 1870, work to deconstruct the image of "the editor" as an "Olympian force," thereby bringing him into closer proximity with the audience. For more on "An Editor's Tales," see Simmons, "There are so many things of which an editor is required to think" (2013).

## 3.3 The Second Visit: Performing Authority in the American Marketplace

Before Dickens left British shores for America in November 1867, a farewell dinner in his honor was held at London's Freemason's Hall. With almost 450 dinner guests, and an additional 100 spectators, this banquet was a grandiose affair, and both British and American newspapers made sure to have correspondents in place.[64] This was the stage on which Dickens chose to publicly announce – rather belatedly, given his imminent departure – his change of heart towards America. In his description of the Hall, the special correspondent for the *New York Tribune* highlighted the symbolic centerpiece of the evening, "the English flag knit with the Stars and Stripes, and above them the word 'Pickwick'." This was not a subtle image, but it was certainly an effective way to assert that Americans and Brits were united in their appreciation of Dickens. In his address to the Hall, however, Dickens chose a much more intimate approach, explaining his desire to visit America largely in terms of friendship, intimacy and personal interaction:

> Since I was there before a vast and entirely new generation has arisen in the United States. Since I was there before most of the best known of my books have been written and published; the new generation and the books have come together and have kept together, until at length numbers of those who have so widely and constantly read me; naturally desiring a little variety in the relationship between us, have expressed a strong wish that I should read myself. This wish, at first conveyed to me through public channels and business channels, has gradually become enforced by an immense accumulation of letters from individuals, and associations of individuals, all expressing in the same hearty, homely, cordial, unaffected way, a kind of personal interest in me, I had almost

[64] Articles on the subject of this dinner, often also reproducing Dickens's speech, appeared in many of America's biggest newspapers, including *The New York Times* (18 November 1867), *The New York Tribune* (18 November 1867), and *The Nation* (28 November 1867).

> said a kind of personal affection for me [...] You will readily conceive that I am inspired besides by a natural desire to see for myself the astonishing change and progress of a quarter of a century over there, to grasp the hands of many faithful friends whom I left there, to see the faces of the multitude of new friends upon whom I have never looked. (*Speeches* 372)

Dickens deployed to great effect the personal mode which he had developed in order to make his periodicals more palatable to a transatlantic audience. By claiming that personal appeals from numberless American swayed him where business considerations could not, Dickens reinforces the idea that his publications created a kind of intimate friendship between himself and his audience. This speech prefigured Dickens's American Readings in more ways than one, as he explicitly blends his print and his public personae. As I will show later on, this merging amounted to the physical enactment of authority which was so crucial to the success of Dickens's American readings.

In the early 1840s, legal and economic circumstances had prevented Dickens from engaging in a similarly complex authorial performance. Two decades on, Dickens had found ways to by-pass and in some cases even to harness those same conditions. During his 1867-68 reading tour, Dickens was careful to avoid being perceived as mining America (once again) for source material. In a speech held at an 1868 New York public dinner, Dickens responded to rumors to that effect which had been circulating in the American press:

> Even the Press, being human, may be sometimes mistaken or misinformed, and I rather think that I have in one or two rare instances observed its information to be not strictly accurate with reference to myself. Indeed, I have, now and again, been more surprised by printed news that I have read of myself, than by any printed news that I have ever read in my present state of existence. Thus, the vigour and perseverance with which I have for some months past been collecting materials for, and hammering away at, a new book on America has much astonished me; seeing that all that time my declaration has been perfectly well known to my publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, that no consideration on earth would induce me to write one (*Speeches* 380-81)

This speech was clearly meant to allay American suspicion of being commodified once again. Dickens's good-humored disavowal of any such intention was appended to subsequent editions of *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and signaled in the 6 June 1868 issue of *All the Year Round*, in an article grandiosely titled "A Debt of Honour." This lofty speech stands in striking contrast to the blatant exploitation in Dickens's American books. Appending it to those books amounts to a belated apology, penance for Dickens's initial "dishonorable," profiteering approach. By 1868, Dickens had found alternative ways to exploit the economic potential of the New World. Indeed, this apology fit within Dickens's overall project of evoking a sense of personal connection with his countless readers.

By the early 1860s, Dickens's engagement with America began to concentrate on Boston's Ticknor & Fields and its junior partner, James Thomas Fields, in particular. As a fairly well-to-do Boston publisher and organizer of literary salons, Fields was a central figure in the mid-nineteenth century American literary scene. He was on familiar, even friendly terms, with many prominent critics and authors, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Cornelius C. Felton and Samuel G. Howe – all of whom were members of "the Five of Clubs," and all of whom had befriended Dickens during his first American tour. Fields had attended one of the Boston public dinners held in Dickens's honor in February 1842, subsequently writing Dickens a note in order to obtain his autograph, under the clumsy pretext of inquiring about the publication date of *The Pickwick Papers* (P.III 49-50 & n). This rather banal start to their correspondence eventually led to Ticknor & Fields becoming Dickens's authorized American publishers (for his books as well as his periodicals). The Boston publisher also bankrolled Dickens's American reading tour. In the spring of 1858, Fields proposed a series of readings in America, following the success of Dickens's readings in Great Britain. Dickens was initially highly reluctant, writing in his response of 19 June 1858 that "[s]everal strong reasons would make the journey difficult to me, and—even were they overcome—I would never make it, unless I had great general reason to believe that the American people really wanted to hear me" (P.IIX 589). The acerbity of the attacks he had endured from the American press in 1842 may have made Dickens wary of committing once more to an American tour, but it is hard to shake the impression that the "great general reason" Dickens was looking for would be money, paid in advance, rather than assurances of public affection.

Despite Dickens's claim that it was a torrent of personal appeals from Americans that changed his mind, the reality was much more mundane. In his memoirs, *Yesterdays with Authors* (1871), Fields claims to have tried to "remove any obstructions that might exist in his mind at that time against a second visit across the Atlantic," sending Dickens "a note setting forth the certainty of his success among his Transatlantic friends" (154). This note did little to change Dickens's mind, but when a few months later, in January 1859, Thomas C. Evans (on the same trip during which he secured the American "rights" to *All the Year Round*) proposed a tour of American readings to Dickens, Dickens seriously considered the offer (P.IX 17).[65] Somewhere around the beginning of August, Dickens

[65] The editors of the Pilgrim *Letters* assume that Evans is acting on behalf of Fields, identifying him as the "deputy" of Mr. Fields mentioned in George Dolby's *Charles Dickens as I Knew him* (P.IX 17n, Dolby 88). I am unconvinced by this reading, as Dickens wrote to Fields on 20 July 1859 voicing dissatisfaction with Evans: "I begin to think it likely (or rather, I begin to think it more likely than I thought it before) that he has not backers good and sufficient, and that his "Mission" will go off" (P.IX 96). Perhaps this is a faux-pas, where Dickens, unaware of a business connection between Evans and Fields, unwittingly insults his correspondent , but I sincerely doubt it. There is instead evidence to suggest that Fields and Evans had both approached Dickens, independently from one another. In the same letter of 20 July 1859, Dickens is resolved not to make any arrangements for American readings until after the negotiations with Evans have come to a close, adding that he did "not regard it as being very probable that the said Evans will appear satisfactorily" (ibid.). This is a damning judgment of Evans, and not one that suggests Dickens, Fields and Evans were likely to collaborate. Moreover, the latter half of the letter consists of Dickens seeking Fields' advice on American readings, asking a number of broad questions regarding the venture, before concluding: "Now, I will make no apology for troubling you, because I thoroughly rely on your interest and kindness" (ibid.). This phrasing echoes that of a letter Dickens wrote to Fields eleven days earlier, on 9 July 1859, just after Fields had spent the day at Gad's Hill Place. In this letter, clearly with reference to some conversation between them at Gad's Hill, Dickens writes: "Only to say that I, too, heartily enjoyed our day, and shall long remember it [...] Also, that I shall trouble you at greater length when the mysterious Oracle, Evans of New York, pronounces" (P.IX 91). Evans had been appearing ever-shadier to Dickens — as the "mysterious Oracle" quip shows — and taken together, these letters point towards separate proposals, rather than a single consolidated one. Dickens's letter of 16 August 1859 to Wilkie Collins is further proof, as he elaborates on the proposal which Evans had finally brought to him: "Evans of New York proposed that I should sign a conditional agreement to go to America for 80 readings within a month after the receipt here of £10,000 [...] this agreement he meant to sell in America, if he could, and get a profit on" (P.IX 106). If Evans was an agent commissioned by Fields, there would be no need for Evans to hawk his agreement with Dickens in America. Furthermore, why would Fields send an agent to

wrote to his lawyer Frederic Ouvry, and a conditional agreement for £10,000 was drafted, but never signed, as Ouvry had strongly advised against it (P.IX 102, 106). The substantial financial reward had tempted Dickens where assurances of success had not, but Dickens and his advisors suspected that Evans lacked the means to make good on his promises. In *Charles Dickens as I Knew him* (1885), Dickens's 1867-68 reading tour manager George Dolby tactfully describes the failure of the negotiations that followed, writing that "after much consideration the scheme was deemed impracticable and abandoned" (88). In his letters to Felton, however, Dickens is much more direct: "[i]t rather appeared to me that the Agent [Evans] who came over, was not prepared with the details, and (perhaps) not prepared with money. Both are important; the last, particularly so, as I could not enter on such a design in any reason without having a large sum paid down here" (P.IX 81). A few months later, in November 1859, after the negotiations with Evans had broken down irreparably, Dickens wrote to Felton again on the subject, stating that "[t]he design wants in it some American *gentleman* (or gentlemen) with capital, position, and influence. So far as I see, it strays instead, into the hands of speculators without money" (P.IX 154). If America wanted to see Dickens again, it would have to be directly profitable.[66]

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propose the scheme to Dickens, considering he was spending the summer in Great Britain anyway? Fields, in his *Yesterdays with Authors*, makes no mention at all of an agreement between himself and Evans, even though he remarks on the fact that "[a]n agent had come out from New York with offers to induce him [Dickens] to arrange for a speedy visit to America, and Dickens was then waiting to see the man who had been announced as on his way to him," (156). There is no question that Fields is referring to Evans here, as he cites the same letters of Dickens I have (though he censures Evans's name). All in all, this evidence does nothing to suggest that Evans had been in any way commissioned by Fields.

[66] Dolby, characteristically hagiographic in his descriptions of Dickens, wrote that "the greatest pressure of all came from [Dickens's] desire to do his duty in promoting the interests of an already expensive family, and his wish to leave them after his death as free as possible from monetary cares — could self-sacrifice have done it, he would have left them free from every kind of care" (88-89). There may well be a basis of truth to Dolby's claim of familial duty (even though at that point in his career, Dickens had been financially secure for almost a decade), but what Dickens's insistence on substantial financial rewards shows unequivocally, is Dickens's awareness of the value of his brand. His first American tour had given Dickens two books' worth of material, but this time, he wanted direct remuneration for his trouble.

There the matter rested for a few years, and it was not until after the American Civil War that Fields broached the subject again with Dickens. In his response, written to Fields on 2 May 1866, Dickens does not mince words. Playing up the success of his readings all over Great Britain, he rhetorically asks, "Why go through this wear and tear [of an Atlantic crossing], merely to pluck fruit that grows on every bough at home?" (P.XI 194). Reading to domestic audiences was proving so profitable that Dickens professed his inability to name a price for American readings, claiming: "I do not know that any possible price could pay me for them. And I really cannot say to any one disposed towards the enterprise, 'Tempt me,' because I have too strong a misgiving that he cannot in the nature of things do it" (ibid.). Almost exactly a year later, Fields had succeeded in tempting Dickens. By this time, on account of his "growing friendship with Fields" (CDP 317 & n), Ticknor & Fields had become Dickens's "authorized representatives" in American publishing (P.XI 352). When Fields offered him the same terms Evans had done in 1859 — £10,000 paid down in London as a guarantee — Dickens was very tempted, writing to Forster in May 1867: "I stand at bay at last on the American question [...] you have no idea how heavily the anxiety of it sits upon my soul. But the prize looks so large!" (P.XI 372). Dickens's primary advisors, Wills and Forster, were both set against the idea, worried as they were about the effect of another American tour on his health.[67] Dickens's counter-argument was simple: "the receipts would be very much larger than your Estimate [...] If you were to work out the question of Reading profits here, with Dolby, you would find that it would take years to get £10,000. To get that sum in a heap so soon is an immense consideration to me" (P.XI 375-77).

In August 1867, Dolby was sent to America, in order to report back to Dickens and his advisors, Forster, Wills and Ouvry. Returning in September, Dolby supplied Dickens with the information for "the Case in a Nutshell," which Dickens sent off to Wills and Forster. In the letter to Wills which accompanied the "Case," written 24 September 1867, Dickens asks: "Give me your opinion on it: To go, or not to go?" (P.XI 437). Both Wills and Forster

[67] Their objections were probably what Dickens claimed to be fighting "tooth and nail" in a letter written 3 June 1867 to J. T. Fields, in order for him to be able to "make [his] way personally to the American public" (PXI 374).

remained vigorously opposed to the idea of another tour. Forster even clashed with Dolby in a meeting they had on the subject sometime between 24 and 27 September. Dolby's description of their interview is both hilarious and revealing:

> A red rag could not have made a mad bull more ferocious than the discussion of the clauses in the moderate and business-like "case in a nutshell" made the biographer of the novelist. He made up *his* mind, and there was an end of the matter. He urged that ever since the Staplehurst accident Mr. Dickens had been in a bad state of health, and that a sea-voyage was the very worst thing in the world for him. He had a personal dislike to America and the Americans ever since the Forrest-Macready riot; and as everybody in America knew of the intimacy between Dickens and Macready, the riots, he believed, would be revived. He was certain there was no money in America, and even if there were, Mr. Dickens would not get any of it; and if he *did*, the Irish (by some means I could not quite understand), and the booksellers, between them, would break into the hotel and rob him of it. Even if the money were deposited in a bank, the bank would fail on purpose. Then the calculation of £15,500 profit in eighty Readings was, in Mr. Forster's opinion, all nonsense, as the halls were not large enough, and, even if they were, there were not people enough in America to produce such a result. Mr. Dickens's desire to increase his property in such a short space of time, and in such a way, was unworthy of him, or, in fact, of any man of genius, as the business of *reading* was a degrading one. Besides, had not the Americans taken Mr. Dickens's books without paying the author's fees; and why should they not do the same thing with the Readings? (Dolby 136-37)

These lines create a lively impression of Forster's impassioned, indignant, and utterly futile resistance to Dickens's readings. Interesting here is Forster's dismissal of America as a legitimate market, claiming it lacked the funds, people and even the financial stability for it to be worth any consideration.[68] Leaving aside Forster's qualms about the

[68] Dickens obviously disagreed with Forster's estimation of the American market. After having asked his advisors for their opinions, Dickens proceeded to ignore their objections completely, writing to Forster in October 1867: "I am not in the least shaken in the conviction that I could never quite have given up the idea"

propriety of reading for a man of "genius," and his continued belief that it was unseemly in Dickens to want to make a quick fortune through "public exhibition for money" (Forster 165), the parting question which Dolby enumerates cuts to the heart of the question: what would stop "the Americans" from taking the Readings from Dickens without paying him his dues?

The American reading tour of 1867-68 was a deceptively simple way of ensuring that Dickens reaped the financial rewards of his American popularity. A month before setting off to America, Dickens wrote to his son Henry that he could not pass up the chance of "being handsomely remunerated for hard work" (P.XI 447). Despite having adopted Ticknor & Fields as his "official" American publishers earlier in 1867, and providing them with several notices to that effect for publication in American newspapers, Dickens still did not enjoy any legal protection over his intellectual property.[69] It had proven to be impossible to exert any kind of control over his printed works in America, but literal authorial performances were another matter entirely. The unique selling point of these readings was Dickens: the author in the flesh, reading his works. Scholars such as Philip Collins, Malcolm Andrews, Alison Byerly and Susan Ferguson have commented extensively and insightfully on Dickens's Readings.[70] What is key to my point here is that these performances allowed Dickens to assert authority

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(P.XI 451). "To go, or not to go?" had apparently been a rhetorical question. On 9 November 1867, Dickens left England for America once more, arriving in Boston ten days later.

[69] In April 1867, a statement by Dickens was published in American newspapers, singling out Ticknor & Fields as the "sole representatives in America, of the whole series of my books." In response to this statement, allegations were printed in the American press, claiming that Dickens was in fact being richly rewarded by several American publishers of his work, in an effort to present him as grasping, mercenary, and plotting. On 16 April 1867, Dickens wrote to Ticknor & Fields, giving them his "personal authority to contradict any such monstrous misrepresentations," and adding that "in America, the occupation of my life for thirty years is, unless it bears your imprint, utterly worthless and profitless to me" (P.XI 352-53).

[70] See Philip Collins *Reading Aloud: A Victorian Métier* (1972), Malcolm Andrews *Charles Dickens and his Performing Selves* (2006), Alison Byerly "From Schoolroom to Stage: Reading Aloud and the Domestication of Victorian Theatre" (1990) and Susan L. Ferguson "Dickens's Public Readings and the Victorian Author" (2001) for a more detailed description and analysis of Dickens's reading practices, particularly in regard to staging and adapting written prose for performance.

over his printed texts. The main draw of Dickens's readings was the notion that they provided audiences with a "correct" and definitive interpretation of the source materials. In his biography of Dickens, G. K. Chesterton states that the Readings "fixed as if by some public and pontifical pronouncement, what was Dickens's interpretation of Dickens's work" (Chesterton 115). Contemporary critics who attended the Readings also made much of Dickens's interpretation, with the *Daily Telegraph* of 24 November 1868 calling it an "inestimable privilege" to see Dickens "exhibit in public the originals whose comparatively pale counterfeits have long since had more interest for us than our own kith and kin."

However, Dickens's readings inevitably varied from one performance to the next, not just in delivery but in content as well.[71] These idiosyncrasies reinforced the idea that Dickens was the inalienable source of his works. The Readings allowed him to situate the value of his works within himself, which was an invaluable asset to Dickens in the context of his engagement with America. By removing printed matter from the equation, Dickens could literally perform his authority over his material and monetize it in America. Without the material object of a printed text to obfuscate Dickens's authority over his material, he was able to capitalize on his American popularity to a degree that was previously impossible, even unthinkable. By physically entering the marketplace and performing his authorship, Dickens stole a march on American reprinters. Ticket scalpers, speculators and other shady pilot fish congregated around the Readings, trying to profit wherever they could (cashing in on the boost in Dickens's popularity by reprinting his works and selling Dickens-related merchandise), but all things considered, the enterprise could only ever benefit Dickens most.[72]

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[71] Philip Collins's in-depth study of the surviving prompt-copies as a part of his editing work on the Clarendon edition of Dickens's public readings (1975) shows that the Readings were never fixed in a definite form. The deletions, annotations, and marginalia which pervade Dickens's prompt-copies, as well as newspaper accounts and eye-witness reports from enthusiasts who attended several Readings prove that (to borrow Collins's term) Dickens never allowed his texts to "ossify" (*Sikes and Nancy* xii).

[72] In one instance, a member of Dickens's own entourage, Richard Kelly, was caught taking bribes from ticket speculators. The arrangement was that Kelly, as Dickens's representative in Providence R.I., would sell no fewer than six tickets to one purchaser, under the pretense that he was operating under Dickens's orders

Additionally, with a touch of poetic justice, Dickens and Dolby discovered a kind of loophole in American legislation which they could exploit. As a British national, Dickens was precluded from enjoying the protection of a legally binding American copyright. By the same token, however, he was exempt from paying tax in the United States. Of course, the halls and theatres where the Readings were held were still very much liable to pay their taxes. At this point in time, the U.S. Internal Revenue Department levied a tax of five percent on "all theatres and permanent places of entertainment," with each city levying an additional city tax of two and a half percent. These costs would have cut into Dickens's overall takings, were it not for the Act of Congress which regulated these matters, stipulating that "occasional concerts and lectures" were excepted.[73]

As the Readings illustrate, Dickens's engagement with America was characterized by the evolution of the economic processes in which he engaged. The Readings reveal a lifelong preoccupation with the problematic relationship between the material and the immaterial, particularly in American contexts. By performing authorship in the way that he did for his Readings, Dickens was indirectly making a case for a Lockean notion

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(Dickens's policy was actually to sell no more than six tickets to one purchaser). As a result, ticket scalpers had all but cornered the market, prompting Dickens to apologize for any inconvenience in a speech held before his reading in Providence, and promise that "the offender" would face the consequences (*Speeches* 376). Initially, Dickens dismissed Kelly, but ended up keeping him on for the remainder of the Readings as "Dolby was uneasy about it" (P.XI 54, 62).

[73] Nevertheless, in April 1868, during the final New York leg of the tour, Dolby and Dickens were threatened with a Federal Tax Lien. Dolby, despite having obtained a signed order of dispensation for the Readings from the Commissioner of Internal Revenue (Dolby 243-44), was harassed by a New York tax collector, who served him and Dickens with a summons to appear before a judge and threatened to arrest Dolby unless he signed an order on Ticknor & Fields for $10,000. For a full description of how Dolby managed to avoid the claim, see *Charles Dickens as I Knew Him* 304-26. Dickens and Dolby were genuinely under no legal obligation to pay this collector, but the climate of political turmoil surrounding the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson meant that these threats had to be taken seriously, as they amounted to an effort from the collector to secure his job in the event of a new Presidential appointment. The identity of this collector is unknown, but Dolby leaves us a trail of tantalizing hints, stating that "the collector" was the "brother of an old friend of Dickens in Boston," and that, whoever he was, tried to bring action against Ticknor & Fields after Dickens had left America "in the hope of arresting any monies they might have in hand belonging to Mr. Dickens" (Dolby 306, 326).

of intellectual property. The popularity of the Readings, with their authoritative yet idiosyncratic interpretations of Dickens (as a collective name for the body of his work) by Dickens (the author), illustrated that whatever value his texts held for American reprinters lay within both the brand and the biographical person "Dickens." Dickens cast himself as the source and unassailable authenticator of his works, free to make adjustments as he saw fit. The intellectual labor of his writing, then, necessarily superseded whatever physical labor was involved in the American (re)printing thereof. Moreover, by marketing himself to American audiences through the personal mode, he not only pre-empted accusations of being mercenary (which had mortified Dickens in 1842) but also rhetorically elided cultural and political differences between America and Great Britain into a simple geographic divide which spanned a supposedly consolidated "Anglo-Saxon" audience.

Despite the inclusive nature of his personal mode, and the goodwill towards America he displayed in his speeches, Dickens was consciously presenting different personae to American and British audiences. The preface to the "Charles Dickens Edition" of *American Notes*, published in London only months earlier in 1867-68, was much less soothing. In it, Dickens refers his British audience to the American Civil War in something of an "I-told-you-so" tone:

> My readers have opportunities of judging for themselves whether the influences and tendencies which I distrusted in America, had, at that time, any existence but in my imagination. They can examine for themselves whether there has been anything in the public career of that country since, at home or abroad, which suggests that those influences and tendencies really did exist. (*The Works of Charles Dickens*, preface)

Given how bloody America's Civil War had been, Dickens's triumphant justification of his criticisms in the *Notes* is in fairly poor taste. The disparity between these two moments of authorial performance is highly revealing. First, the consideration that Dickens showed to his American audience when addressing them indicates that he considered them a demographic worth targeting. Second, despite having successfully (i.e. remuneratively) entered the American marketplace, the discrepancy in tone between the preface of the (British) "Charles Dickens Edition" of *Notes* and Dickens's American speeches signals a complex engagement with the audience he rhetorically

cast as largely homogenous. Here, too, Ticknor & Fields were crucial to Dickens, as they were releasing the authorized "Diamond Edition" of Dickens's works (which did not feature this preface), meaning that there were, to some extent, separate standard editions in America and Great Britain.

When Dickens realized he was "a pawn within the larger dynamic of mass culture" (John 180), in which he had no legal, economic or authorial control over his work, he was forced to retrench, and reconsider the importance of the *material* to the product of his labor. After his nominal retreat from the American literary scene in 1842, Dickens re-entered it in various guises; first, as the "conductor" of, and contributor to, his periodicals. *All the Year Round* especially made an effort to cater to transatlantic audiences, and Dickens had gone to considerable trouble to ensure that it was widely available in America (Drew 147). The personal connection between Dickens and his American audience was reinforced by Dickens's public readings. One newspaper critic, after attending one of Dickens's performances of "A Christmas Carol," wrote in the 14 December 1861 issue of the *Preston Guardian*: "the difference between his Christmas Carol as we read it by our firesides and his delivery of it from the platform last night, reminded us of the difference between a letter and a personal interview."[74] Yet, the stage set-up for these readings (formalized by Dickens's entourage), was not exactly conducive to the intimacy implied in friendship. As Malcolm Andrews has explored in great detail in chapter 4 of his *Charles Dickens and his Performing Selves. Dickens and the Public Readings* (2006), large venues were adapted to "ensure maximum focus on the solo reader, visually and acoustically, and control of the audience's viewpoint" (128).

The setting was highly charged, as everything conspired to identify Dickens as the originator-author. In 1867-68, when Dickens returned to America for a second tour, this time consciously performing his possessive authorship in these public readings from his

[74] In the words of Susan L. Ferguson: "In the readings Dickens thus continued a process begun in the published works of transforming the professional and financial relationship of reader and author as buyer and seller and the hierarchical difference of author as teacher and reader as student into a type of relationship that elides such differences: friendship." (744)

works, the staging took on significance within the still-unresolved copyright question. Noteworthy in this regard was the presence onstage of a book, a bound prompt-copy, which was rarely consulted on stage, sometimes even closed before the "reading" began. This eschewing of the material book resolutely identifies Dickens as the signifier behind the work. Dickens varied his performances each night, improvising and making on-the-spot cuts which were not changed in the prompt-copy (83-87). According to Michel Foucault, authors are sought to reveal "the hidden sense pervading their work" (14), making the draw of these readings the fact that they were the latest "authoritative" versions of Dickens's work. As Amanda Adams has pointed out in "Performing Ownership: Dickens, Twain and Copyright on the Transatlantic Stage," these performances allowed Dickens—as the "final arbiter" of his works—to seek "to secure copyright protection for works as stable and separate commodities paradoxically by emphasizing a work's changeability at the exclusive discretion of the author" (228-30). By denying that the "disembodied" text is a stable commodity, this strategy casts authors as "living books" (231), inherent to and inseparable from their work.[75] This challenges the utilitarian, republican ideal of pure circulation,[76] as meaning and form remain situated within the author, even after publication. Dickens, then, in an extreme case of "esprit d'escalier" had hit upon a way to re-center the author on the transatlantic stage, over a quarter-century after first encountering the issue of the

[75] Up until at least 1863, Dickens also wielded a large paper knife, usually used to "open" the uncut pages of new novels. Of course, during these readings, Dickens brought only his work-in-progress prompt copy, which was very open indeed; not to mention the fact that he knew the readings by heart. The implication is that Dickens was bringing new material, unopened and pristine, underscoring his unique relationship to these works, which he could authorize on the spot.

[76] Interesting here is the mocking way in which Dickens portrays American editors and pamphleteers in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who assume their publications have been distributed universally, which suggests that Dickens at least sensed the abnegation of the material object in favor of pure circulation: "My name is Colonel Diver, sir. I am the editor of the New York Rowdy Journal." Mark received the communication with that degree of respect which an announcement so distinguished appeared to demand. "The New York Rowdy Journal, sir," resumed the colonel, "is, as I expect you know, the organ of our aristocracy in this city." "Oh! there *is* an aristocracy here, then?" said Martin. "Of what is it composed?" "Of intelligence, sir," replied the colonel; "of intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequence in this republic. Dollars, sir." (215)

(im)materiality of literature in unauthorized reprinting. The "pirate publishers" were not exactly daunted: reprinting continued, and even intensified as a result of the surge of public interest in Dickens's works that came with his American visit. Yet Dickens came away from America in 1868 with nearly £20,000 profit (Collins ix), irrefutable evidence that the "author function" was a marketable, and exportable commodity.

# Conclusion

*[T]he Two Nations — which, properly, are not two Nations, but one — indivisible by Parliament, Congress, or any kind of Human Law or Diplomacy; being already united by Heaven's Act of Parliament, and the Everlasting Law of Nature and Fact [...] knit in a thousand ways by Nature and Practical Intercourse; indivisible brother elements of the same great SAXONDOM, to which, in all honorable ways, be long life. (Carlyle to Dickens P.III 623-24)*

In Chapter 27 of *Martin Chuzzlewit* we learn that the impressively named Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Insurance Company is a sham business. In an exemplary bit of villainous exposition, co-conspirators Tigg Montague and David Crimple (chairman and secretary of the company, respectively) gloat about their idea to "furnish an office and make a show, without any money at all" (429). The impressive materiality of their office belies their fraudulent insurance business, which is essentially a pyramid scheme:

> Business! Look at the green ledgers with red backs, like strong cricket-balls beaten flat; the court-guides directories, day-books, almanacks, letter-boxes, weighing-machines for letters, rows of fire-buckets for dashing out a conflagration in its first spark, and saving the immense wealth in notes and bonds belonging to the company; look at the iron safes, the clock, the office seal—in its capacious self, security for anything. Solidity! Look at the massive blocks of marble in the chimney-pieces, and the gorgeous parapet on the top of the house! Publicity! Why, Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance company is painted on the very coal-scuttles. It is repeated at every turn until the eyes are dazzled with it, and the head is giddy. (430)

The prevalence of business papers is deployed as ironic shorthand proof of the company's impressive levels of economic activity, solidifying our notion of the Anglo-Bengalee as a paper tiger. Indeed, as Tigg reminds his partner in a mock-serious way, part of the (fictional) Bengal property that ostensibly guarantees the company's capital is a "preserve of tigers," which is in itself "worth a mint of money, David" (429). David can only "reply in the intervals of his laughter," and "continued to laugh, and hold his sides, and wipe his eyes, for some time" (ibid.). The essence of this scam is its specious gesturing towards distant wealth: the grandiose London offices of the Anglo-Bengalee Company are enough to instill confidence in people and convince them that there really is an enormous Bengal property "amenable to any claims" (ibid.). Tigg boasts that "merely because they find this office here; knowing no more about it than they do of the Pyramids," people are persuaded to get involved with the company, trusting it as if it "were the Mint" (444). Their faith in a global economy with opaque streams of finance is what precipitates their eventual financial misfortune.

The Anglo-Bengalee episode in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is well-suited for my purposes here, as it demonstrates both the prevalence of incorporation (and other innovative

economic structures) in nineteenth-century creative consciousness and its relevance to the study of authorship. The connection is made explicit in another exchange between Tigg and David:

> 'All the credit you deserve, you have,' said Tigg. 'The plain work of the company, David — figures, books, circulars, advertisements, pen ink and paper, sealing-wax and wafers — is admirably done by you. You are a first-rate groveller. I don't dispute it. But the ornamental department, David; the inventive and poetical department —'
> 'Is entirely yours,' said his friend. 'No question of it. But with such a swell turn-out as this, and all the handsome things you've got about you, and the life you lead, I mean to say it's a precious comfortable department too.' [...]
> 'Could you undertake it yourself?' demanded Tigg. 'No,' said David.
> 'Ha, ha!' laughed Tigg. 'Then be contended with your station and your profits, David, my fine fellow, and bless the day that made us acquainted across the counter of our common uncle, for it was a golden day to you.' (429-30).

The terms that Tigg uses to describe the company here, and the division of labor between the partners, call to mind the book trade: David is representative of the print industry, the company's material "plain work," while Tigg is the "author" of the company's illusion of wealth, as he is in charge of its "inventive and poetical department."[1] This reading of the Anglo-Bengalee shows the importance of the nineteenth-century print sphere in generating the investor confidence required for establishing the emergent economic structures like incorporation and an international financial economy. It also reveals *Martin Chuzzlewit* as a novel that thematizes the dangers of an opaque and global economy generally, rather than just in an American context. Even though the scope of my dissertation has been transatlantic, my model of fiscal nationality is not necessarily limited to the transatlantic market: the Anglo-Bengalee Company is every bit as dangerous as Scadder's Eden Land Corporation.

[1] It is interesting to consider, in the context of the international copyright debate, that this passage works to install Tigg as the "rightful" chairman and prime benefactor of the Anglo-Bengalese profits, situating the value of that enterprise first and foremost in the "poetical department."

Linguistically (and subsequently to an extent also cultural-historically) America and Great Britain were united, but economically, they were not. This split market was crucial, as economic consumption became the wedge which divided them into national cultures. By the mid-nineteenth century, after having first enabled and to an extent established the global markets, authorship as a profession was coming to terms with the mechanisms it had created, both imaginatively and pragmatically. Transatlantic author-publisher interaction took place in a quasi-legal context which essentially left contracts largely unenforceable and so literary labor was vulnerable to simple appropriation. Authors responded to the unauthorized reprinting of their work on the other side of the Atlantic by engaging imaginatively with the dangers of incorporated, global finance, and by seeking – like Scott's "Eidolon" and his *persona standi in judicio* in *Tales of the Crusaders* – legal incorporation under international law.

In this dissertation, I have shown how authorship and the burgeoning global financial market of the nineteenth century were inextricably entwined. Authorship took on a macro-economic significance, as narratives began responding to the risks of incorporation and global free trade by offering up storylines which either imply or explicitly thematize economic protectionism. The unease about economic interdependence caused a preoccupation with domestic fiscal benefit. Mid-nineteenth-century authorship, then, reflects the ways in which Smithian free market ideology informed contemporary conceptions of national identity along a transatlantic axis. The Anglo-American literary marketplace was wholly extra-legal which meant that literary labor could be freely appropriated across national boundaries. This basic economic fact is what motivated both Melville's exhortations to read locally in "Mosses" and Dickens's anger at the unauthorized American reprints of his works. Both authors were shanghaied by their transatlantic audience: British critics cast Melville as an anonymous British wit posing as an American author, while Dickens's early American reception – before he had actually visited the New World – inscribed him and his texts with republican values which were not his own. As texts and authors became contested markers in the Anglo-American sphere, they began to engage with the economic landscape that surrounded them. The ease with which texts crossed the Atlantic highlighted the extensive networks of trade between Great Britain and America, to be sure, but this textual mobility also gave rise to the international copyright debate which

either side argued in terms of a national industry threatened from without. The copyright issue itself was relatively insignificant in the broader context of nineteenth-century Anglo-American trade, but it prompted authors on either side of the Atlantic to engage imaginatively with the anxiety about international economic interdependence. For all the intended inclusiveness of Dickens's 1842 speech, in contemporary British and American imaginations, the Atlantic between them was an impenetrable and treacherous financial strait.

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