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"An Architecture of Its Own": Material Correspondence of Literature and Architecture in Antebellum America

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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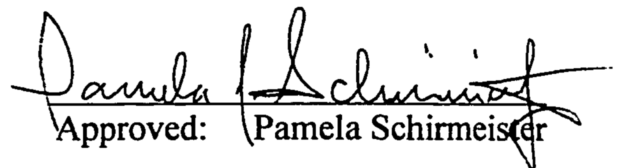

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Introduction: A Literary Architecture

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Those authors making the earliest attempts at an original style in American literature all, to some degree, absorbed architectural metaphors into their work. This was done either through reading Classical and contemporary architectural writings firsthand and then reconstituting acquired tropes in their writings (as was the case with Emerson and Melville) or through the recollection of actual buildings from their personal and historical past and then rethinking these structures as fictional or poetic images (as was the case with Cooper, Irving, and Hawthorne). Sometimes architectural conceits found their way into the works of an author simply owing to their easy availability for consumption through popular magazines or lectures and picked as so much fruit for the taking. This is to a large degree true in the case of Poe, who, while he might vehemently deny the fact, almost certainly received his literary philosophy at second or third hand from various popular magazines and journals or through attendance of lectures or cultural gatherings such as those of the Cary sisters, and not from close study of original texts. Poe's tendency here identifies an essential irony inherent in the project of creating a new style, whether literary

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or architectural. The process itself involves a denial of the past that cannot help but make use of architectural metaphors. Originating a style necessarily invokes a ground-clearing of the past in order to lay the foundation of the future. The act itself borrows a trope from architecture, further easing the tropological slippage between literature and architecture. James' "many-windowed house" and fund of architectural metaphors are well known. Equally well known is *Walden*'s correspondence of the process of building a cabin and building a text, and everywhere are the analyses of Usher's and Pyncheon's houses as symbolic architectural structures. The early practitioners of American literature found their work inextricably linked to the traditional fund of architectural metaphors.

Nearly all critical analyses of this linkage between architectural troping and the earliest manifestations of style in the Republic focus on a single trope of architecture in fiction: the house as psychological space. Undeniably, this trope was there for all to see. When Hawthorne writes of Hepzibah Pyncheon that her brain "was impregnated with the dry rot of its timbers" (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 58), her psychological state—indeed, throughout the book her physical appearance and physiognomy—is openly paralleled to the eponymous house of the novel. Likewise, when Clifford later launches into his half-mad diatribe against modernity, he cannot help but pun upon the meanings of the

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word "house," as in the "house of Pyncheon," the genealogical house. The building itself reflects Clifford's own personal torment in virtually sadomasochistic imagery:

> The greatest possible stumbling blocks in the path of human happiness and improvement are these heaps of brick and stones, consolidated with mortar, or hewn timber, fastened together with spike nails. Which men painfully contrive for their own torment, and call them house and home....There is no such unwholesome atmosphere as that of an old home, rendered poisonous by one's defunct forefathers and relatives (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 228).

Here, in addition to manipulating the house image as psychological space, Hawthorne is borrowing from and parodying the contemporary language of domesticity and the so-called "home feeling." He does this in order to intensify the ironic content of Clifford's appeal. Such fluent command of the possibilities for architectural imagery in written works is not limited to strictly literary writers. Andrew Jackson Downing's *Architecture of Country Houses* was an immensely popular "house pattern book," or architectural guide containing descriptive plates and various philosophizing on the cultural significance of domestic architecture. In this book, the details for the plate "Farmhouse in the English Rural Style" are described in anthropomorphic terms. The roof becomes a "wide, shadowy straw hat with which the farmer

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covers his head," and the effect of the whole is presented in much the same way as it is in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*. Such houses, Downing writes, "affect us with the feeling of beauty, because, like agreeable lines and features of the face, they are manifestations of the intrinsic goodness of the mind within" (quoted in Masteller, 492). Prior to Downing and Hawthorne having so mastered this kind of troping, Washington Irving made much of psychological characterization in architectural terms, even to the point of actually living the trope in the form his home, the "nookery," or seat of his public persona at Sunnyside. In *Bracebridge Hall,* the Squire is characterized in architectural similes: "His mind is like modern Gothic," so the parallel is overtly drawn, "where plain brick-work is set off with pointed arches and quaint tracery" (quoted in Anderson, 142). Indeed, the entire project of writing in general and writing *Bracebridge Hall*, in particular deliberately confuses architectural style and rhetoric at the level of imagery. The reader is told that "an old English mansion is a fertile subject for study" and that "I'am not writing a novel, and have nothing of intricate plot nor marvelous adventure, to promise the reader. The Hall of which I treat has, for aught I know, neither trap-door nor sliding-panel, nor donjon-keep; and indeed appears to have no mystery about it" (quoted in Anderson, 14). This kind of language evokes a curious feature of the popular Gothic Romance novel as

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practiced by Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and others—the earliest versions of what was later to develop into the genre of the horror novel—namely that the most intense vision of psychological states in characters is best expressed by an architectural image: the haunted house. Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* is only a typical version of a most popular kind of book in the second half of the twentieth century. At this late date, there can be no question of the forthrightness of the parallel between house and character, house and psychology:

> 'I daresay,' he went on, 'that old Hugh Crain expected that someday Hill House might become a showplace, like the Winchester House in California or the many octagon houses; he designed Hill House himself, remember, and, I have told you before, he was a strange man. Every angle'—and the doctor gestured toward the doorway—'every angle is slightly wrong. Hugh Crain must have detested other people and their sensible squared-away houses, because he made his house to suit his mind' (Jackson, 105).

The epitome of this approach to architectural imagery in nineteenth-century American fiction—as trope of the mind and fictional character as house—is found in the work of Henry James. In *The Portrait of a Lady* alone, dozens of instances of this technique appear: from Lord Warburton's sexually charged appeal to Isabel cast in terms of his house "I've got a very good one....I should like very much to show it to you" (James, *Portrait*, 79) to James' description

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of Osmond's villa being the novel's most pointed revelation of the villain's character to Osmond's later complaint regarding Warburton's treatment of Pansy. Here, his sexualization reads like a real-estate transaction: "He comes and looks at one's daughter as if she were a suite of apartments. He tries the door-handles and looks out of the windows, raps on the walls and almost thinks he'll take the place" (James, *Portrait*, 390). In all this, one can see James' kaleidoscopic variation of this correspondence between mind and building. James tropes in this way exponentially. Mme. Merle sums up her own—and James'—wholesale acceptance of this method at the conclusion of her central monologue, wherein she easily moves between the psychology of the self and the imagery of the materials of architecture and interior design: "One's self—for other people—is one's expression of one's self: and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps—these things are all expressive (James, *Portrait*, 432).

Melville is equally capable of writing in this way. Pierre becomes a "doorless and windowless house for the four loosened winds of heaven to howl through" (Melville, *Library of America*, 132). Likewise, Ishmael's self-deprecation can be amplified in typical fashion for this tradition: "Yes, these eyes are windows, and this body of mine is the house. What a pity they didn't stop up the chinks and crannies though, and thrust in a little more lint here and

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there" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 410). Melville, though, can reformulate this tradition into a higher rhetoric. Ishmael is described as a "stone-mason" more than once in the novel, and the whale is often described as a piece of living architecture to which adhere meanings usually associated with architectural metaphors. The whale shares imagery and signification of architecture in its body. Ishmael is warned to "have a care how you seize the privilege of Jonah alone; the privilege of discoursing upon the joists and beams; the rafters, ridge-poles, sleepers, and underpinnings, making up the framework of leviathan" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 505).

So it is that two central intellectuals of the Romantic movement in America, Emerson and Thoreau, both possess myriad architectural images and tropes in their writings. Everywhere in the works of these two authors, whether in journals, letters, lectures, prose, or poetry, architectural imagery stands front and center, right along with all the troping and philosophizing that ultimately defines these authors as American Romantics. Less well known than the case of Thoreau, is the demonstration of literary architecture in Emerson. Architectural references—historical, imagistic, symbolic—seem present at the most potent and memorable moments of his prose. "For it is not metres, but a metre making argument that makes a poem," he famously asserts in "The Poet." Few note the modifying clause that follows: "a thought so

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passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing" (Emerson, *Essays*, 317). Earlier in the essay, the poet is described as one who must write what will and must be spoken, "as sitters or models in the studio of a painter, or as assistants who bring material to an architect" (Emerson, *Essays,* 316). In the "Introduction" to *Nature*, Nature is penultimately defined along with Art: "Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. Art is applied to the mixture of this while with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture" (Emerson, *Essays,* 191). Statues and pictures—traditional material exemplars of art, and typical of the European inheritance, are juxtaposed to houses and canals—the material exemplars of art for the new American Romanticism. Literary architecture is vital to the construction project of American Romanticism, whose key imperative is not to build upon the sepulchers of the fathers but to grow beyond the current state, to a future time when it is no longer true that "our houses are built with foreign tastes" (Emerson, *Essays,* 232).

These correspondences are not random coincidences. There is a deeper reason for "Astonished art/To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,/Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,/The frolic architecture of the snow" (*American Poetry, Vol. 2*, 156). By mid-century, so intertwined was the

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project of American architecture and American literature, that it had become difficult to think of one outside of the forms and language of the other. Literary architecture runs a vein through nearly all of Emerson's essays. The character of "man thinking" so omnipresent in these essays, is very often a kind of architect of the mind whose self is imagined as a house. In *Representative Men* the central thesis of "Plato" is intertwined with house imagery: "Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of old forests, and ruins, and stone quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors" (Emerson, *Essays*, 331). Of "Swedenbourg," the reader is told that "his thought dwells in essential resemblances, like the resemblance of a house to the man who built it" (Emerson, *Essays*, 387). "Montaigne" admires throughout the right-thinking skeptic as an architect, whose philosophy is pragmatic and moderate, without any of the dirt of empiricism or wind of idealism: "as, when we build a house, the rule is to set it not too high, nor too low, under the wind, but out of the dirt" (Emerson, *Essays*, 346). In order to describe Shakespeare's art, Emerson insists that he must have "a new architecture in mind" (Emerson, *Essays*, 200).

Both Emerson and Thoreau reveal the intensity of this admixture of the two arts where they spend their greatest intellectual capital—in their journals. In their journals it is clear that these two thought a great deal about the

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problematized architecture of America—as they worked out the problems of their selves, their souls, and their art. On July 21, 1870, Emerson will compare his mind to his house, even as he questions the state of his soul: "I am filling my house with books which I am bound to read & wondering whether the new heavens which await the soul (after the fatal hour), will allow the consultation of these?" (Emerson, *Journals*, Vol. 9, 185). Twenty years earlier he was thinking in just these terms: "I found when I had finished my new lecture that it was a very good house, only the architect had unfortunately omitted the stairs" (Emerson, *Journals, Vol. 3*, 150). Even the earliest evidence of his most infamously gnomic image is attended by architectural imagery. On January 16, 1833, he writes in his journal that "the inconvenience of living in a cabin is that people become all eye." So the decisive image of the self as transparent eyeball is ultimately based upon a concern over the neighbors being able to easily look into a certain style of house.

For Thoreau, the presence of literary architecture is a given. But how it becomes central to his work is discovered in his journal entries of July fifth and seventh, 1845—the beginning hours of the *Walden* project. The image that is most on Thoreau's mind at this moment, the image that by its foremost position within the text amounts to an apostrophe and gives tone to the writing

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that will become *Walden*, is the image of the house, and considerations of the meaning of architecture. Sitting on the shores of *Walden* Pond, Thoreau's thoughts turn to houses:

> Yesterday I came here to live. My house makes me think of some mountain houses I have seen, which seem to have a fresher auroral atmosphere about them as I fancy the halls of Olympus. I lodged at the house of a saw-miller last summer, on the Catskills mountains, high up as Pine orchard in the blue-berry & raspberry region, where the quiet and cleanness & coolness seemed to be all one, which had this ambrosial character. He was a miller of the Kaaterskill Falls, They were a clean & wholesome family inside and out—like their house. The latter was not plastered—only lathed and the inner doors were not hung. The house seemed high placed, airy, and perfumed, fit to entertain a traveling God....Could not a man be a man in such an abode? And would he ever find out his groveling life? (Thoreau, *Journals*, *Vol. 6*, 155).

Here Thoreau's moral goal is imagined as a moral house, and it does so in overtly materialist terms. It contains a simplicity of living denoted in the lathing (not the expensive and more delicate plastering). It is a simple place without the European invention of hung doors, at once clean of the sin of vanity and frugal, an exemplar of Thoreau's thesis of the morality of economic living rendered in architectural images. *Walden*, a moral treatise on right-living, begins as a disquisition on the morality of building and the imagination of a morally pure architecture. Two days later, he will return to his opening

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theme: "Verily a good house is a temple—a clean house—pure and undefiled, as the saying is....It was a place where one would go in, expecting to find something agreeable; as to a shade—or to a shelter—a more natural place" (Thoreau, *Journals, Vol. 4*, 157). This construction of "a more natural place" is a defining project for American Romantics as a whole. Along with the abiding materialistic edge given to the movement between imagined and actual living spaces, it amounts to the signature style of what could be termed their literary architecture.

All of this has not gone unnoticed by scholars. In the discussions that will follow, the scholarly background, as well as instances of its limitations or excesses, will be noted and elaborated upon. Some relevant and important texts, being so extensively examined in these terms by past criticism, will of necessity be left, if not unexamined, merely touched-upon. The foremost work in this category is *Walden*. Much criticism on this topic for *Walden* is not surprising, seeing how wholly Thoreau absorbs and masterfully manipulates these tropes. In *Walden*, not only is architecture troped as psychological space, but house-building is troped as moral construction: "What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, who is the only builder" (Thoreau, 42). Thoreau even carries the correspondence between

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architecture and literature so far as to directly engage contemporary architectural styles and actual houses. The reader is told in a kind of sermon to beware of succumbing to the then-current vogue for Romantic ornamentation in houses, the so-called "carpenter Gothic" of cottage architecture:

> True, there are architects so called in this country, and I have heard of one at least possessed with the idea of making architectural ornament have a core of truth, a necessity, and hence a beauty, as if it were a revelation to him. All very well perhaps from his point of view, but only a little better than the common dilettantism. A sentimental reformer in architecture, he began at the cornice, not at the foundation (Thoreau, 41).

Thoreau clearly sees his project in *Walden* as that of a reformer, and an architectural one at that, but he is never a "sentimental" rhetorician. His is a tougher manner of building, wherein "there is some of the same fitness in a man's building his own house as there is in a bird's building its own nest" and "an enterprise to improve the style of cottage architecture" (Thoreau, 41). "Let the ornaments take care of themselves," he warns the reader as he dismisses the popular style (Thoreau, 43). Best known is Thoreau's correspondence of architecture and writing at the level of style; his correspondence of "palaver" and "parlor" through half-rhyme and pun, not forgetting the fact that the parlor is the room commonly reserved for

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conversation and communication. This sounds the note that bad architecture, like bad writing, cannot speak, its "dumb-waiters" becoming so many dumb writers:

> It would seem as if the very language of our parlors would lose all its nerve and degenerate into palaver wholly, our lives pass at such remoteness from its symbols, and its metaphors and tropes are necessarily so far fetched, through slides and dumb-waiters, as it were; in other words, the parlor is so far from the kitchen and workshop....As if only the savage dwelt near enough to Nature and Truth to borrow a trope from them (Thoreau, 220).

Such troping is there to be seen, barely beneath the surface of nineteenth-century writings of every stripe. Yet it is one thing to simply note and characterize these tropes; it is another to explain how these tropes came to be so integral to the project of an original American style in literature, why it is that they are so pervasively used, and in what ways are they unique to the style itself. This dissertation will move beyond examining the trope of architecture as psychological and moral space in American literature to an examination of architectural tropes and images at the level of individual style in writers of the period. It is true that architecture is used symbolically and metaphorically in antebellum literature in typical fashion, unvarying from inherited approaches. But after these tropes crossed the Atlantic, distinctly American treatment

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began to seep into their substance. The Greeks had troped the human body as architecture, as the human form was central to the Hellenic aesthetic. The English Romantics troped the imagination as psychological because psychology was an abiding concern of early Romantic theory as practiced by Coleridge, Carlyle, or Wordsworth. And in this vein, Americans troped materialist and capitalist images as architecture. The correspondence of literature and architecture in America has a particularly material shine to it. Capitalistic concerns manifest themselves as materialistic metaphors in the language and the literature of the early Republic, and by default these metaphors are carried over into the field of architectural tropes.

So pervasive is the correspondence between these diverse forms, that writers take notice of contemporary architecture and occasionally move the residual material into their works. Just as much at a cultural level—the antebellum period witnessed the advent in New England of a native architecture as well as native writing style—as at an aesthetic level, the correspondence is evident. Many of the best-known architectural theorists worked closely with major literary theorists and transcendental philosophers, and certainly they all knew one another's work. So too, at a social level—many of the concerns that permeated popular culture were shared by the era's serious writers—this slippage between writing and architecture occurs. In the

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end, there exists even what Ruskin would call a moral correspondence between architecture and literature in antebellum America.

As to this notion of moral correspondence, Ruskin, in the second and third volumes of *Modern Painters*, will prove helpful, as it is from this source that this term is borrowed. When in *Volume 3* Ruskin delineates his famous concept of the "pathetic fallacy," he is careful to specify that "according to the principle stated long ago, I use the words painter and poet quite indifferently" (Ruskin, 76). It is clear that Ruskin finds something as yet unnamed lurking behind and associated with these two entirely different art forms. There is something elemental within both the visual and poetic arts that is not quite intelligible by each art form's vocabulary; it is that which explains the common parlance of "the sister arts" of poetry and painting. This something is, to Ruskin, "the imagination." But this font of the imagination can only be accessed by a person of moral strength, so much so that Ruskin feels he can measure poetical quality by a moral yardstick, and thus he can rate Wordsworth's imagination as morally superior to Coleridge's: "Coleridge may be the greater poet," we are told "but surely it admits of no question which is the greater man" (Ruskin, 1). Likewise, he prefers Virgil to Pope, (Ruskin, 335) and throughout his writings Ruskin habitually maintains these dialectical positions of comparison—he almost cannot help but discuss authors

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or painters in moral contrast to one another. Straight comparison is a rhetorical device central to his writing style as much as the philosophical justification of an artist's work on moral grounds. For the preferred writers, and the artists and poets made kin to them, the "power of noble composition is never given but with an accompaniment of moral law" (Ruskin, 243). Superior poetry is made by writers who possess superior imaginations, and superior imaginations are possessed by those of superior moral fiber, those who have an easy access to the imagination's resources:

> You must first have the right moral state, or you cannot have art. But when the art is once obtained, its reflected action enhances and completes the moral state out of which it arose, and above all, communicates the exultation to other minds which are already morally capable of the like. For instance take the art of singing, and the simplest perfect master of it—the skylark. From him you may learn what it is to sing for joy. You must get the moral state first, the pure gladness, then give it finished expression, and it is perfected in itself, and made communicable to others capable of such joy. Accuracy in proportion to the rightness of the cause, and purity of the emotion, is the possibility of fine art. You cannot paint or sing yourself into being good men; you must be good men before you can either paint or sing (Ruskin, xvii).

That which lurks behind the best works of art can only be had by individuals of moral strength.

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The notion that all art can be judged on a moral plane beyond any accident of form implies a levelling among what would usually be seen as diverse forms of expression. Not only do poetry and painting become readily transferable categories, but poetry and rhetoric, art and architecture, literature and art, indeed, any number of combinations and comparisons are made possible by this technique, since actual form and style are marginalized in the face of the "nobility" of the imagination, which lies behind and in support of them all. Thus, Ruskin posits his most detailed explanation of the character of the imagination in art by borrowing the major categories of Classical rhetoric (*Inventio* or Invention, *Dispositio* or Arrangement, and *Elocutio* or Style) and splitting the imaginative faculty into three forms: the "Analytic or Penetrative," the "Combining or Associative," and the "Regardant or Contemplative." Terms of rhetoric are interchangeable with terms of the imagination. The implication is the revelation of an overarching correspondence. Likewise, terms of architecture are interchangeable with terms of art and literature, and nowhere is this corollary to Ruskin' explanation of the imagination more evident than in his tendency to use architectural metaphors when discoursing upon poetry and painting. His work is laced through with such metaphors; he speaks of the imaginative faculty, "which takes hold of the very imperfections which the theoretic rejects; and by means

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of these angles and roughness, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple, wherein the Theoretic faculty, in its turn, does deepest homage" (Ruskin, 14). He uncovers something architectural in the mind:

> Every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leads us to gather what more we may. It is the Open Sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it: the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the imagination only (Ruskin, 18-19).

Such equivalencies of architecture and literature at the level of metaphor will be the currency of this dissertation's analysis. The closest analog to this procedure can be found in the work of Ellen Eve Frank, whose *Literary Architecture*, taking its cue more from the work of Walter Pater than Ruskin, examines Proust, Hopkins, and Henry James in similar fashion. Her work presents an adaptation of terminology from Pater's "Style" essay in *Appreciations*. Frank brings together many diffuse analyses on the myriad points of correspondence between literature and architecture with distinction. "Literature," the reader is told, "by its analogous relationship to memory and architecture, comes to be defined as a process of recapitulation, not only of a private past, but a historical one, what the nineteenth century might call

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racial" (Frank, 33). She admits to her own intellectual source when she discusses Pater's correspondences: "Pater inherits and brings together at the very least two seemingly separate and ancient traditions: the *ars memoria* tradition, which uses architecture as a quotidian structure for memory and a convenient metaphor for the mind; and what I call the *ut architectura poesis* tradition, which suggests that writers respect and imitate in their literary style principles of architectural construction or structure" (Frank, 33-34). This designates an important distillation of previously generalized terms into a resonant thesis, a clarification by Frank of what tends to remain in Pater merely brilliant, stylized suggestion. Pater begins his essay with a characteristic ambiguity and denial of his own thesis, praising the "achieved distinctions" between arts that he is about to obliterate. He only surreptitiously suggests the *ut architectura poesis* tradition described by Frank, in that "certain conditions of true art (are) in both alike, which conditions may also contain in them the secret of the proper discrimination and guardianship of the peculiar excellencies of either" (Pater, 102). So too, with the *ars memoria* tradition: "that architectural conception of work, which foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it....I shall call the necessity of mind in style" (Pater, 104-5). He makes connotative references to this conception of art as body and mind throughout the essay, speaking of writers

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who think by "setting joint to joint" and of the art that "finds its logical, its architectural place, in the great structure of human life" (Pater, 113, 123). Later, Pater's actual coinage of the term "literary architecture," while very suggestive, is not quite clear, in certain contrast to Frank's explication. Here Frank clarifies Pater's term:

> This is the larger connection of correspondence or equivalence between the two arts themselves, architecture and literature, the one whose characteristic form spells time. Correspondence is usually active: it is a process of conservation in which there is no loss. Writers who select architecture as their art analog dematerialize the more material art, architecture, that they may materialize the more immaterial art, literature. In this way, architecture and literature relinquish an analogical relationship to marry as literary architecture (Frank, 7).

That amounts to as transparent a definition of the correspondence between literature and architecture, and the motivation to the use of its effectiveness and efficiency, as is imaginable. What Ruskin has characterized as moral correspondence, and what Pater only hints at, is that the most refined and effective use of the correspondence is at the level of style: whether through correspondence between the elemental units of that style (its tropes) or the defining tendencies of that style (a style typified by characterizations of minds as buildings as in James or Hawthorne), or the disposition of materials in that

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style (Frank's literary architecture, the building of texts as if they were material structures).

It has been shown that literature can correspond to architecture on both a psychological and rhetorical level. A long tradition exists for these correspondences, which regularly occur in American and most other Western literature. Dionysis of Halicarnassus, in his *On Literary Composition*, clarifies the second order of rhetoric, *dispositio*, by imagining the composition of a literary work as the construction of a building:

> Words should be like columns firmly planted and placed in strong positions, so that each word should be seen on every side, and that the parts should be appreciable distances from one another, being separated by perceptible intervals. It does not in the least shrink from using frequently harsh sound-clashings which jar on the ear; like blocks of building stone that are laid together unworked, blocks that are not square and smooth, but preserve their natural roughness and irregularity. It is prone for the most part to expansion by means of great, spacious words. It objects to being confined to short syllables, except under occasional stress of necessity (quoted in Frank, 250, fn. 56).

Quintillian will make use of much the same language: "For words are not cut to suit metrical feet, and are therefore transferred from place to place to form the most suitable combinations, just as in the case of unhewn stones" (quoted in Frank, 251, fn. 57). Of course, mention of two authors is not intended to be

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an exhaustive list—nor is that necessary. The correspondence is probably as old as at least the Western tradition, and this traditional metaphoric correspondence between the two arts was handed down relatively unchanged for centuries; it even bridges the gaps of the Middle Ages over the Renaissance and into the twentieth century—it is part of everyday language, whether literary or not. The commonplace example of this is its most available possibility: the imagination of the self as house. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Englishman George Whightwick could make the transparent observation that "what the skin is to the body, the hair to the head, the eye-brows and lashes to the eyes, and the lips to the mouth—such is the casing to the walls, the cornice to the facade. The pediment and architrave to the windows, and the porch to the door" (quoted in Adams, 1). This is simple enough. But in America this simple imagery occurs with a difference (i.e., a Russian formalist "strangeness" creeps in). Deliberate attempts at American style seemed to have altered the inherited tradition. Why is it, one might ask, if this rather innocuous imagery amounts to a long-established metaphoric tradition, that Hawthorne twists the correspondence so that the Pyncheon house is so troubled, its porches beetling like Hepzibah's brows; why is the house of Usher, like Usher's mind, such a psychologically distorted place; and why are all the houses, chateaux, and palaces in *The Portrait of a Lady* so

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telling of the darkest possible recesses of the mind? If Wordsworth could see *The Prelude* as "a sort of Portico to *The Recluse*, part of the same building" (Wordsworth, *Prose*, 252), what was it that so mutated the conceit as it made its way across the Atlantic?

A possible answer to these questions is skirted—almost accidentally—by Vicki Halper Litman in "The Cottage and the Temple: Melville's Symbolic Use of Architecture," wherein she assigns to Melville a critique of the tradition:

> Although Melville made use of nineteenth-century architectural theory, he did not appropriate it uncritically. His objections to the pseudo-science of physiognomy, found in *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre*, and *The Confidence-Man*, are also directed toward the physiognomical bent of architectural theorists. These objections were that what is exterior and observable does not always mirror the interior and nonobservable and that the interpretation depends upon one's point of view (Litman, 633).

What Litman would limit to Melville can be expanded to include much of the literature of America from its inception on down. Not only Melville, but practically everyone else writing in the serious tradition did not appropriate their architectural metaphors uncritically. The American adaptation of the traditional correspondence between architecture and literature, both psychologically and rhetorically, is unprecedented and expressive of an intense

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will to originality. The characteristic distortion of the inherited metaphors is a result of American writers' anxiety to create a unique American literature capable of competing on the world stage. Because the Romantic tradition so mined architectural tropes for its poetic metaphors, it became easy fodder for distortion by American writers of the early Republic anxious to prove themselves original. Each writer responded to the fund of metaphors slightly differently, but each writer was motivated in much the same way. Evidence of this peculiarity remains as a residuum in their texts: the correspondence is very nearly always tinged with a certain anxiety, a kind of neurosis at the level of style—a nervousness—that is entirely unique to American literature. If the mere correspondence between architecture and literature in antebellum America is explained by Washington Irving as simply as he mentioned in his preparatory notes to *The Sketch Book*: "In literature, Poetry is like Classical architecture," he certainly did not evidence such calm acceptance in his life and work. (1) (Irving, *The Sketch Book*, xiv). Irving, so anxious to enter the world stage as American author—to be the founder of a great tradition on the world stage—made his life his work, blurring biographical and narratologic distinctions, and in so doing constructed his meticulous country seat—or is it one of his narrator's country seats?—at Sunnyside.

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One can see this American quality of literary architecture again and again in the works of the American Romantics. The places of Hawthorne's childhood and early career come back with a vengeance in his writing—from the "castle dismal" wherein he learned his craft to the window on the wharf at Salem from which he looked and brooded on *The Scarlet Letter* to his childhood experiences with architectural "follies." The recollection of these peculiar architectural structures will later surface in his inability to successfully construct his final Romances. Cooper's personal, generational involvement with land speculation and the economics of land title and ownership are a backbone to his work; much of his literary output and his imperative to invention can be revealed as an argument over who gets to build on which land. The collapse of Melville's writing career parodies his obsessional imagery of architectural collapse, personal failure, and descent from high windows or buildings.

For American writers architectural and literary style shared the same point of contention. Architectural imagery held strong fascination for American writers practicing in the Romantic style because on the one hand such imagery had a long history of usage and came ready-made with the European tradition. On the other hand the actual images of buildings seen by these American Romantics, were—or were self-consciously attempting to

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be—uniquely American in style. Buildings, and the architecture that defined them, were a most tangible result of being American. Whether they were called pioneers or men of business, American celebrities up to mid-century were often at some point in their careers land speculators. The United States itself can be seen both politically and economically as a vast land speculation that only ended with the closing of the frontier at the end of the nineteenth century. To be an American meant to clear the wilderness and build from its residue barns and farmhouses, churches, and meeting halls. Representative structures like sod or log houses were literally built out of the land. So the tradition met head-to-head with the will to originality.

From this, architectural imagery becomes doubly empowered for American Romantics. As one of many typical Romantic images such as breezes, houses, woods, or natural cruciforms, architecture offered a location for American Romantic writers to work out their problematized American style. (2) No one knew what it meant to be an American writer, and since those authors holding themselves up as exemplars of American style were all working squarely the Romantic tradition, they typically voiced their anxieties of self-identity on the ground of Romantic images, which were already easy with dialectic metaphorical structures such as interior versus exterior, nature

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versus man, and so on. Architectural images were the perfect place to work through the troubled status of American style.

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Chapter Notes, Introduction

(1) Nor does he credit the ultimate source of this idea, Horace, with his "*ut pictura poesis est.*"
(2) For comprehensive discussion of the various types of Romantic imagery and their effect upon individual style, including architectural imagery, see Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze* and Kermode, *Romantic Image*. For a post-Modern view of the matter, and a presentation of the correspondence between exterior and interior, mind and space, etc., as problematized consciousness versus material reality, see the definitive essay by de Man, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image."

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Part I

The Material of Architecture and the Material of Literature

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Chapter 1 - Historical and Cultural Correspondence

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The earliest buildings in America owed much to European sources, but were adapted to the exigencies of the colonial experience. The architecture of these buildings was of two minds: being at once European in aesthetic and native in practice. Contemporary European building styles could not possibly have adequately provided the immediate need for shelter from the harsh American climate. Total adaptation of native east coast building styles, while practical, was too abhorrent to be wholly acceptable to the prejudice of the colonists. So the earliest colonial architecture evinced the muddled style that comes of a compromise solution to a pressing problem. Half-Indian, half-medieval, these earliest shelters were often hardly buildings at all. Ranging from cave dwellings and little more than holes-in-the-ground to mere wooden piles hammered together against the wind and what must have been astoundingly harsh winters for the unprepared colonists, none of these structures survive. But something of them is known from primary sources of letters, journals, and printed ephemera such as the descriptions of colonial houses found in John Smith's "Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England" (1631) (Condit, 5).

Naturally, among the most substantial buildings erected by these religious communities were houses of worship. On describing the first structure for the Church of England in Jamestown, Smith was less than

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enthusiastic: "In foul weather we shifted into an old rotten tent; for we had none better....This was our first church, till we built a homely thing like a barn, set upon crotchets, covered with rafts, sedge, and earth, so also the walls" (quoted in Andrews, 2). Smith can't mask the disappointment in his tone. But around this time the chronicler Edward Johnson sensed, and forgave, the unavoidable immediacy of solution that the circumstances of the environment demanded:

> They (the settlers) burrow themselves into the earth for their first shelter under some hillside...casting the earth aloft upon timber, they make a smoky fire against the earth at the highest side, and thus these poor servants of Christ provide shelter for themselves, their wives and little ones, keeping off the short showers from their lodgings, but the long rains penetrate through (quoted in Andrews, 37).

He sensed a possibility of better structures in the near future: "yet in these poor wigwams they sing psalms, pray, and praise their God, till they can provide them houses" (quoted in Andrews, 37).

One can be certain that rude frame construction began as early as 1611. That year, two-storied brick structures went up in Henrico, Virginia. The techniques of construction for these buildings were simple and commonly known to the period. As Condit states on this point:

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> Colonial brick building, like the techniques of timber framing, was derived from medieval and Renaissance precedents. The construction of brick masonry was a well-developed art in the Middle Ages, useful for flooring, paving, walls, and vaults, and it had behind it a continuous history extending back to the third millennium B.C. The method of preparing brick from clay had scarcely changed over more than forty centuries: the process of digging, pulverizing, weathering, and kneading the clay and of forming the bricks and baking them in kilns was essentially the same in the American colonies as in ancient Mesopotamia (Condit, 25).

Wigwams and wattle huts were still common in 1625; many colonists chose covered cellars or dugouts. By 1630, carpenters were building homes in rudimentary Tudor style (Condit, 5). Shingle and slate construction arrived in the 1650s, and the late-medieval timber framing of the "English house," or "fair house," with clapboard siding appeared in the early seventeenth century. Simultaneous to this, log cabins—a Scandinavian and Baltic invention of the seventeenth century—appear. Log cabins were brought to New Sweden on Delaware Bay in 1638. German settlers of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries later adopt the technique, which is picked up by succeeding waves of Scotch-Irish immigrants and carried into the Western territories.

Yet definitive documentation of these matters, whether or not certain techniques were in fact used, or the even how these structures exactly appeared, remains unresolved. It is certain, after all, that these buildings were

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made of wood or organic, found materials, no matter what the intentions of the settlers were toward rendering permanent structures in glory to God. At the other end of the spectrum from the conception of these early settlements being composed of only the rudest forms of shelter are the contemporary descriptions and chronicles. These paint a somewhat more sophisticated picture of contemporary housing. Perhaps these documents are colored by emigration-based propaganda—perhaps not. A good example of this kind of description is Ralph Hamor's 1615 *A True Discourse of the Present State of Virginia*, wherein he describes effective results of the colonists' drive to build well, and bring art and architecture (the best of Jacobean civilization) into the wilderness, all for the glory of God: "Jamestown hath in it two fair rows of houses, all of framed timber, two stories, and an upper garret or corn-lofty high, besides three large, and substantial storehouses, joined together in length some 120 feet, and in breadth 40" (quoted in Andrews, 2).

All of these structures—both in building materials or design—were at once European and native. What will become the third term—the American synthesis—had not yet entered into the equation. There wasn't time. Architectural niceties served no practical purpose to people on the brink of annihilation. Further, they had not as yet come to think of themselves as "Americans," as a distinct culture in any nationalistic sense. They were a

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dissident sect, expatriate Englishmen doing God's work in the wilderness. Even so, one can hear incipient yearnings for differentiation, and thereby a consequent beginning of national origins. In the following quote from a contemporary pamphlet attacking Roger Williams' persecutor John Cotton, *A Bloudy Tenet of Persecution*, the point is literally brought "home"—the arguments of authority in America come down to what is found in the household Bible:

> In vain have English Parliaments permitted English Bibles in the poorest English houses, and the simplest man or woman to search the Scriptures, if yet against their Soules perswasion from the Scripture, they should be forced (as if they lived in Spaine or Rome it selfe without the sight of a Bible) to Beleeve as the Church Beleeves (quoted in Horton, 77).

Already there is a cultural doubleness in America, as if the New World must be defined in terms of otherness, and a discomfort with this role. This is all seen in the architecture of the colonial period. Doubleness characterizes American architecture from the very beginning. Instead of native combined with late medieval or generalized European elements, colonial architecture will be based on contemporary English models in conflict with the desire to create an independent, original colonial style. This duality—and attendant conflict—will characterize not only American architecture from 1600 on, but

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American literature and even art. Cultural conflict was the fundamental mechanism of art and architecture in early America; to a certain extent, it remained essential to almost every American style up until 1945. It only facilitated the easy movement between the metaphors of architecture and the metaphors of literature that is to come.

This kind of conflict was present in the literature almost as soon as it was present in architecture. For certain writers, American architecture became a problematized issue that found its way into their writings in characteristic ways. In the case of Cooper, the anxiety over who owns the land upon which to build proved to be overwhelming, and he eventually turned away from his earlier audience (by then become popular Jacksonian American society) into the waiting arms of radical conservatism. The Americanization of the continent was troubled because of the irony that even as Americans created a nation that they saw as their natural, deserved gift from God, they destroyed essential elements of that gift. This irony became mixed in Cooper into a bitterness over the loss of the idyllic landscape of his youth, Cooperstown. Taylor comes close to recognizing this when he discusses the destruction by fire (possibly arson; the issue was never resolved) of Otsego Hall, Cooper's childhood home: "The mansion's lapse into a lumberyard symbolized the unpredictability of fortune and reputation in the American Republic" (Taylor,

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401). (1) For Cooper, the prelapsarian landscape is re-imagined as Cooperstown/Templeton in a personal mythology. So Cooper turns away from body politic and writes satire for his remaining days. The seed of this reactionary response is seen throughout his fiction. It is nowhere more clearly stated than in Edwards' speech to Marmaduke on the question of who owns the land:

> Who! and this to me!" he cried; ask your own conscience, Judge Temple. Walk to that door sir, and look out upon the valley, that placid lake, and those dusky mountains, and say to your own heart, if heart you have, whence came these riches, this vale, and those hills, and why am I their owner? I should think, sir, that the appearance of Mohegan and the Leatherstocking, stalking through the country, impoverished and forlorn, would wither your sight (Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 345).

Here, the sin of dispossession is seen in the enduring conflict between Natty and Duke. This same conflict is to be metaphorically evinced in Hawthorne and later still in Cather, two writers for whom this issue held enduring potency. All of these responses to the genocide of the indigenous people are made indirectly. This is partly because it less problematic to write about ruined buildings in the landscape than the genocide of a people erased from their homes and land.

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So effective was this destructive Americanization of the landscape that by the time Cooper was writing little that was strictly native in east coast American architecture could be found. "Native" here does not mean local (at least identifiably original) interpretations of the European inheritance. As to the question of the actually native architecture—the architecture of the American natives previous to the European invasion—it is fairly safe to say that by this time all that composed the architecture of the indigenous people east of the Alleghenies had been obliterated. The accumulated volume of governmental acts had done the job well. George Washington' s wartime order for the genocidal destruction of the Iroquois Six Nations, ostensibly made in response to the Seneca attacks on Cherry Village, New York, in November of 1779 (in reality nothing more than a brazen military strategic act of retribution against British collaborators) was only the first act sanctioned by the new Confederacy of States. This was the policy prototype that would later be adopted as national policy, in one guise or another, by the federal government. During Washington's campaign, nearly 80% of the Iroquois people were either killed or dislocated west. Needless to say, all of their villages, towns, and buildings were gone. Almost as an aside, the architecture of these people was systematically erased, and little or no evidence of it remains today.

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With the expansionist policies of Jefferson (cultural effacement knew no party bounds, being practiced by Republican and Federalist alike) and his successors (most notably in the Indian Removal Act of 1830) in place, the pace quickened. All of this composed a relatively hidden doctrine literally manifest as "destiny" in John L. O'Sullivan's 1845 call in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. From here on, the native architecture was doomed. Only the Pueblo style of the Southwest would survive as architectural ruins.

The remnants of this policy of total erasure of native architecture still survive in even recent architectural histories. "Before the coming of the pioneers, much of America was unpenetrated by human activities," Ernest Pickering writes in his *Homes of America* (Pickering, 8). He goes on to state what is, to today's politically sensitized ears, almost incredible in its cold-hearted teleology "It was inevitable, and desirable, that penetrated space should soon develop into organized space" (Pickering, 8). Granted, Pickering wrote these words in 1951, and architectural histories and the practitioners of architecture in history themselves were merely, like Pickering, enacting a characteristic desire of the American character up until that time. Europeans erased a people and their architecture, but the guilt and memory of that erasure

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resurfaced in many forms in American literature, not the least of which was architectural troping in literature.

While the exact vocabulary of this characteristic might not survive to the end of this century, the tendency certainly does remain and even flourish. Phillip Fischer perfectly describes this peculiarly American response:

> Alongside the search for grand unifying myths, with their inevitable narrative of their fall into imperfection and disappointment....was the claim of pluralism within American culture. This diversity, which resists the single shelter myth or ideology, has again and again risen to dominance in what we might call the episodes of regionalism in American cultural history (Fischer, xii).

Fischer is writing specifically about the forces of what he perceives to be inevitable colonization manifest as stylistic regionalism in American literature. He expands the usual notion of stylistic regionalism to include gender and race, and discusses how minorities can be culturally "colonized' within the geographic bounds of the country itself. There is American literature on the one hand, and then there is "women's," "black," "southern," or "western" literature on the other hand. The same could be said of any American myth-making. Americans habitually marginalize the nonstandard into the status of "other." In the case of the Native American population, the cultural tendency, backed with the power of an armed an aggressive government, killed the

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people off, even as it effectively erased their cultural artifacts, including their architecture.

There is strong coincidence between authors on this ground. In Alan Taylor's *William Cooper's Town*, he tells of Samuel Preston's entry into the ruins of an Onaquaga settlement near Otsego, which is reminiscent of scenes from Cooper's own childhood as well as re-imaginations of such ruins in his fictions, where the signs of fortresses and Indian camps stumbled across in the woods are potent images of guilt entailed. (2) Decades later, Willa Cather's focus on relative meanings of native architecture in an Americanized landscape leads to a similar anxiety. In *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *The Professor's House*, the archeological remnants of the erased pueblos echo and illuminate character and plot and are set in counterpoint to the collapse of the materials of native cultures. Graveyards become omnipresent in these text. Attendant to towns, graveyards inscribe written history across the face of the prairie. Their material presence is intrinsically iconographic and therefore self-reflexive within the text: graveyards are composed of written material (gravestones) that are oddments of the landscape. History is virtually written across the prairie:

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> "We can remember the graveyard when it was a wild prairie, Carl, and now—" "And now the old story has begun to write itself over there," said Carl softly. "Isn't it queer: there are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before; like the larks in this country, that have been singing the same five notes over for thousands of years" (Cather, 196).

Cather's detour into anthropological speculation later becomes an intentional devaluation of her own story of the book. Originary status disappears under the weight of Alexandra and Carl's judgment. Significantly placed for emphasis on the last page of the novel is a similar passage: "You belong to the land," Carl murmured, "as you have always said. Now more than ever." "Yes, now more than ever. You remember about the graveyard, and the old story writing itself over? Only it is we who write it, with the best we have" (Cather, 289). The "old story" implies the new story of the framing novel: inevitably renewing, by virtue of its name, its own literary form, as well as the lost stories of the people who once inhabited the now hieratic structures of the past. The now of the conversation is the material present of the narrative, that is, the end of the novel. Textual play occurs in a landscape where books have lives of their own and stones are like characters written across the landscape.

Cather's response to her anxiety is surprisingly comparable to Cooper's. One might expect to find little correspondence between these two

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authors' novels (separated as they are by a century and working in entirely different traditions) beyond the similarity of titles: Cooper's *The Prairie* and *The Pioneers* as compared to *O Pioneers!* and the so-called "prairie novels." Yet their respective responses to the trope of scribing an American nation on the landscape are characteristic not only of themselves, but of many other American writers. This metaphor is almost omnipresent in *The Leatherstocking Saga,* nowhere more so than in *Last of the Mohegans* (see Chapter 12, wherein Hawkeye and David clearly inscribe the mythic wilderness as a written book). The parallel to architecture here is that buildings, half-erased and splayed across the land, can lead to associations in the mind of the reader not only of architecture, but of literary history. The habitual use of architectural metaphors for Copper and Cather is due to this: buildings inscribe the land just as much as American writers describe it.

Pre-colonial becomes colonial as seen in surviving examples, mostly meeting houses and churches in New England and those associated with the early colonies in Virginia. But the oldest surviving brick structure is domestic. Completed by Adam Thoroughgood in Princess Anne County in 1640, it included a chimney enormous for its time and place. A respectable example of imported Tudor Gothic style is Bacon's Castle, built in Surrey County in 1655. Regarding this house, Wayne Andrews, in *Architecture, Ambition, and*

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Americans makes the observation that this house is extraordinary on account of its tremendous chimneys at either end, which he characterizes as an exuberant expression of the owner's yearning to brag in brick of his rise in the world, and "such exuberance is the stuff of which the art of architecture has ever been made" (Andrews, 4). The most innovative designs were New England meeting houses, probably because the communities' religious leaders actively avoided references to anything reminiscent of the Church of England. Typical of this flair for originality is the "Old Ship" Meeting House in Hingham, Massachusetts (1681), so-called because of its having been built by carpenters trained in shipbuilding, who ingeniously constructed the supporting timer frame of the roof as an upside-down ship's hull. It is the original for Father Mapple's church, the "gable-ended Spouter-Inn" in *Moby-Dick.*

A patchwork of styles and influences dominated the colonial scene during these years, though progress was made toward codification of styles and methods. William Penn's followers had his *Information and Direction to Such Persons as Are Inclined to America* (1684), which included complete building guides and descriptions of framing members. Penn himself had quite clear ideas (in this as in nearly everything regarding his personal experiment on the wilderness) about just how the building of structures in America ought to proceed: "Let every house be placed, if the person pleases, in the middle of

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his plat, as to the breadth way of it, so there may be ground on each side for gardens or orchards or fields, that it may be a green country town, which will never be burnt, and always wholesome" (Andrews, 50). In contrast, in 1724, the Carpenter's Company of the City and County of Philadelphia was founded. In 1734, the Company begins to assemble the first library of English books on architecture and the building arts. The "Articles of the Carpenter's Company" were published in 1786. Much of this information was used in the construction of Independence Hall (1732-1748). For example, the floor frame interlocking is clearly developed out of a design by Sebatiano Serlio (1475-1552) found in Batty Langley's *Ancient Masonry*, a volume known to have been in the library of the Carpenter's Company.

Around this time appeared an example of what would prove to be the first of the popular pattern books and builder's guides: Asher Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant*, published in 1797. This book went through over forty editions in Benjamin's lifetime (Andrews, 99). Benjamin's work is greatly responsible for disseminating Adams' and Georgian motifs throughout the colonies.

Eventually, buildings clearly based on specific European models and styles began to appear, most widely in the manner of the popular Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh, Nicholas Hawksmoor, and Lord Burlington.

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Architecture based on these men's work is classified as Georgian. Wren died on February 25, 1723, but his influence was felt for years in England and America. His early works include the chapel at Pembroke College, Cambridge (1663) and the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford (1664). His commission to rebuild London after the Great Fire made him famous. A typical example of Wren's church architecture is Saint Paul's Cathedral, upon which he worked until 1710, and for whose design he was largely responsible. Royal commissions include the Chelsea Hospital, London (1689); portions of Hampton Court (1694); and Kensington Palace (1696). He also designed the Royal Hospital for Seamen (1707). A typical example of Wren's influence in America is the Governor's Palace at Williamsburg.

The first professional American architect has generally been identified as Peter Harrison, who did his best-known work for wealthy patrons in and around Newport, Rhode Island from 1739 onward, including his interior for the Congregation Jeshuat Israel and Redwood Library of Newport. Many of his other works characteristically borrow and adapt from published architectural guide books such as James Gibbs' *Book of Architecture*, Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones*, and Langley's *Treasury of Design.*

A typical practitioner of contemporary building methods and adapter of Wren's styles would be Samuel McIntyre. McIntyre was a professional

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"house-wright," a vocation for which modern America has no exact equivalent. Carpenter, architect, theorist, and sculptor, McIntyre and his contemporaries were responsible for the craftsmen-built homes in the cities and towns of colonial America. Their building methods were mortise-and-tenon joinery and their materials hand-wrought, even down to the nails. They lived by commission, and so gravitated to the wealthier cities. McIntyre practiced out of Salem, then a burgeoning seaport not yet experiencing the economic decline of Nathaniel Hawthorne's time. McIntyre's Cook-Oliver House and Pierce-Johonnot-Nichols House, both in Salem, are representative examples of his style. The professional house-wright existed pretty much up until the development of balloon frame construction, which, in combination with the expansionist policies of the Second Bank of the United States, rendered the craftsmen-like slowness an impractical skill for the frontier-bound Americans. But as late as 1810, Walter Whitman, the poet's father, was building the family house in West Hills by hand. The family moved in 1816. The poet remembered his father as the house-wright artisan he was: "My good Dad used to say: 'Oh! What a comfort it is to lie down on your own floor, a floor laid with your own hands, in a house which represents your own handiwork—cellar and walls and roof" (Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America*, 175). The elder Whitman moved the family to Brooklyn in 1836 so as to seek

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his fortune as a builder in the rapidly expanding housing market of that city. But he was a man out of his time. Reynolds correctly ascribes Whitman's ultimate failure as a result of his not adapting to balloon framing construction techniques, while he incorrectly describes the building techniques as "prefabrication" (Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America*, 551). Prefabrication was not to be perfected or widely in use for another 10 years.

Thomas Jefferson personally took upon himself the dissemination of what could be called the first truly original style in American architecture: Monumental Neoclassicism. Championed by Jefferson, who found himself unhappy with the current state of architecture in his new country, the style was, in essence, a local adaptation of a European style. Jefferson here enacts the prototypical movement of stylistic origination in America—in architecture as in so much else. He builds upon the sepulchers of his fathers; he does so in response to the provincial quality of what had been built in the country up until that point. Jefferson even found great fault in the architecture of Williamsburg, the shining example of the art in Virginia, and the cultural and artistic center of the nation. The capital building, which he described as "the most pleasing of its day," he attacked for its egregious disruption of Classical orders. Its lower portico was "tolerably just in its proportions and ornaments, save only the intercolonations are too large" (Andrews, 109). He thought

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even less well of the upper order of the portico: "The upper is Ionic, much too small for that on which it is mounted, its ornaments not proper to the order, nor proportioned within themselves. It is crowned with a pediment, which is too high for its span" (Andrews, 61). He called the college itself a "rude misshapen pile," which, along with the hospitals, "but they have roofs, would be taken for brick kilns" (Andrews, 61).

Jefferson's use of Renaissance models closely resembles another original thinker of American style: Emerson. The notion of European models impinging defects and impurity upon American works predates Emerson in many places, including the architectural works of Thomas Jefferson. Just as Jefferson's adaptations to Classical models at once reflect his political Republicanism and describe his reach beyond the unacceptable, contemporary English or continental styles, so Emerson will characteristically reject the past and turn instead to his own models. His Renaissance choices, the works of Montaigne, Shakespeare, and the even Plato, who himself stood as a model for Renaissance artist, reenact Jefferson's own choices. Jefferson adapted and altered the style from European models to suit his own political and artistic goals. It becomes as if the conflicts between the two reigning political entities of the time, Federalist and Republican, (exemplified in such political acts as the "XYZ affair," the antics of Citizen Genet, or the passage of the Alien and

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Sedition Act) are reflected in the contrast between the two reigning architectural styles of the time, each portrayed by various buildings in the Federal or Neoclassical mode. His Virginia State Capitol (1796), based on the *Maison Carrée* at Nimes, France, is the parent of Neoclassicism in America. Borrowing from ancient Roman models, the mode was allegorically Republican and set in deliberate contrast to contemporary Georgian style. Even as deeply entrenched as he was in this style, he was nonetheless capable of moving beyond his own imposition of strictures and, on occasion, anticipating the Gothic style by a few years. One of his many revisions to the structure included a battlemented tower, another a funerary temple. Neither was built. But Jefferson is worth remembering as regards architecture in America, not only for the Virginia Capitol building and Monticello and its grounds, but because he was one of the first native intellectuals to foreground the problem of an American style in architecture. His early spade work on this issue contributed in no small way to the unique and profound influence architectural style and popular and erudite consideration of that style had upon literature and culture. His search for a practical architecture set in political terms both anticipated and dictated the relation between the art of writing and the art of building in America. It all came from his love of buildings, as he

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eloquently expressed it in a flirtatious note to the Comtesse de Tesse in the spring of 1787:

> This is the second time I have been in love since I have left Paris, the first was with a Diana at the Chateau de Laye-Epinaye in Beaujolais, a delicious morsel of a sculpture by M. A. Slodtz. This, you will say, was in rule, to fall in love with a female beauty; but with a house! It is out of all precedent. No, madam, it is not without a precedent in my own history. While in Paris, I was violently smitten with the Hotel de Salm, and used to go to the Tuileries almost daily, to look at it. The *loueuse de chaises*, inattentive to my passion, never had the complaisance to place a chair there, so that, while sitting on the parapet, and twisting my neck around to see the object of my admiration, I generally left with a torti-colli (quoted in Andrews, 63).

Jefferson shows another aspect to his status as a founding father; not until after Melville's 1857 trip abroad will the country produce a mind so passionately responsive to the visual arts in general, and architecture in particular.

Neoclassicism is designated by William Thornton and Stephen Hallet Benjamin's Capitol of the United States in Washington, D.C. Benjamin Latrobe worked on the Capitol with Jefferson (who, worked, in turn, with Charles Bulfinch). Jefferson had appointed Latrobe "Surveyor of Land and Buildings" in 1803, and Bulfinch quickly became the style's leading practitioner. During the 1790s he established an architectural practice in

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London and designed several country houses before emigrating to Virginia in 1796. In America, his works include the Bank of Pennsylvania (1800) and the innovative Centre Square Pump House (1800). In 1818, Bulfinch became the official architect of the Capitol. Bulfinch had a distinguished career beyond his work on the Capitol. Indeed, he is generally credited with being the most influential practitioner of the Georgian style in New England. His works include many preserved townhouses in and around Boston, as well as the plan for University Hall at Harvard, and the since destroyed, but at the time famous for their innovations, Franklin Place row houses.

The capitol building owns a confusion of multiple architects and diverse designs. William Thornton, the original architect, was followed by Stephen Hallet (1793), George Hadfield (1795-98), and James Hoban (1798-1802). Burned by British troops in 1814, in the following year Latrobe began its reconstruction and redesign. Bulfinch finished the building in 1830. In 1850 Thomas Walter was commissioned to redesign the structure. New House and Senate wings were added. Walter is responsible for the current cast-iron dome, and Thomas Crawford's Armed Freedom was placed on top in 1863.

This building, like so many other monuments of Neoclassicism in the early Republic, was directly influenced by the work of the Venetian Renaissance architect, Andreas Palladio. Palladio was born Andrea di Pietro

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della Gondola in 1508, and died in 1580. In 1554 he published *Le Antichita di Roma*, a historical treatise on Roman archeology and one of the best-known treatises on architecture in his day. Its appeal lasted for centuries. His most influential book, however, was *The Four Books of Architecture* (1570), which was translated into English in 1738 and underwent numerous editions and printings thereafter. Inigo Jones was the chief practitioner of Palladian designs in England.

The preferred construction method for monumental buildings in the Neoclassical style was masonry construction. As Condit states:

> Moreover masonry was the dominant material for the kind of building that was coming to prominence in the early decades of the Republic. Timber construction belonged in good part to vernacular building—mills, warehouses, bridges, and the like—constructed for strictly utilitarian ends, whereas masonry was the obvious choice for buildings consciously designed for expressive or symbolic purposes. Until the advent of steel framing, large, ecclesiastical, governmental, and even commercial buildings required masonry construction not only for formal and traditional reasons but for structural ones as well. Iron was not introduced until the climax of large-scale masonry construction around the time of the Civil War, and then only for certain interior structural elements, especially in the support of domes and vaults, and is thus to be regarded as a supplementary material incorporated into the body of an essentially masonry building (Condit, 64).

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Masonry construction, like all of the above-mentioned building techniques, remained essentially ancient in character, little changed from the codifications of Leone Battista Alberti in 1485 (Condit, 64). Ancient and Renaissance building techniques went hand-in-hand with the respectful retrospection of the style, so that not only were the buildings allegorized versions of Roman temples, they were built using the same methods as the ancient Republican architects. Even construction techniques became political at this time. Without masonry construction, there could not have been monumental Roman (later developed into Greek) forms of Neoclassicism. Through such ancient methods, Americans felt that they had found a way to mark themselves on the American landscape permanently. These construction techniques are a turning point in the search, first sounded by the earliest settlers in the wilderness, for a truly American voice in the New World. America joined the league of civilized nations with the definitive stamp of concrete and brick. Nevertheless, national pride on this issue could be seen as misplaced, and one caustic critique of monumental Neoclassicism was Hawthorne. Clifford Pyncheon, here functioning as Hawthorne's mouthpiece, has much to say on the matter: "I doubt whether even our public edifices—our capitols, state houses, court houses, city hall, and churches—ought to be built of such permanent materials as stone or brick. It were better that they should crumble

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to ruin once in twenty years, or thereabouts, as a hint to the people to examine into and reform the institutions which they symbolize" (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 163). A critique of the material of architecture composes the literary rhetoric. As will be seen to be the case with the advent of popular Hellenism in a few decades, many literary voices were raised in alarm at the latest architectural developments.

Neoclassicism found itself in conflict with many styles. Jefferson and its other inventors had foisted the style upon a sometimes unwilling public. Monumental, historically correct temples in the Palladian style were not exactly the stuff of domestic comfort or humanizing proportion. So the style existed side-by-side with many alternatives: from remnants of the medieval heritage evidenced in the earliest colonial buildings to more conservative Georgian clapboard homes. Some of this contemporaneousness of styles is reflected in the work of C. B. Brown, whose novelistic experiments began during this period. In a work such as *Edgar Huntley*, living spaces—caves, cabins in the woods, and so forth—are imagined in fairly revealed psychological imagery. But in *Wieland*, architectural images are dealt with in more complex fashion. Here, the Neoclassical style is opposed to an incipient Gothic style (Romanticism and Gothicism had just begun to make themselves heard in England) in architectural structures. In this way, the classical,

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epistolary form of the novel comes into conflict with the qualities of a Gothic Romance. Just as the gazebo on the elder Wieland's estate is rendered in Neoclassical form but has characteristics of Gothic Romance, so too the characters will behave in a sophisticated, enlightened manner beneath it—except Wieland himself, who will experience the most Gothic kind of self-immolation. So the characters and the structure of the novel itself are at once Classic and Romantic. This conflicted multiplicity behind the images, the way in which meaning spills beyond the bounds of the ostensible object, closely mirrors the way in which this novel—indeed, all of his novels—falls to pieces stylistically. They are of two minds, at once Gothic Romance and enlightenment psychological narrative. They follow both Clarissa and Melmoth, and Brown cannot make the novels cohere. The result is a slippage into ambiguity. They remind the reader of many architectural structures of the time; less disciplined than the strictly classical works of Jefferson and Latrobe, and more Romantic in their freedom from any authority in style. The structural discomfiture of Brown's novels echoes the stylistic eclecticism of the coming Hellenism and Gothicism in American architecture. Brown seems to intuitively sense this, as the centrality of architectural imagery in his works suggests that the association of the two arts did not escape his consideration.

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An offshoot of the monumental Neoclassicism was the Federal style, popular until the time of Andrew Jackson's presidency, when various forms of revivalism take over. Federalism's chief influence was the Englishman Robert Adam. The first volume of *The Works of Robert and James Adam* appeared in London in 1773, and was almost immediately reprinted in the United States. The Adams' style most representative practitioner in the United States was the earlier-discussed Samuel McIntyre. The popularity of Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (1764) helped more than any other work to disseminate the style. The Adams' style replaced the Burlingtonian Palladian style, which was transformed to Federalism as it came overseas.

It would be disingenuous to affirm that Neoclassicism alone was the popular architectural style of period. Beyond the realm of commissioned public works, it would probably not even be fair to characterize the style as dominant. This is, after all, the time when the Shakers first began to develop their truly American style. But the early phases of Romanized Neoclassicism, and its later development into the Greek revival style, are generally recognized to be the typical popular and political architectures of the period. As Leland Roth succinctly puts the matter, the country "borrowed so heavily from the form and terminology of the Roman Republic government, it was natural that

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Roman architectural forms should have been among the first used by American architects" (Roth, 84).

The advent of the War for Greek independence in 1820, and American sympathy with the cause of the Greeks, together with the results of recent archeological digs at Herculaneum and Pompeii and Lord Elgin's removal of the "Elgin" marbles from the Parthenon in 1812-1813 and their subsequent purchase by the British government in 1816, contributed to the popularity of Hellenism in America. Towns across the United States were named or renamed after Greek and Mediterranean places. "Troys," "Ithacas," and "Alexandrias" appear all over the map from this time. Pure Neoclassicism was eventually subordinated to these Greek influences. Formerly, Roman devices and sources were predominant; this would soon change. Popular Hellenism was furthered by the discovery of painted Greek vases, which were collected and illustrated in publications (1766-67; 1791-95) by Sir William Hamilton in Naples. These vases appeared in such popular engraving books as James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *Antiquities of Athens (1762-1816)*. Johann Winklemann and Anton Raphael Mengs helped to disseminated this new variation on the traditional Eurocentric aesthetic.

Surviving examples of the Greek revival style are William Strickland's Philadelphia Merchants' Exchange (1834) and Alexander Jackson Davis' La

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Grange Terrace (1836), which partially survives on Lafayette Street in New York City. William Strickland's Second Bank of the United States (1824) in Philadelphia is the reigning example of purely Greek design in the style. Fenimore Cooper greatly admired Strickland's achievement with this structure: "next to this exquisite work of art (the Bourse in Paris), I rank the Bank of the United States....There are certainly a hundred buildings in Europe of very similar style, and of far more labored ornaments; but I cannot remember one in which simplicity, exquisite proportion, and material unite to produce so fine a whole" (Cooper, *Letters*, 137). Strickland is also credited with introducing iron construction to America.

Alexander Jackson Davis was a partner with Ithiel Town in the firm of Town and Davis. The firm designed the old State House at New Haven, Connecticut (1831), the old New York Custom House (1842), the State Capitol at Raleigh (1834), and the old Illinois State Capitol at Springfield (1841). Davis' Italian villa mode can be seen in Lyndhurst at Tarrytown, New York. Davis often anticipated what would be the next stylistic phase in American architecture, Gothicism. As Andrews emphasizes in *Architecture, Ambition, and Americans*, Davis came by Gothicism through a lifelong attraction to Gothic literature (Andrews, 110). At the age of sixteen, he moved

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to Alexandria Virginia. There he found a great deal of Gothic literature and theater at his disposal:

> Davis's notebooks in these years reveal that while he and his friends were not unwilling to act out *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare was not half so popular in Alexandria as the Gothic dramatists. Who, after all, could compare with Charles Robert Maturin, creator not only of that troubling novel *Melmoth the Wanderer*, but also of *Betram*, a play complete with haunted towers? Charmed, Davis made sketches for what would have been the ideal sets for Bertram (quoted in Andrews, 111).

Davis liked to hobnob with the writers of the day and fancied himself something of a dilettante. He thanked the poet James Abraham Hillhouse for a copy of his latest poems with a poem of his own: "Behold yon woodland seat! How deep, how grand/The shadows of those groves! The graceful home/Where he, the bard sublime, feeds his soul/With visions high and solemn swelling thought" (quoted in Andrews, 202). Davis had designed Hillhouse's home, so the architectural imagery is not unexpected. This is another example of how the correspondence between literary and architectural imagery begins to flow both ways in the stylistic milieu of this period.

Not everyone was caught up in the enthusiasm for Hellenism. Conservatives as diverse in background as Tocqueville, Irving, and Cooper

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found little to admire in the results of the enthusiasm for all things Greek. Tocqueville documents his disappointment in discovering that the white marble temples dramatically facing New York Harbor turned out to be whitewashed brick and are held up by columns of wood. Downing referred to the style as "the Greek temple disease" (Downing, 108). It is exactly the popular enthusiasm for the latest style—Hellenism—that led Irving to mock the immoderate layering-on of styles in his simultaneously keening and laughing description of the Church at Sleepy Hollow, wherein everything is only "semi" complete and the doctrine of various architectural styles is mocked outright:

> The pulpit, fabricated in Holland, had been superseded by one of modern construction, and the front of the semi-Gothic edifice was decorated by a semi-Grecian portico. Fortunately, the two weathercocks remained undisturbed on their perches, at each end of the church, and still kept up diametrical opposition to each other on all points of windy doctrine (Irving, *Crayon Miscellany*, 64).

Sounding a similar note, Cooper sarcastically described a view of the Hudson river during the heyday of Grecian temple-building: "One such temple, well placed in a wood, might be a pleasant object enough, but to see a river lined with them, with children trundling hoops before their doors, beef carried into

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their kitchens, and smoke issuing, moreover, from those unclassical objects' chimnies, is too much even of high taste" (Cooper, *Letters and Journals*, 122). Of this profusion of temples, only one remaining example exists, in Cold Spring, New York, staring down a bluff to the water; so Cooper's first proposition comes around to reality.

Gothic revival followed Greek revival. It is commonly characterized as the first architectural influence of English Romantic thought epitomized by Horace Walpole's villa at Strawberry Hill (1770), outside London. Andrews gives import to this small Gothic castle—the first of its kind. It was "The first building to set the stamp of fashion on the rediscovery of the architecture of medieval times. The lord of this demesne, who knew nothing and cared less about the structural mathematics of Gothic vaulting, was anxious above all else to create a setting in which he might recall the romance of the past" (Andrews, 77). This "romance of the past" can be seen as that aspect of Gothicism that will manifest itself in parallel fashion in so much of American literature, from the Romances of Hawthorne and Melville to the sense of nostalgia that hangs over all of James' stories (his "sense of the past") to Emerson's reactionary optative mood that will characterize the peculiarly American troping of Romance in literature.

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In many ways, Gothicism in architecture determines aspects of burgeoning Romanticism, and later Modernism, in literature. It hits the right note in the minds of writers working at this time. The *Port-Folio* exemplifies the level of enthusiasm expressed toward the style as it describes, as Andrews calls it, with "something like ecstasy...over the arcaded loggia of the entrance" the First Unitarian Church in Boston (quoted in Andrews, 144). The same article later asserts that this building "will be acknowledged to approach nearer the perfection of architecture, than any other edifice in America" (quoted in Andrews, 145). Downing begins to sound a little like Emerson of the "American Scholar" and "Representative Men" when he discusses Gothicism: "There is something wonderful in the idea of a battlemented castle, even to an apparently modest man, who thus shows to the world his unsuspected vein of personal ambition....But unless there be something of the castle in the man, it is very likely, if it be like a real castle, to dwarf him to the stature of a mouse" (Downing, 180). Even more to the point is the following:

> There are the men of imagination—men whose aspirations never leave them at rest—men whose ambition and energy will give them no peace within the mere bounds of rationality....It is for such that the architect may safely produce the tower and the

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> campanile—any and every feature that indicates originality, boldness, energy, and variety of character (Downing, 196).

Gothic architecture, like Romantic literature (at least according to its own in theoretical underpinnings) had much to do with rejection of perceived values of the Renaissance: the quest for beauty in proportional uniformity. Gothicism is an organic style, emphasizing freedom of form and play with quotation. It is a reaction against Federalism's conservatism and strictures. So the free-form Greek temples, which continued on into the Romantic style of Gothicism, are very unlike the Palladian reconstruction of classical orders in Roman temples of the earlier period style. To judge a thing by its enemies is a procedure nowhere more appropriate than here. The strangely bifurcated criticism of E. A. Poe, shows him to be on one hand an inventor of Gothic prototypes of unparalleled order and on the other hand a conservative reactionary set against the Gothic in architecture. He complains about the expense of Trinity Church (a quintessential Gothic construction and house of worship of choice among New York's fashionable of the time), in 1845 in the *Broadway Journal*: "any structure of the so-called Gothic order must of necessity be an incongruous work, unless it be an exact copy, and then it must be unfit" (Poe, *Vol. 11*, 230). Whenever Poe adopts the high tone of dismissal, as he almost always does in his accusations of plagiarism and artistic fraud, one can be fairly

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certain that he is masking his own paranoia regarding influences. His dismissal of Gothic architecture is the best argument imaginable for the potency of its influence upon his literary output.

Gothic theorists included John Ruskin (in *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice*) and Augustus Pugin (in *Contrasts*). Gothicism was the unofficial style of Parliament and the British Royal family. Westminster Palace was designed in 1836 by Sir Charles Barry and Pugin. The immense popularity of the Houses of Parliament started the revival in earnest. George Gilbert Scott's Albert Memorial (1872) is another example of this mode.

In America, the style appeared almost exclusively—in its earliest inception—in church architecture. Trinity Church (1846) by Upjohn; James Renwick's ensemble of Grace Church and its parish buildings (1846); and Renwick's Saint Patrick's Cathedral (1879), are all located in New York City and exemplify the style. Richard Upjohn came to the United States in 1829 and devoted most of his career to the design of such churches. His Trinity Church in New York City (1846) is the reigning example of Gothic revival churches in America. Upjohn's *Rural Architecture* (1852) was an important piece of Gothic revivalist propaganda. Mock Italian villas were also a very popular form of the Gothic revival mode, as was the cottage architecture of Andrew Jackson Downing.

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Simultaneous to the adoption of Romanticism in the architecture of America a new form of construction appeared, both complementing and furthering the movement. This method was the so-called "balloon frame" construction. Balloon framing was invented by George W. Snow, a Chicago surveyor, but the first demonstration of its practical possibilities was St. Mary's Church, designed by Augustine D. Taylor in Chicago in 1833. The method was simply this: "Starting out with the familiar New England frame (mortise and tenon), Taylor removed all the heavy members, such as girts and posts, and reduced it to a framework of studs and joists, which could be assembled easily by hand with nothing more than a hammer, a saw, and spikes" (Condit, 43). Coupled with the mass production of nails—machine-cut nails were perfected between the years 1790 and 1830 (the actual dates are lost because of the Patent Office fire of 1836), balloon framing spread almost instantaneously across America. Its easily learned techniques and relatively low costs were perfect for the quick, cheap construction needed in the farms and small towns of the frontier. Cities, too, expanded rapidly using balloon framing. Prefabrication came next, adding further fuel to the development fire. Balloon framing is the single most important contribution of America to construction methods—and arguably architecture—in the nineteenth century. Gothic revival cottage construction went hand-in-hand with balloon framing.

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It is a procedure that created the housing-stock equivalent of the mass-market paperback.

But of all the manifestations of the style in American architecture, the best known figure (in some ways the figure credited not only with the style's popularization but its actual invention), is Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing's *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841) and *Cottage Residences* (1842) were the standard texts for the genre. Downing's villa and cottage designs (and those of his followers such as Calvert Vaux or the older Alexander Jackson Davis, late in his career) proved immensely popular, and many examples of these pattern book-based structures exist today. Downing went so far as to invent actual orders for the Gothic. The structures of Downing and his followers, the picturesque cottages, farmhouses, and villas, are the primary manifestation of Gothic style in nineteenth-century America. As editor of *The Horticulturist*, he initiated the campaign to create Central Park in New York City. Frederick Law Olmsted adopted many of Downing's theories.

Critics have written about the intimate relation of Downing's work to the literature of the period, most notably in articles by Andrew Sweeting (3) and Masteller, (4) who, in particular draws parallels between the writings and theories of Downing, as expressed in his *Cottage Residences* and *The*

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Architecture of Country Houses to *Walden*. Masteller finds great coincidence of vocabulary and rhetoric between these two authors, and proposes that *Walden* is first and foremost a parody of the work of Downing and his followers. The coincidence of style is evident in the following generalization on "true" architecture: "To find a really original man living in an original...house, is as satisfactory as to find an eagle's nest built on the top of a mountain crag, while to find a pretentious, shallow man in such a habitation, is no better than to find the jackdaw in the eagle's nest" (quoted in Andrews, 109). It's all there: the moralizing spin on building construction, the metaphorical fund of nature-imagery, even the tone of defiant disappointment in the implied inadequacies of the present state of things begin to make Downing sound like Thoreau. Indeed, Masteller's central thesis, that Thoreau knew of and parodied the language and conclusions of Downing's work, is convincingly argued at every turn. Most impressive is the similarity in the breakdown of building expenses in moral terms seen in both *Walden* and *The Architecture of Country Houses* and the coincidence of language on the subject of house painting (Masteller, 496-497). Also, Thoreau often does seem to be taking Downing to task while using Downing's own terms. When Thoreau writes that "A great proportion of architectural ornaments are literally hollow, and a September gale would strip them off, like borrowed plumes,

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without injury to the substantials" (Thoreau, 122), he is directly criticizing Downing's well-known penchant for ornamentation as the outward manifestation of inward good. Thoreau does not disagree with Downing's elevation of country architecture to the level of moral argument, he simply despises Downing's conclusions. Precedent for Masteller's presumption that Thoreau works out his architectural images at the level of rhetoric (often making use of irony and sarcasm) is evident as well in *Cape Cod*, especially in Thoreau's discussion of the dubious charitableness of the so-called "charity houses" that dot the Cape Cod beaches, all for the presumed purpose of acting as havens for shipwrecked sailors—but failing utterly to actually perform this function. After many paragraphs of diatribe and sarcastic reference to the guide books to these houses—published by the scorned "Charity-Society"—he ends with a flourish of disdain. He is looking into the dark interior of one of these houses, hopelessly locked and totally devoid of the required supplies—clothing, firewood, food, or any of the necessities of survival:

> Turning our backs on the outward world, we thus looked through the knot-hole into the Humane house, into the very bowels of mercy; and for bread we found a stone....However, we were glad to sit outside, under the lee of the Humane house, to escape the piercing wind; and there we thought how cold is charity! How inhumane humanity!...So we shivered round about, not being able to get into it, ever and anon looking through the know-hole

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> into that night without a star, until we concluded that it was not a *humane* house at all, but a seaside box, now shut up, belonging to some of the family of night, or chaos (Thoreau, *Cape Cod*, 74-75).

Downing was commissioned in 1851 to landscape the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C., but died on July 28, 1852, while rescuing passengers from a fire on board the Henry Clay, a Hudson River steamer. Various revival styles came and went during the following decade, including Far Eastern and Egyptian. By the time of the Civil War, Gothicism had burned itself out, to be replaced in the post-war years with new technological methods and modes, including cast iron architecture, eclecticism, and early skyscrapers. Romanticism in architecture was on the way out.

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Chapter Notes, Chapter 1

(1) Taylor's massive account of the rise and fall of the Cooper estate is comprehensive on this. He tells of a New York City editor named William Leete Stone's return to Cooperstown after having grown up in Otsego county in its earlier, more prosperous years as a Cooper real estate venture. Stone writes of his visit: "The grounds and orchards are the same; but the shrubs and the flowers; the long rows of green-house plants, indigenous and exotic, which rendered the noble corridor at all seasons redolent of spring, are no more....added to all which, the edifice is ruinous, and some Goth or Vandal has converted the smooth gravel walks and beautiful iawn into a receptacle of planks and scantling, clapboards and shingles. The nostalgic poignancy of this architectural loss—a material loss—will touch of his work.
(2) See Taylor, 61-62 for a good outline of these symbols' meanings in Cooper's work. Also *Last of the Mohegans*, Chapter 13, where a long footnote by Cooper recounts the potency of palimpsest foundations of ruined structures.
(3) See Sweeting.
(4) See Masteller.

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Chapter 2 - Nascent Americanisms

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Architectural tropes and imagery develop simultaneously in the historical and cultural context of material buildings, the literature, and the popular prose of nineteenth-century America. Posited almost from the inception of a native style in the early decades of the century, these conceits, whether rendered in the form of images, symbols, or rhetorical argument, are subsequently woven into the fabric of American literature. Pervasive and variegated, they often hold a central place in the primary tropologies of an individual work or author's entire output. Such tropes and images advance and retreat alongside cultural movements. Transformed to more than just a representative space symbolized in literary works, the popular and aesthetic imagination of architecture becomes peculiarly politicized in American culture. Foreign observers of the early Republic such as Tocqueville, Crèvecoeur, and Fredrika Bremer were quick to notice this phenomenon and to give it an important place in their analyses of America. Likewise, the explosive distillation of Lincoln's "House Divided" speech of 1858 is an example of just how elemental to the national psyche house imagery had become by mid-century. The question of exactly what sort of structure an American architecture would take maintained a currency as high as the question of and obsessive desire for a native American literature. "What is American architecture?" was to the nineteenth-century American mind as potent a question as "Who reads an

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American book?" Thoreau's famous question "what is a house?" resonates even into the late twentieth century.

Such observations rank as something of a critical commonplace when taken at face value. Once investigated, the incentive toward an American style in response to the hegemony of European models—in both literature and architecture—reveals itself to be colored by an equally strong incentive in the Republic: material enterprise. The establishment of a national economic structure during the highly politicized and culturally defining public discussions over the establishment of the First and Second Banks of the United States is one example of this phenomenon. In fact, the structure of the Second Bank is relevant both metaphorically as building and investment house: the meaning of the two structures coalesces in one building. Likewise, the material facts of an authors' economic status figure front and center for early American writers: in the interpretation of their work by critics, the popular perception of the authors' defining meanings and symbols, and the authors' own self-reflections upon their work. The monetary facts of an author's life matter just as much as literary responses to their works. This can be seen in the details of authors' careers, the popular traditions surrounding certain works, and the particular styles of certain authors.

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In the August 1799 edition of *Monthly Magazine I*, an article entitled "On American Literature" appeared under the pseudonym "Candidus." Authorship has been attributed to Charles Brockden Brown (*Monthly Magazine*, August, 1799). This article openly laments the lack of professional authors in the United States. If the author of this article truly is Brown, then a certain amount of tongue-in-cheek humor has to be allowed, inasmuch as Brown was at this time writing all of his central, most deliberately artistic and original novels. But the imperative toward the creation of a native literature expressed here is neither new nor unique to Brown. As early as the turn of the century a central conundrum of American literature is manifest: the argument for an entirely American literature, free from European inheritance, is undeniably shot through with those very same European models. Throughout its colonial history and into the first half of the nineteenth century, America suffered from feelings of cultural inadequacy to Europe and Great Britain. The complex took many forms, and expressed itself in many ways. This critical commonplace can be refreshed by the observation that these feelings resulted in an imperative to create an American architecture just as much as an American literature. The correspondence of literature and architecture is traceable to this ground. Smith inspires the creation of an American architecture, as well. One key result of this felt inadequacy was the country's

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extraordinary reaction to Sydney Smith's *ad populum* diatribe against American culture in the January 1820 *Edinburough Review*. Earlier versions of the feelings aroused by Smith had made themselves known from the outset of the colonial experience, and myriad examples of British snobbery earlier than Smith can be found. Yet his eloquent expression of disdain stands as a powerful illustration of the culture war between the two nations. Nothing quite cut as close to the bone as Smith's words. The cutting snobbery is everywhere in evidence. He first strikes an innocent pose by feigning ignorance of the exact date of the Revolution. He then diminishes American contributions to Western culture to nil: "during the thirty or forty years of their independence, they (Americans) have done absolutely nothing for the Science like studies of Politics or Political Economy" (quoted in Ricks, 89). He works himself into a fine English lather over the "self-adulatory race" of the Americas and then, at the apogee of his disdain, he asks the infamous question, which was too much for the guardians of American culture—the literary practitioners and journalists—to swallow. Defensive postures toward Smith begin to be taken in the literature, prose, and journalism of the first half of the century. The insult, as is well known, rankled for years to come.

As late as 1850, Melville shows not only the persistence of the irritation, but gave as good as he got in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" when he

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writes "But it is not meant all American writers should studiously cleave to nationality in their writings; only this, no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to sound like an American" (Melville, *Writings, Vol. 6*, 703). Apparently, questioning the Englishman's manhood wasn't enough: Melville resorts to calling him French. As in so much of his writing, the subversive meaning lurks beneath the surface. Melville seemed habitually unable to resist the sledgehammer blow surreptitiously buried beneath a display of elegant prose. He was not responding directly to Smith, but rather to a generally accepted truth of the time. He certainly had the English, if not that particular Englishman, in mind, and he approached the comparison between the former colony and the mother country as did so many others, in the way of nationalistic sibling rivalry. Hawthorne, in his preface to *The Marble Faun*, would frame the situation as a complaint: "No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a Romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land (Hawthorne, *Faun*, xxii). Poe got into the act as well. In his review of the *Twice-Told Tales*, he takes up the same cause: "But whatever titular blunders we receive in this book, it is most

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cordially welcome. We have seen no prose composition by any American which can compare with some of these articles in the higher merits, or indeed in the lower; while there is not a single piece which would do dishonor to the best of the British essayists" (Poe, *Vol. 7*, 819). Like Melville and Hawthorne, Thoreau abides by the tenets of this dialectic even as he takes a moral high road (while simultaneously demeaning his country's critics). Here he is in *Walden*:

> Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy he can? Let everyone mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made (Thoreau, 564).

Then there are James' expansions of these sentiments in the 1879 tribute to his predecessor on this subject, "Hawthorne." America is an inadequate canvas for the writer's imagination, for there is "no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no castles, nor manors, nor old country houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches" (*James, Vol. 14*, 459-460). What has rarely been recognized is the preponderance of architectural imagery in James' lament. In

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parallel fashion, Smith's diatribe is replete with hardly noted architectural images. This leads to an important point about the cultural inferiority complex in general and Sydney Smith's and James' articles in particular. Less well-known than Smith's avowed disdain for American writing is his overall contempt for all things American. In returning to the original article in the *Edinburough Review*, one is struck by just how very many things Smith attacks, how he slights much more than the books of the "self-adulating race":

> In the four quarters of the globe, who reads and American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at American picture or statue? What does the world yet owe to American physicians or surgeaons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? or what old ones have they analysed? What new constellations have been discovered by the telescopes of Americans? What have they done in the mathematics? Who drinks out of American glasses? or eats from American plates? or wears American coats or gowns? or sleeps in American blankets (quoted in Ricks, 289).

American literature, now considered to be Smith's primary concern, in fact hardly fits into the picture at all. By rhetorical device—one has to admire the supreme confidence behind Smith's abuse—he runs down to insignificance the whole of American culture circa 1820, snorting with equal contempt at arts and letters as well as the smallest materials of everyday life. Even the things lying about a typical house are offered up for ridicule. Smith makes short

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work of the nation, and brings the whole country down. And that is just the point: the whole of American is ridiculed. Too often Smith's article is reduced to a mere derision of books alone. More is involved. And more than one discipline in American culture picked up the gauntlet Smith threw down—not the least of which was architecture. Henry James' review of Hawthorne's career, with its parallel metaphoric base, is perhaps the clearest echo of Smith on this ground.

To the extent that American Romantics and their followers position their agendas as purely American in scope, they provide a clear, however distant, response to Smith's challenge. As late as 1953, T. S. Eliot continued to struggle with the status of a American literary tradition opposed to English tradition. In the essay "American Literature and the American Language" one can see the anxiety decades and decades after the fact. Eliot cannot commit to one side in the contest, and ends by concluding that "English poetry and American poetry can help each other, and contribute toward the endless renovation of both" (Eliot, 72). Smith's scoff at the expense of Americans still demanded address by American writers 130 years after the fact.

Almost contemporary with Smith, but in a somewhat friendlier spirit, in *Democracy in America*, De Tocqueville concluded in his discussion of the "literary characteristics of democratic times" that "the inhabitants of America

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have, then, at present, properly speaking, no literature" (Tocqueville, 56). One is tempted to read into the suspended modifying phrases a certain amount of hesitation, reflecting Tocqueville's reluctance to criticize overmuch the achievements of his chosen subjects. Maybe he just felt badly for the unlettered Americans. Certainly, his assertion contributed to the general feeling of inadequacy coupled with an almost desperate desire to do something positive, to create a national literature at all costs.

This was the time that witnessed the open call for a native literary style. It is perhaps no coincidence that the very qualities by which Tocqueville explained the American's want of a representative architectural style and building technique, that "in democratic ages monuments of the arts tend to become more numerous and less important," are the same qualities that he ascribes to his accounting of the meager state of American literature (Tocqueville, 55). He expounds upon this subject after observing first-hand in a book shop the almost total lack of a native literature. One cannot help but notice the repetition of emphasis on the observation that quantity exceeds quality, and in terms of quantity, America was universally seen to be sorely lacking:

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> When a traveler goes into a bookseller's shop in the United States and examines the American books on the shelves, the number of works appears very great, while that of known authors seems, on the contrary, extremely small. He will first find a multitude of elementary treatises, destined to teach the rudiments of human knowledge. Most of these books were written in Europe; the Americans reprint them, adapting them to their own use.....Although America is perhaps in our days the civilized country in which literature is least attended to, still a large number of persons there take an interest in the productions of the mind and make them, if not the study of their lives, at least the charm of their leisure hours. But England supplies these readers with most of the books they require. Almost all important English books are republished in the United States. The literary genius of Great Britain still darts its rays into the recesses of the forests of the New World (Tocqueville, 95).

Out of all this reactionary response a picture emerges: the American book and American house grew out of the same soil and at the same time. The trees cut to make the pioneer's log cabins were the same trees ground to pulp for printers' paper. And so it is that Tocqueville finds his fitting symbol in a metaphoric equivalence between book and building: he read his American reprint of the "the feudal drama of *Henry V* for the first time in a log cabin" (Tocqueville, 55). Not only is the inadequacy of an American literature felt, so too is the inadequacy of an American architecture.

The styles that Smith or Tocqueville might have considered to be a candidate for native architecture—whether Federalist, Georgian, or Palladian Neoclassicism—were, as practiced in America, virtually indistinguishable

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from their English counterparts. In a word, there was no native style for Smith to see. The country's three prime examples of the Georgian style, for instance, show no originality of design beyond their specific English models other than in the minutiae of craftsmen's details. The William Byrd house, commonly known as "Westover," in Charles City County Virginia is much-derived from Salmon's *Palladio Londineusis* (Roth, 40). Colonel John Taylor's "Mount Airy" was obviously lifted from plate 58 of Gibb's *Book of Architecture* (Roth, 41). Peter Harrison's Redwood Library of Newport, Rhode Island, finds provenance in an illustration by Edward Hoppos for the fourth book of Andrea Palladio's *Architecture* (London, 1763) (Roth, 43). Dissenting voices could be heard—Jefferson, Latrobe, and Bulfinch lead the chorus—but no distinctly American school or style had emerged by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The negligible status of American architecture at this time is boldly drawn by its glaring absence from the single most authoritative book on architecture available to the contemporary audience, Papworth and Wyatt's *The Encyclopedia of Architecture: Historical, Theoretical, and Practical*, first published in final form in 1842. This huge and authoritative text on the subject, written during the preceding decades, attempts coverage of the entire history of architecture from its earliest forms down to the contemporary present, all the while making room for styles of

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every known or imagined nation. In this book, not one mention of American architecture or building innovation can be found—excepting two lines of lip-service to the inventiveness of the American cook-stove, the "Franklin" stove. Such implied derision must have galled the early architectural practitioners of America, all of whom certainly knew the book, and who spent much energy in addressing the issue of forlorn American style and attempting to remedy the situation, in much the same manner as authors had responded to derision.

These practitioners recognized the basic truth that for an American style in architecture to exist, certain elements had to have been available, and that these necessary ingredients were not yet in place. Not until the 1840s did the *North American Review* begin to publish articles exclusively about architecture. *Harper's* magazine followed in the 1850s. The first purely architectural journals, *Sloan's Architectural Review and Builder's Journal* and *The American Builder's Journal of Art* appeared simultaneously in 1868 (Roth, 151). Architectural books then began to experience growing success in the coming years. Gervase Wheeler's *Rural Homes* (1851) went thorough nine editions by 1868. Calvert Vaux's 1857 *Villas and Cottages* went through five editions until 1874. The all-time bestseller of this group was Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences* of 1842, which went through 13 editions by 1887, followed by his *Architecture of Country Houses* in 1850

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(which went into nine editions by 1866). Downing's first attempt, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841) cannot properly be called an architecture book, as its primary subject is landscape design.

Herein lies a major difficulty in locating the foundations of a purely American school in architecture, even as the same difficulty eases the comparison of architectural treatises to more literary works. Downing's books, like all of the others, are concerned with much beyond the presumed bounds of the art of architecture. In a Romantic excess typical of these books, Downing freely flows from subject field to subject field, visiting every element of the quadrivium, often barely touching upon his ostensible themes or subjects at hand. *In Cottage Residences* he elaborates upon such issues beyond the purview of architecture as the contemporary state of landscaping, a somewhat pseudo-scientific disquisition on the effect of climate upon building materials, and speculations about the culture of domesticity. Nearly all of the books were directly marketed as guides to building, not treatises on architecture. These books were at once picture books intended to assist the carpenter on-site and bestsellers meant to appeal to the desires of the time. Their popularity speaks to the infestation of architectural notions in the historical climate. At bottom, they were no more a set of architectural theories than could have been found in Asher Benjamin's Palladian field guide *The*

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Country Builder's Assistant (1797), or any of its descendants such as *The Rudiments of Architecture* (1814) or *Elements of Architecture* (1848). In this environment, simply because a book contained the word "architecture" on its title page did not make it a book about architecture

Benjamin's books, like those of Downing and the others, plant the seeds of what would later grow to be a truly American architecture. But at the time of their publication, they were really only builders' guides and pattern books—handbooks for craftsmen and carpenters. Nevertheless, these works do suggest great effort on the part of earlier architects. For years they had been learning their craft, and slowly they had begun to develop some original techniques and styles. Similar to these works in style and inherent tendency to run along myriad philosophical tangents is the work of Squire Orson Fowler, the popular phrenologist who is best remembered today for having been lucky enough to distribute the first edition and publish the second edition, along with his brother, of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*. On top of everything else, Fowler was an architectural theorist, who experienced something like an epiphany when he discovered the possibility for octagonal houses, that "contain one fifth more room for its wall" than rectangular houses (quoted in Andrews, 50). Upon his almost religious conversion to the cause of octagonal housing as healthful and morally pure domestic space, he promptly published, among

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other works and lectures on the same matter, his enthusiastic *A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, New Cheap, Convenient, Superior, and Adapted to Rich and Poor*. Fowler was not alone in his enthusiasm for delivering healthful surroundings through domestic environmental designs. Consider the popularity of the work of William Anders Allcot or any of the other domestic scientists of the time. Octagonal houses experienced quite a vogue at mid-century, and many survive today.

In *Villas and Cottages*, Vaux tries to maintain his best optative mood: "Although there is a cheering prospect for American architecture in good time coming, its present appearance is in many ways far from satisfactory." His optimistic attitude speaks to his historical place; his crashing pessimism reveals his good sense. Vaux elaborates upon the problem and repeats his rhetorical device of self-pity:

> Cheap popular works on architecture in all its bearings, popular lectures, popular engravings—and hundreds of them, and yet all good—these are the simple, truthful, and effective means that are to influence the public, by supplying a medium through which it may see clearly, and thus be led to criticize freely, prefer wisely, and act judiciously. Every year offers proofs of an advancing interest in this subject, and shows an increasing desire to respond to it in newspapers, magazines, books, etc., while the public is certainly not slow to buy and read.
>
> The truth is, not that America is a dollar-worshipping county, with a natural incapacity to enjoy the arts, but a dollar-

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> making country, with restricted opportunities for popular, artistic education, as yet (Vaux, 264).

Even the foremost architectural theorist of the time can do little more than make excuses for the abiding capitalist mentality of America. Materialism is intimately involved with even the most elemental questions of the status of art. The body of Vaux's essay consists of a precocious call for the creation of an American "academy" to hold up the social and intellectual aristocracy of America. He winds up this jeremiad with—inappropriately in terms of context—a quote from Emerson's "The American Scholar," an essay set squarely against just such notions of academy. "Emerson says forcibly on this point," begins Vaux with certain speciousness, "'Why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of government, he will create a home in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also'" (Vaux, 315). Vaux claims Emerson as a precursor to his central argument, the occasion of an American academy of architecture. His confusion on this point betrays something of the troubles of a culture that longed for not only an architecture,

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but a literature that was truly American, even as that same culture was possessed by material enterprise.

Statements more eloquent than Vaux's were made. Horatio Greenough, for one, critiqued American architecture with the familiar tone of lament in *Form and Function*:

> We have heard the learned in matters relating to art express the opinion that these United States are destined to form a new style of architecture. We forgot that, though the county was young, yet the people were old; that as Americans we have no childhood, no half-fabulous, legendary wealth, no misty, cloud-enveloped background. We forgot that we had no unity of religious belief, nor unity of origin; that our territory, extending from the white bear to the alligator, made our occupations dissimilar, our characters and taste various. We forgot that the Republic had leaped full grown and armed to the teeth from the brain of her parent, and that a hammer has been the instrument of delivery. We forgot that reason had been the dry nurse of the giant offspring, and had fed her from the beginning with the strong bread and meat of fact; that every wry face the bantling ever made had been daguerreotyped, and all her words and deeds printed and labeled away in the pigeonholes of official bureaus (Greenough, 665).

Greenough is far closer to Emerson than Vaux. Later on, Greenough holds the hitherto only possible example of a native style—the Neoclassical—up for ridicule: "In our eagerness to appropriate," meaning Palladianism inherited through English models and the school of Wren, "we have neglected to adapt,

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to distinguish,—nay, to understand" (Greenough, 678). Appropriation untempered by knowledge is not approved by as serious a scholar as Greenough. Showing the sense of humor of a class-conscious esthete, he complains of the "Greek temple, jammed in between the brick shops of Wall Street or Cornhill, covered with lettered signs, and occupied by groups of money-changers and apple women," and suggests that when "bringing the Parthenon into our streets" the true style is "botched" (Greenough, 155). This is entirely reminiscent of the disdain for the Neoclassical style voiced by so many writers of the time. The details—posited as the lifeblood—of the style are effaced in adapting the buildings to contemporary usage: "Instead of the storied relief and the eloquent statue which enriched the frieze and graced the pediment, we have made our chimney tops to peer over the broken profile" (Greenough, 155-166). From the binary opposition located in this metaphor, Greenough launches into the substance of his book: a reconstruction of Coleridgean form vs. function in decidedly American terms. That he moves from architectural metaphors to the body of the work illustrates just how central the issue of a native architectural style had become. Arguing from a typically Transcendentalist emulation of nature's balance of form and function, he consoles himself with the recognition that there is at least a field of native building design worthy of admiration: clipper ships. In this he

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reveals his own materialist bias. It is with these peons to American ingenuity and technological dominance of world commerce that Greenough can at last find a model of artistry worthy of unbridled admiration. That he would feel compelled to choose so mercantile an icon in what is self-consciously presented as an idealist treatise explicates the depth of the penetration of materialism into aesthetic arguments:

> I do not suppose it is possible to check such as that which sets all this corruption toward our shores. I am aware of the economical sagacity of the English, and how fully they understand the market; but I hope that we are not so thoroughly asphyxiated by the atmosphere they have created as to follow their lead in our own creation of a higher order. I remark with joy that almost all the more important efforts of this land tend, with an instinct and a vigor born of the institutions, toward simple and effective organization; and they never fail whenever they toss overboard the English dictum and work from their own inspiration to surpass the British, and there, too, where the world thought them safe from competition.
>
> I would fain beg any architect who allows fashion to invade the domain of principles to compare the American vehicles and ships with those of England, and he will see that the mechanics of the United States have already outstripped the artists, and have, by the result of their bold and unflinching adaptation, entered the true track, and hold up the light for all who operate for American wants, be they what they will (Greenough, 101-103).

From architecture to books and literature to ships, Greenough elides along the spoor of association seen so many times in the writers coming after Sidney

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Smith. The material correspondence of the two arts is intense. Ironically enough, Greenough can only devise an anti-capitalist aesthetic with the help of the beautiful transports of capitalism. The intensity of the felt inadequacy is revealed in his choice of the speediest, most technologically advanced ships of the day; speed of solution impelled the immediacy of the will to originality. His argument is still with England, and his ride through American art is placed in the ships that can best challenge the nautical superiority of the British. The argument has not changed at all, but the focus of the argument has. Sidney Smith's legacy endures in the argument that American ships are metaphors for American success in literature and art. James Jarves in *The Art Idea* will find solace in this same vision of clipper ships. He finds little of value in doubly derivative Neoclassicism (derived first from its ancient sources, and second from the English model). The style is said to create "architectural anomalies that disfigure our soil" (quoted in Andrews, 199). He concludes that "strictly speaking, we have no architecture." He then follows, almost to the letter, Greenough's essential argument:

> If the mechanical features of our civilization were left to tell the story, our ocean-clippers, river-steamers, and industrial machines would show a different aspect (than the pathetic visage of art in America). They bespeak an enterprise, invention, and development of the practical arts that proclaim the Americans to

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> be a remarkable people. If therefore, success attend them in whatever they give their heart and hands to, it is but reasonable to infer that cultivation need but be stimulated in the direction of architecture to produce results commensurate with the advance in mechanical and industrial arts. If one doubt this, let him investigate the progress in shipbuilding from the point of view of beauty alone, and he will discover a success as complete in its way as that of the builders of Gothic Cathedrals and Grecian temples. And why? Simply, that American merchants took pride in their work; their purses opened without stint; and they built the fastest and handsomest ships (quoted in Andrews, 202).

Jarves finds money to be a sound basis for artistic achievement. When he speaks of ship building from "the point of beauty alone" he somewhat willfully ignores his own admission of the motivating force of profit and posits the notion of "love of work" as the operative element in artistry. This will form the basis of his theorizing from now on.

The above assaults on the Neoclassical style are a barely covert—in the case of Greenough, overt—rejection of any style traceable to English origins. The style was rejected as having any possible chance to develop into something wholly American. After all, Neoclassicism is a function of Palladianism, and Palladio came to this country bound in English books. Roth, in his *Precise History of American Architecture*, divides American architecture in the eighteenth century into two periods. Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren are the primary influences on the first period, and James

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Gibbs and the Palladianism are dominant in the second period. Architectural treatises of both periods are, as Roth says "undertaken in earnest at the beginning of the eighteenth century" (Roth, 291) Roth offers a comprehensive and compelling catalog of these books, which, if nothing else, strongly illustrates the place of European models in the theoretical work of early America and the United States. The first of the 14 editions of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* appeared in England in 1663. Lord Burlington's 1715 edition, edited by Giacomo Leon, was the most popular of them. William Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones* was published in 1727. This was the first illustrated edition of Jones' work available in the colonies. Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* came out in 1715-1725, later replaced by William Adam's *Vitruvius Scotius* in 1750. The most important book of the century was James Gibbs' *A Book of Architecture*, published in 1728. Many carpenters' handbooks also followed the Palladian and Neoclassical bent. Foremost was William Salmon's *Palladio Londineusis* in 1734. Equally important were books by William Halfpenny, Abraham Swan, and Robert Morris. Over 11 editions of Batty Langley's *The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs*, which first appeared in 1740, were printed. It was still in print in the nineteenth century. Literally thousands of these books canvassed America for over a century. By the turn of the century,

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surfeit had set in, and the nineteenth century spent a lot of energy trying out new ways of building. The intellectual landscape had become suffused in architectural handbooks based on European models, to which a reactionary stance was forming.

From out of the rejection of Neoclassicism and disappointment in any acceptable development of style the theorists and writers did offer an optimistic vision of the future. If not exactly drawn in the optative mood of Transcendental rhetoric, was something fairly close. Inherent in the assaults upon and emphasis of American failures was its flip-side: the possibility of American success. For example, Crevecour equitably found much to be ashamed of, but much to admire in American buildings. In *Letters of American Farmer, "Letter 3,"* he contrasts the economic and political freedoms of America with the economic and political failures of Europe. He comes down on the side of America, yet illustrates his argument not with anything typical of political rhetoric (authoritative quotation, logical argument, etc.), but by way of simple, potent imagery: the imagery of housing. It is the American house, the cabin, and the church that best exemplify all that Crevecour admires in the American system:

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> The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. If he travels through our rural districts he views not the hostile castle, and the haughty mansion, contrasted with the clay-built hut and miserable cabin, where cattle and men help to keep each other warm, and dwell in meanness, smoke, and indigence. A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time before he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honour. There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble waggons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labour of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free; as he ought to be (Crevecour, 102-104).

Later, he develops a theory of frontier existence whose deist mechanism anticipates Frederick Jackson Turner's speculation on the manner of American cultural development. Crevecour sees the frontier as the space wherein American culture is winnowed down to its true self, the field upon which

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America is formed. He admits to the inadequacy of American frontier life and habitations, but he hopes for a better day:

> He who wishes to see America in its proper light, and have a true idea of its feeble beginnings barbarous rudiments, must visit our extended line of frontiers where the last settlers dwell, and where he may see the first labours of the mode of clearing the earth, in their different appearances; where men are wholly left dependent on their native tempers, and on the spur of uncertain industry, which often fails when not sanctified by the efficacy of a few moral rules. There, remote from the power of example, and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society. They are a kind of forlorn hope, preceding by ten or twelve years the most respectable army of veterans which come after them. In that space, prosperity will polish some, vice and the law will drive off the rest, who uniting again with others like themselves will recede still farther; making room for more industrious people, who will finish their improvements, convert the loghouse into a convenient habitation, and rejoicing that the first heavy labours are finished, will change in a few years that hitherto barbarous country into a fine fertile, well regulated district. Such is our progress, such is the march of the Europeans toward the interior parts of this continent. In all societies there are off-casts; this impure part serves as our precursors or pioneers; my father himself was one of that class, but he came upon honest principles, and was therefore one of the few who held fast; by good conduct and temperance, he transmitted to me his fair inheritance, when not above one in fourteen of his contemporaries had the same good fortune. Forty years ago this smiling country was thus inhabited; it is now purged, a general decency of manners prevails throughout, and such has been the fate of our best countries (Crevecour, 157-158).

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In sum, he boldly declares himself in favor of an American style in all things, including architecture: "If we have neither ancient amphitheaters, gilded palaces, nor elevated spires, we enjoy in our woods a substantial happiness which the wonders of art cannot communicate....For my part, I had rather admire the ample barn of one of our opulent farmers...than study the dimensions of the Temple of Ceres" (Crevecour, 123). Late in his life, Cooper would reminisce about the concerns of this time in both arts. *The Pioneers* intentionally drew the picture, he says (and anything in this book is intimately wrapped up in architectural metaphors), of "the sort of life that belongs to a 'new country,' forming a link in the great social chain of the American community" (Cooper, *Letters, Vol. 6*, 401). The material structure of the homes of the pioneers figure in the literary structure of the homes in *The Pioneers*. The significance is simply that American architecture and literature were brought forth out of the same metaphors and cultural concerns.

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Chapter 3 - A Material Sentimentalism:

Romanticized Houses and Home Feelings

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The Mount Vernon Ladies Association was founded in 1853 by Mrs. Louis Cunningham and her daughter Ann Pamela with the help of the popular actress Anna Cora Mowatt. The avowed cause of the group was to purchase the Mount Vernon estate and restore the grounds and architecture to their original condition. By the 1850s the estate had been entailed through the family to a great nephew of Washington's, who had little money available for upkeep. The condition of Mount Vernon was not generally known, but during a voyage to her own plantation in Charleston down the Potomac, Mrs. Cunningham visited and was appalled by the disrepair of the grounds and buildings. Her daughter hatched the plan of purchase, and the two made this their life's work. In their work, Mount Vernon is clearly synonymous with George Washington himself. The house stood for the paternal figure—Mount Vernon became, through the abiding interplay of house and self, George Washington (Handlin, 29).

Edward Everett, no longer Henry Clay's protégé, but by the 1850s a full-blown celebrity orator, was intimately involved in the group's fundraising activities. In 1856 in Boston he delivered a widely circulated speech in which George Washington became a symbol of national unity, bringing him squarely into the field of Whig politics. After giving this lecture on March 19 in Richmond, he was met backstage by an enthused Mrs. Cunningham. George

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Washington stood for Union, and reference to his home highlighted the disrepair of the Union itself, brought to mind the Kansas-Nebraska act, the fugitive slave law, and the Missouri Compromise—all the hottest political topics of the time. Disunion was in the air, and it became the patriotic duty of Cunningham and Everett to repair Mount Vernon as well as the Union. The two stand as figures of compromise themselves, she the wife of a South Carolina planter and he the anointed successor to Webster. So too, Washington was a slave owner and Southern gentleman, but was now a stand-in for compromise and Union. Everett was enlisted as fundraiser for the group. The speech was given well over a hundred times across the nation, resulting in about $70,000 being raised for the cause. On April 6, 1858, the contract to purchase Mount Vernon for the State of Virginia for $200,000 was finally signed.

The preservation of Mount Vernon held within itself a different resonance than such an endeavor would today. This was not an example of preservationism in its current sense, with its subliminal imperative to define the present through nostalgic re-imagination of the past—even at the expense of historical accuracy couched in terms of purism. Rather, the motivation for saving the estate, as defined by the association, had little to do with any personal desire for reinventing a shared cultural past, but would "reflect what

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those involved hoped would happen in the realm of politics. This nonprofit and totally disinterested cause was also an assertion of the values of home over those of faction and competition that dominated the world of business and politics" (Handlin, 83). While the association had succeeded in positioning itself on politically neutral ground and was a joint North/South venture, this could not overcome the uncomfortable discrepancy of Mount Vernon's having been at heart nothing more than a functioning slave-holding estate. The association's good political intentions did not pan out. The War Between the States was visited upon America anyway. What is memorable about this episode is that anyone, especially the politically connected and savvy Edward Everett, would have imagined, without cynicism, that the association could achieve its goals. It stands as a testament to the power of the ease of imagistic associations available to houses, architecture, politics, and national cause. It also attests to the ease with which such interplay moved by mid-century. Along with literary architecture come other architectures: cultural and political. In the culture-at-large, the house had become a potent image around which fractional differences could be momentarily laid to rest. It was also capable of capturing the imagination of utopian writers; it had the strength to draw together diverse political and social theorists under an umbrella enterprise.

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Albert Brisbane is best known as the man who took over the operation of Brook Farm after Ripley and turned it into a Fourierist communitarian experiment. He is also the person most responsible for bringing the ideas of Charles Fourier to the American public in the first instance. His 1842 articles on Fourier for the *New York Herald Tribune* were the most readily available source for information on Fourier's ideas. One of the first things Brisbane did upon taking over the farm was to institute phalansteries, a basic component of Fourierist living arrangements. He almost certainly did this in full knowledge of the fact that the houses, structures, living quarters, and land purchase arrangements were some of the very things that had come to define the experiment under Ripley. The institution of phalansteries sent a powerful message, not only that the experiment was now openly Fourierist, but that he, Brisbane, was now fully in control. He knew, as well, the importance his ideological hero—Fourier—placed upon the meaning of living arrangements. Among all the jumble of Fourier's doctrines, the elaborate arrangement and institutionalization of living quarters stand out by their consistency (Handlin, 88).

At the outset of the Brook Farm experiment, George Ripley, who essentially ran the show, moved everyone into an informally arranged living situation in a farmhouse that he named, with inimitable descriptive clarity,

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"the hive." The men were not named "drones," nor were the women "queens" or "workers," although this vocabulary was in fact used by Fourier himself. The imagery is reserved for houses alone. As more people came aboard, the farmhouse was expanded in all directions with all manner of buildings. Unfortunately for the community's future prospects, the organizational influence of insect society did not seem to extend very far beyond Ripley's naming. Eventually, the group purchased another house, dubbed the "Cottage," for which they hired local workers to do repairs, preferring to indulge themselves in more intellectual pursuits. The naming of the building with an entirely bourgeois epithet, one so common as to resonate not at all, bespeaks a retreat from the difficult strictures of Fourier's systemization. They didn't gain very much by the retreat. The local builders were no more successful than anyone associated with Brook Farm. The fireplace and entire chimney collapsed into a hole in the middle of the Cottage one day soon after it was completed. No one had considered that it might be a bad idea to build the huge chimney over an open cellar without adding additional structural support. One cannot help but recall the voice of Thoreau in *Walden*, as he brings up for ridicule the architectural theorists and experimenters of the time:

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> But lo! Men have become the tools of their tools. The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer, and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a housekeeper. We now no longer camp for a night, but have settled down upon earth and forgot heaven....When I consider how our houses are built and paid for, or not paid for, and their internal economy managed and sustained, I wonder that the floor does not give way under the visitor while he is admiring the gewgews upon the mantle-piece, and let him through into the cellar, to some solid and honest though earthy foundation (Thoreau, 37-38).

The episode stands as a kind of fable of the doomed experiment of Brook Farm, a utopia collapsing under the weight of its over-intellectualized and impractical structure. Earlier Ripley had built himself an utterly impractical home at Brook Farm, which he named the "Eyrie." (1) It took many levels of rickety stairs for visitors to arrive at the terrace upon which it was perched. In yet another irony, when Brisbane's phalanstery was finally built, it totally obscured the once dominating position of Eyrie from view—just as Ripley himself eventually became obscured by the project. The whole thing later burned to the ground under mysterious circumstances.

Horace Bushnell, William A. Alcott, and Harriet and Catherine Beecher, in conjunction with Transcendentalist and Fourierist social theorists, together contributed to the distinctly American version of the Victorian ideal

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of the morally good house and home. This ideal is central to Alcott's *Essay on the Construction of Schoolhouses* and *The House I Live In*, Harriet Beecher's *House and Home Papers* and *The Chimney Corner*, and Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy and Domestic Receipt Book*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is typical of the genre's treatment of house imagery. Later, the image matures and ferments into the vision of a morally degraded self as physically deteriorated house. This new—uniquely American—image (anticipated by "The Fall of the House of Usher") appears in Melville's short fiction of the 1850s and the novel *Pierre; or the Ambiguities*. Its apotheosis is seen in Howell's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* Still later, issues of a moral living space color late-century political discourse over tenement design and housing for the poor. Variations on this discourse appear in the prose and poetry of Walt Whitman (who, as a journalist, was directly involved in the public discourse itself).

Architectural tropes and images begin to noticeably populate the writing and literature during the years of the early Republic, and they do so more often than not in the readily available style of Romantic sentimentalism. J. F. Cooper's Aristabulus Bragg disapproved the alteration of his employer Effingham's home, the "Wigwam," to Greek revival temple from Palladian Neoclassic mansion. From the human physiognomy of the Pyncheon house to

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the cabin by Walden pond and beyond to James and Wharton where the image abounds with import, meaningful images of houses dot the landscape of American literature as endlessly repeated as single family ranches sprawling across a suburban development.

Nineteenth-century writers were greatly attracted to the image of the house, and often mythologized their own houses and then integrated these homes into their work. The popular Swedish author Fredrika Bremer shared this belief in the significance of domestic architecture in the interpretation of American literature and culture. She arrived in America in 1849, set to research a book on American culture. She named her work *The Homes of the New World*, apparently believing that it was from the houses of Americans that their character could best be read. Likewise, Dickens dismisses the first substantial American hotel building, Boston's Tremont House, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Isiah Rogers' design had "more galleries, colonnades, piazzas, and passages than I can remember, or the reader would believe" (Dickens, 474). Even a passing glance at significant works of the time reveals the high degree of importance literary writers attached to the image. The poets Whittier and Tuckerman—while contemporaries, nonetheless as stylistically unrelated in their work as was imaginable at the time—found common ground in buildings. Both sentimentalize the home by mythologizing the house. The

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voice of Whittier's "Snow Bound" speaks from inside a sentimentalized American house:

> Shut in from all the world without,
> We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
> Content to let the north-wind roar
> In baffled rage at pane and door,
> While the red logs before us beat
> the frost-line back with tropic heat;
> And ever, when a louder blast
> Shook bean and rafter as it passed,
> The merrier up its roaring draught
> The great throat of the chimney laughed.
> The house-dog on his was outspread
> Laid to the fire his drowsy head,
> The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
> A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;
> And, for the winter fireside meet,
> Between the andirons' straddling feet,
> The mug of cider simmered in a row,
> And, close at hand, the basket stood
> With nuts from brown October's wood.
> (*American Poetry, Vol. 1*, 184).

Sentimentalization of the imagery at least partially accounts for everything from the popularity of "Home Sweet Home" to the "home feeling" movement—with its attendant culture of domesticity—to Melville's' satirizing the very scene in Whittier's poem in "I and My Chimney." (2) Even Tuckerman, a poet who was usually careful to avoid the pitfalls of indulgence in the pathetic fallacy, was not immune to the sentimentalizing influence in his

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"Sonnet XVI," from *Sonnets: Second Series*. Here he indulges in typical fashion in popular culture's sentimental imagination of the house. Building upon the available language of Romanticism, Tuckerman's nostalgically remembered house—the scene of a now long-gone home feeling, suffused with the nostalgia of the past remembered at the moment of recovery—is abandoned and falling to pieces. Tuckerman is not unusual in his procedure. Much of the Romantic inheritance has been through Wordsworth. As Yeats' well-known echoes of "Tintern Abbey" in "The Tower" are relatively commonplace; so, too, are Ruskin's essential notions of the Imagination, its Associative, Penetrative, and Contemplative aspects as outlined in *Modern Painters, Volume I.* Its "piercing, pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into the very rock heart," (Ruskin, 49) are adapted from, among other sources, the "other aspect more sublime" of "Tintern Abbey":

> that blessed mood,
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power

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> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things. (Wordsworth, 85, ll. 38-49).

Likewise, Tuckerman will recollect this of Wordsworth in another poem, "The Ruined Cottage." Tuckerman will pick up the declining house of Robert and Margaret as a transmuted reflection of his own grief over the loss of his wife. The image of the "reft house" is taken one step further toward annihilation. No Armytage comes by to keep watch over the half-remembered; Wordsworth's cottage is turned into Tuckerman's "red house." The falling shards of glass are heard by no one, and no Transcendental meditation on nature's gifts relieves the suffering:

> Under the mountain, as when first I knew
> Its low dark roof, and chimney creeper-twined,
> The red house stands; and yet my footsteps find
> Vague in these walks, waste balm and feverfew.
> But they are gone: no soft-eyed sisters trip
> Across the porch or lintels; where, behind,
> The mother sat,—sat knitting with pursed lip.
> The house stands vacant as a broken heart;
> The wild rain enters; and the sunset wind
> Sighs in the chambers of their loveliness,
> Or shakes the pane; and in the silent noons,
> The glass falls from the window, part by part,
> And ringeth faintly in the grassy stones. (*American Poetry, Vol. 2*, 189).

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Because it is "vacant as a broken heart," and crumbling over time, the mythologized house can even affect its sister myth: Nature. Something very like a correspondent breeze sighs in despair at the destruction of the image of this cabin in the woods. The defining quality of this trope of the house in Romanticism (and into Modernism) is neatly put by M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism*, during a discussion of Proust's stylistic tendencies, which he lumps together as "Proust's Gothic Church." In many places in his writings, Abrams finds much of Wordsworth in Proust, and here is no exception: "One of Proust's favorite analogues for his work, like that of Wordsworth for *The Recluse* was architectural—the intricate structure and disposition of stresses of 'une eglise,' a 'grande Cathedrale'" (Abrams, 82).

Interest in the meaning of homes by American authors, as well as the book-buying public, drove many of the arbiters of American literary heritage—authors, editors, and so forth—to repulsion at what they perceived to be crass tourism. While they, too, were unable to escape from using the received metaphors of author and architecture, they nonetheless attempted to do so in an original manner and for entirely different ends. Appropriation of such metaphors into a kind of tourism ad copy was not what these people had in mind for that which they assumed to be houses almost mythologized to the level of shrines. These literary arbiters might not have agreed with the manner

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or consequences of general public's adoration of homes of authors, or might have scoffed at contemporary notions of domestic science, but they absolutely walked into the metaphoric field with identical assumptions about the importance of the place the house held in American culture—historical, literary, or otherwise. A typical example of this attitude on the part of an editor respected by many as an authority on literary matters would be Margaret Fuller. Fuller's opinions about Anglo-America's most recognized writer of the time—Scott—is to the point. By mid-century, Scott's home had become something like an international shrine, a necessary stop along the Grand Tour for expatriate Americans. While Scott's Clarty Hole Farm, bought in 1811 and reclaimed as the estate "Abottsford" in 1824, is obviously not located on American soil, the mythical version of the house constituted an integral portion of the American imagination of writers' homes. By that time, Abbotsford had become the quintessential literary house. The lithograph "Scott and His Literary Friends at Abbotsford" was hung in a place of honor on the walls of many American homes, including that of Washington Irving (Anderson, 144). Indeed, Abbotsford became an extraordinarily well-known component of Scott's work and central to many contemporary critical interpretations of his work. Just as Ruskin would claim for Scott the highest praise as the representative mind of the age (Ruskin, 110), so Abbotsford was

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seen as a kind of representative house of the age. In *Modern Painters* Ruskin finds great significance in Abbotsford's famous transformation from the nearly meaningless Clarty Hole Farm to the writer's castle by way of carrying away stones from Melrose Abbey. He relates the entire construction process to the stylistic method of the writer and writing in general:

> He (Scott) had some confused love of Gothic architecture. Because it was dark, picturesque, old, and like nature; but could not tell the worst from the best, and built himself perhaps the most incongruous and ugly pile that gentlemanly modernism ever designed; marking, in the most curious and subtle way, that mingling of reverence with irreverence which is so striking in the age; he reverences Melrose, yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fireplace (Ruskin, 116).

The writing and the house are in one-to-one relation. In stark contrast to Ruskin's easy transitions was Fuller's reaction to Abbotsford. In an 1848 letter to the *Tribune*, she sourly recalled a visit to Scott's house, then a common attraction and assigned to her as a journeyman reporter. The *Tribune* knew well enough how popular a subject matter this was. Though specifically writing in the travelogue style, Fuller nonetheless complained that "This pilgrimage is so common that there is nothing left for me to say" (quoted in Douglas, 414). This was not the uncritical admiration of the public. Perhaps it

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was Fuller's uniquely American manifestation of feelings of cultural inadequacy; or maybe she was just being her Boston Brahmin self, unable to hide her sense of revulsion at the unwashed masses tramping across the carpet. Most likely, Fuller's tone recalls her own personal frustration (this was not to be the best of times for her at the *Tribune*) as well as a professional one: she, like her peers (including Ruskin), ascribed great importance to the literary house. But unlike Ruskin, the superfluity of comment upon Scott's home was taken to heart and viewed as indicative of the overvaluation of Scott's writing. Certainly, too, there is a somewhat hidden agenda: a deliberate distancing in her writing, which she considered to be advanced and modern, from her earliest precursor on this subject of touring authors' houses in general and Abbotsford in particular, Washington Irving.

In 1835 Irving published "Abbotsford," a descriptive reminiscence of Irving's visit with Scott in 1817, in *The Crayon Miscellany*. "Abbotsford" is generally interpreted as a fond tribute to the man from whom Irving felt he had learned so much, and to whom he offered public thanks in the 1848 edition of *The Sketch Book*. In what amounts to an early example of what would become in the hands of certain American writers (e.g., James and Wharton or later Pound and Eliot) a Eurocentric trans-Atlanticism, Irving—through the voice of the narrator—finds his best material for inspiration in Britain, not the United

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States. After pages and pages of descriptive admiration of the picturesque qualities in impressive architectural ruins such as Melrose Abbey—from which Abbotsford was reconstituted like "rare picking in it, as in a Silton cheese," (Irving, *The Crayon Miscellany*, 211), Irving's narrator comes to value European locale over American wilderness. He tells us that "Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of time gone by" (*The Sketch Book*, 147). Here again is the theme of America as yet only promise, existing in a continuing, inchoate present; trying in architectural terms to change its status as an unsuitable country for literary achievement.

William Owen's analysis of "Abbotsford" on this point suggests a certain level of cynical careerism on the part of Irving, rather than any true feelings of the inadequacy of American materials:

> After recognizing that he can find pleasure in the images and setting in Scott's fiction while rejecting their sources in the actual landscape, ironically because his own native associations have produced a preference for American landscape, Irving breaks away from associationism...European ruins may be

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> preferred because the full store of associations they already possess will serve as subject matter rather than because the ruins evoke strong personal feeling in Irving (Owen, 74-75).

In contrast to this remains the possibility that Irving was responding genuinely to the dearth of material on hand at this time. A writer whose essential mode is gentle recollection of established folklore could have little to inspire him at home. Years would pass before the patina of age would spread over the Hudson Valley, providing a usable past and enabling Irving to move beyond the fantastic past of *Knickerbocker's History of New York*. Here at least was one American writer who found not only nothing to disapprove of, but a portion of his literary career, from a tour of a famous writer's home. That Irving would chose to work for so long in England before returning to his native land as a triumphant literary figure is at least partly attributable to the associative power he found in the ruins and landscape around Abbotsford. This emphasizes not only of the power such forms of tourism held, but explains something of the vehemence of Fuller's disapproval. This was no small subject matter. Writers' careers were held in the balance. Irving's own multiple points of view on this matter of the ability of native landscape and architecture to inspire—never is there any doubt about whether landscape and architecture do inspire, the only question is of the adequacy of America's

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landscape and architecture—attest to this fact. In the same work wherein Irving sees only "promise" in the landscape, he is capable of writing "no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery" (Owen, 73). Architecture is empowered beyond landscape here. The natural scenery is enough; it is the absence of ruins, of historical buildings, which fails to inspire.

Hawthorne, like Fuller, finds cause for complaint in the author's home as tourist trap. In his *English Notebooks* he offers up a similar point of view on the matter by confessing that he does "abhor" the obsequiousness inherent in touring these houses (*Centenary*, 8: 540-541). Hawthorne sensed some danger in associating architectural structures with works of fiction. His warning in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* against trying to find an actual prototype for the Pyncheon estate betrays his recognition of the potent and widespread tendency of readers to do just that:

> The reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the events of this narrative. If permitted by the historical connection (which though slight, was essential to his plan), the Author would very willingly have avoided anything of this nature. Not to speak of other objections, it exposes the Romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing his fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 3-4).

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His anxiety betrays the facts of the case. Hawthorne's insistence that he is "building a house, of materials long in use for constructing castles in the air" (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 4) not only explicitly delineates his writing project as a building project, metaphorically casting the book as a house and writing as architecture, but displays his knee-jerk defensive reaction against any sloppy association of the two in terms not his own. He knows this to be a mistake powerful enough to collapse his carefully wrought Romance. This is Hawthorne's typical literary architecture functioning at the level of rhetoric—which will be discussed in detail in the chapter devoted to Hawthorne's fiction. In *The American Scene*, Henry James tells the story of his visit to the tourist site of the historical, so-called Pyncheon estate. His sarcastic tone is meant, as much as anything else, as a respectful nod of agreement to Hawthorne's intention. Walter Benn Michaels, in "Romance and Real Estate," from *The American Renaissance Reconsidered* gives a good account of James' visit:

> Visiting Salem in 1904, James asked to be shown the 'House of the Seven Gables' and was led by his guide to an 'object' so 'shapeless,' so 'weak' and 'vague,' that at first sight he could only murmur 'dear, dear, are you very sure?' In an instant, however, James and the guide 'a dear little harsh, intelligent, sympathetic American boy' had together 'thrown off' their sense that the house 'wouldn't do at all' by reminding themselves that

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> there was, in general, no necessary 'relation between the accomplished thing for ...art' and 'those other quite equivocal things' that may have suggested it, and by noting in particular how Hawthorne's 'admirable' novel had so 'vividly forgotten its origin or reference' (Michaels, 156).

These points of convergence between architecture and literature are like nodes of Cartesian coordinates at which the question of "what constitutes an American architecture" crosses the question of "what constitutes an American literature." Such a node could manifest itself in as the very literary and rhetorically motivated architectural theories discussed above. Or literary essays that touch upon on architectural imagery, like those of Emerson or W. A. Alcott, might constitute another form of coordination. One need only take the briefest look at the works of Andrew Jackson Downing, who summed up the prevailing zeitgeist in landscape architecture (1840) as follows: "As in literary composition, no beauty of language can ever compensate for poverty of sense, so in architectural composition, no beauty of style can every compensate for want of expression of purpose"(Downing, 98). To Downing, any composition, whether literary or architectural, can be equivalent responses to the same problem. This coordination of the two arts was an essential element to his work, accounting for the powerful responses to his work by the public.

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Sentimental idealization—and the negative response to such idealization—marks the beginning of a process that would end in the institutionalization of the meaningful house in America. This institutionalization is still very much a part of the American landscape today. Many towns in America have their house with a 200-year pedigree, a place of special civic pride once occupied by a famous author or figure in history. "George Washington slept here" is only the contemporary joke that speaks to the omnipresence of the myths. As Handlin has stated in a different context:

> When Americans (of the nineteenth century) spoke of the home, they referred above all to a social institution. At the same time they had in mind an idea about a proper physical setting, because they realized that domestic architecture was an important agent in the development of the individual and, by extension, the national character. Americans arrived at this appreciation of the significance of houses only gradually and by different routes. Nevertheless, by the time of the Civil War houses had become laden with meanings that they did not previously possess. Once they did, their design demanded a new degree of scrutiny and care (Handlin, 4).

Authors were only expressing in literary terms what the culture at large generally believed: that a national literature could be derived out of the same materials as a national architecture, every bit as much as that national literature

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could be derived—as is far more frequently cited by literary and cultural critics—out of the geography of the national landscape.

In her introduction to *Dwelling in the Text: Houses in American Fiction*, Marilyn Chandler neatly summarizes the correspondence between the two arts of architecture and literature:

> The history of architectural ideas in the United States closely parallels the history of literary theory or of the doctrines that define the conventions and appropriate uses of fiction and poetry. The parallel histories of these closely related enterprises can be roughly characterized as having moved from emulation of European models to the development of indigenous forms, which in revitalizing, recasting, or rejecting those models made something new of them....Both architecture and literature are simultaneously reflective and formative social forces. In both, implicit issues of gender and class lie behind the politics of style (Chandler, 6).

Chandler continues to discuss the social and political environment specifically in terms of domestic images of houses as manifestations of psychological and spatial metaphors. (3) Yet in the correspondence of literature and architecture there is much more than mere metaphoric sliding between landscape and literature troped as space. So pervasive is house imagery and attendant issues of domestic culture in contemporary works, so extensive breeds the interplay between architectural images, theory, and technical language, and literature

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that the correspondence is present at the level of figuration itself. In later examinations of the works of specific authors it will be seen that the correspondence between architecture and literature is not limited to a correspondence at the level of representative space, but expands to include a coordination mediated by style. That which makes the style of certain American authors peculiar to him or herself—the author's signature style—can be a reflection of that author's interaction with or interpretation of architecture either in theory or as a material science. Likewise, the personal experiences of these authors with various homes counts toward the construction of their style. More than a social, political, or psychological relation, the correspondence between architecture and literature can reduce for certain authors even to a material correspondence. This is owing to the fact that the rhetoric of architecture became the rhetoric of literature in America under the pressure of cultural formation at work in the early Republic. Historical imperative carried forth from those formative years. Whether by deliberate mythologizing on the part of established literary figures and self-appointed cultural watch dogs or through the investment and transformation of symbolic architecture in actual literary works, the national fixation with the meaning of architecture was everywhere at work. Architecture had planted its

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root deep into the literature of antebellum America. The conceits of one become the conceits of the other; they interplay in the words of authors.

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Chapter Notes, Chapter 3

(1) Figures of these *eyries* continually appear in the writings of the era. Melville, in the third book of *Clarel* and his journal entries during the original trip to Palestine frequently hovers around this image of the eagle's nest as potent image of writer's home. The "little hermitages in rock—" that are the dwellings of philosopher-monks at Mar Seba comprise a "Monastery" that is "a congregation of *stone eyries*" (quoted in Marovitz, 93).
(2) More than this is satirized. Melville was likely to have known the popular *Scenes at Home: Or the Adventures of a Fire Screen* by Anne Bache, a typical example of the "fireside book" so heavily imbued with moralistic architectural advice. Here, the story is narrated by various parts the fireplace itself (the chimney, the screen, etc.) each bringing a unique slant on domestic events. For a complete account of the domestic movement as evidenced in these sorts of books, see Handlin, *The American Home*, "The Homes of the New World" pp. 16ff. Handlin's central theme is that such books as *Home* by Catherine Sedgewick or *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, along with popular magazines such as *Mother's Magazine and Family Circle* or the *Happy Home and Parlor Companion* comprise a variation on the Victorian domesticity movement unique to America, with their own "principles of beauty and morality" (Handlin, 16). This species of domesticity is elaborated upon using the model of Horace Bushnell's cultural theories of "the Age of Homespun" versus the "Day of Roads," Bushnell's own contribution to contemporary utopianism.
(3) Avoiding any formalist or material analysis of architecture's correspondence to literature, so neatly outlined in the quote above, Chandler's project is altogether a different one. She places herself squarely in the camp of both critics who investigate psychological metaphors of space, as practiced, for example, by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* and Judith Fryer *Felicitous Space* (whose procedures Chandler applies to half a dozen major works of the 1850s to the present) and critics more interested in the social and historical implications of domesticity during the nineteenth century, as first practiced by Ann Douglass in *The Feminization of American Culture*. Her book elucidates canonical nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary works by way of house imagery alone.

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Part II

Aspects of the Correspondence

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Chapter 4 - The Contemporary Type: *Homes of American Authors*

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Houses owned by American authors were potent signs of national character, and the association of authors with their homes eventually developed into a national characteristic. Even today, these homes are preserved like religious relics. A tourist in modern-day Concord can be given a tour of the Emerson House, Alcott's Orchard House, the Wayside, the School of Philosophy, the Thoreau-Alcott House, the Old Manse, and a recreation of Thoreau's Walden cabin (the original long-ago deteriorated in the backyard of a local framer who was using it as tool shed) (Harting, 97). In the nineteenth century, nowhere was this peculiar mixture of architecture and literary biography more evident than in the once immensely popular, but now almost entirely forgotten book, *Homes of American Authors*.

Homes of American Authors was one of the first in a long heritage of tour guides to the houses of famous authors. So popular was this book, printed in 1853 by G. P. Putnam, that it went through multiple editions, and eventually spawned a companion volume *Homes of American Statesmen*. The book consists of rhetorically overblown descriptions of the homes of a variety of popular American authors. The essays were written anonymously (although scholars now presume that the majority of articles were written by George William Curtis, the project's editor) and were presented in no particular or

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hierarchical order. Marketing fell along the lines of typical gift books of the period.

Homes of American Authors exhibits a politically Whig and geographically Northeast bias (reflecting the taste of its publisher, Putnam). The authors discussed are, in this context, a representative group: Irving, Bryant, Cooper, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Emerson, which reads like a contributors list to "The Atlantic Monthly," or the original nominating list of what would formally become in two-years time "The Saturday Club." By mid-century, housing and authors have become inextricably linked: houses signify authors. Authors, in addition, are the pride of America, and the book's not-so-hidden project is the presentation of houses in which no author would be ashamed to live:

> Although there are no Abbotsfords, which have been reared from the earnings of the pen, among our authors' homes, yet we feel a degree of pride in showing our countrymen how comfortably housed many of their favorite authors are, in spite of the imputed neglect with which native talent has been treated (*Homes*, 23).

Once again Scott's Abbotsford is foregrounded; it is instantly understood, without meriting any explanation, as a representative author's home. Its sheer fame, coupled with its newfangled Gothic grandeur, was an irresistible

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temptation to those interested in the homes of authors as cultural metaphor. "Perhaps American authors are not wealthy enough to live in bran-new [sic] castles," the book states with achieved immodesty. *Homes* may sneer, but one of its unspoken goals is to refute just this point. "If our authors are as unread and unlearned as the Europeans say, it seems to say at every turn, how is it that they live so well, in homes so fine?" (*Homes*, 25). So an actual agenda is revealed here beyond any cultural competition, political ax-grinding, or Romantic theorizing. Latent within *Homes of American Authors* is the presentation of American literary art as a form of real estate. The above quote on Abbotsford is nothing less than a rationalization of American claims to literary success cast in the decidedly capitalist terms of the acquisition of property and home. The book hammers this particular point again and again, constantly zeroing-in on the wealthy displays and success reflected in the furnishings, architecture, and overall domestic style of the authors whose homes it portrays. Together, this betrays a fundamental idiosyncrasy of literary architecture as practiced in America. To form an original American style in response to European models brings about myriad types, from the "American Adam" to Rousseau's native American. But to do so through a literary architecture is to present the author as a kind of real-estate agent whose rhetorical devices are like commodities of the contemporary, material

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facts of property. As there was the omnipresence of architectural imagery in the literature of the period based upon actual houses, so there was the national fascination with the creation of a native architecture every bit as important as the creation of a national literature. The preoccupation with houses and homes on this ground is affirmed in the personal letters and journals of authors of the time. If such authors' usages are not directly connected to financial circumstance (as will be seen to be the case in Melville) they are material in their connotations (as will be seen in the case of Hawthorne). Thoreau and Emerson conceived their moral designs with decidedly material architectural imagery. Cooper positioned himself in American literary history on a question of property rights. Architectural imagery in American literature is shot through with monetary valuation. *Homes of American Authors* illustrates this fact again and again.

Authors' homes are directly related to their styles of their literary works in the book. *Homes* makes no bones about asserting that a particular author, known, for example, for his "Gothic" style of writing, lives in a "Gothic" style house. This is precisely the association Longfellow makes in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in the *North American Review*, that "some writers of the present day have introduced a kind of Gothic architecture into their style" (*North American Review, Vol. 45*, July, 1837, 59-73). The fact

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that Longfellow's comment was made in 1837, but *Homes* came out over 15 years later, is yet another example of just how pervasive and resistant such deliberate confusion of the architectural image with the literary image was in antebellum America. Elsewhere, the book asserts that an author known for his Byronic, reclusive characterizations, will naturally choose to live in a house built in a style of architecture reflective of this temperament (*Homes*, 34). Further, the actual careers of various authors are read in their houses, like architectural fortune-telling. The houses are signs of the author's biography, structures upon which can be read everything one needs to interpret a writer's style. The case is made that the American writer and the American house are intimately linked, and often can be said to be one.

This conflux is clearly seen in the chapters devoted to Irving and Bryant. Initial descriptions of Irving's Sunnyside present a bridging of English and American cultures in the style—both in the exterior architecture and in the interior decoration—of the house. Eventually, this amounts to an assertion that the architecture of the house is the same as the style of the writer. Irving was known for the Dutch settings and English sophistication of his writing. His European credentials were actually a source of national pride as well as tantamount to a defining characteristic of his style. *Homes* reiterates this correspondence when it states flat out: "the house itself is a graceful

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combination of the English cottage and the Dutch farmhouse" (*Homes*, 50). It might as well be talking about Irving's short stories. In fact, the book immediately does so:

> In this delightful homestead are tokens of all that is most characteristic of its owner....the simplicity and rustic grace of the abode indicate an unperverted taste,—its secluded position a love of retirement; the cottage ornaments remind us of his unrivaled pictures of English country-life; the weathercock that used to veer about the Stadt-house of Amsterdam, is a symbol of the fatherland; while the one that adorned the grand dwellings in Albany before the revolution, is a significant memorial of the old Dutch colonists; and they are thus both associated with the fragrant memory of that famous and unique historian Diedrich Knickerbocker (*Homes*, 55).

The knowing wink of the final sentence does not in any way diminish the force of the metaphoric relation between the writings of Irving and his house. The linked metaphors reach on and on, until the house and the writing almost become one and the same. A line is followed without interruption from the author's writing style to architectural elements of the house and finally to embodiments of fictional characters. In this milieu of freely alternating terms, it becomes difficult at times to tell exactly what it is to which the book is referring: architecture or literature. Reading *Homes of American Authors* can be a dizzying experience in this regard. Immediately following the above

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quote, the essay directly slips to an extended excerpt from the "Knickerbocker Magazine" of March 1839. The article deals with "Geoffrey Crayon's" purchase of the "Van Tassel" estate "now called Sunnyside" (*Homes*, 53). Using the same metaphorical stew as above, the book treats character and author as interchangeable figures on the issue of houses. Crayon and Irving easily become the same homeowner. In the excerpt, the revitalization of the Crayon character states "I thank God I was born on the banks of the Hudson" (*Homes*, 59). This is a reiteration of the wording used earlier by the author when discussing Washington Irving himself: "...does Irving thank God he was born on the banks of the Hudson; for it possesses all the elements requisite to inspire the fancy and attach the heart" (*Homes*, 41). Earlier in the essay, an introductory section describes both the scenery of the Hudson as it actually exists, and Irving's characteristic substance and style (its English and American elements) as perfectly expressing this same scenery. This extreme example of the pathetic fallacy tethered out to the point of confusion is in no way apologized for. Rather, it is bestowed such potency that its strength is able to erase the War of 1812. Irving's affinity of style with the classic British essayists served not only as "invaluable in view of the crude mode of expression prevalent half a century ago among us, but also proved a bond in letters between our own country and England, by recalling the identity of

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language and domestic life, at a time when great spirit of feeling divided the two countries" (*Homes*, 43). Irving's combination of English and American aspects in his landscape descriptions are presented as having contributed to diplomacy in the post-war era. Domesticity is directly related to the house from which it emanates, as well as the landscape by which it is surrounded. The question becomes as confused as "Who is responsible for the diplomatic state of affairs, Washington Irving, or his house?"

While such wholehearted acceptance of the metaphorical confusion of author and houses is perhaps *Homes of American Authors*' most defining characteristic, the book was by no means unusual in its knowing confusion of author and house. A few years after the publication of Putnam's book and its sequel, T.A. Richards wrote on much the same subject in an article for *Harper's* 14 (1856) entitled "Sunnyside, the Home of Washington Irving." *Harper's* and Richards were merely exploiting what was a popularly recognized metonym. Adam Sweeting has summarized:

> Richards offered a vicarious glimpse into the domestic arrangements of successful writers and artists. He painted an Edenic picture of gentility in the midst of the Hudson Valley's natural splendor. We read, for example, of the "broad lawns and slopes of Placentia," the Hyde Park estate of the novelist James Kirke Paulding; and the "mysterious evening shadow" of Susan Warner's home on Constitution Island, just off West Point.

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> "Dearest to us of all," Richards added, "was Sunnyside." These elegant and vaguely Romantic properties seemed utterly appropriate for the literary elite of the region. Like Hawthorne's Old Manse, they were architectural spaces indelibly suited to their masters' talents and temperaments (Sweeting, 33).

So they seemed to a public eager to establish a literary elite. In describing Sunnyside, Richards makes overt any conjunction of author and house that might have been left to the imagination of the reader *Homes of American Authors*. "There is about the cottage, as about himself (Irving), an air of reserve....the sweet, sunny sentiment of his home is ever seen in his genial smile....its odd twists, and turns, and unexpected vagaries speak of the quaint and whimsical, yet refined and delicate humor of his character," the reader is told explicitly. (quoted in Sweeting, 35).

In the same manner equivalencies are drawn the "rural sights and sounds" of Bryant's poetry and the scenery about his actual house. The essay on Bryant begins with the observation that "if ever there were a poet of whom it is not necessary to ask whether he lives in town or country it is Mr. Bryant" (*Homes*, 66). Clearly this assumes a one-to-one correspondence between the scape of poetry and the landscaping of the author's back yard. The essay continues to express belief in the correspondence of material house and imagined space as "consistent":

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> All is consistent, therefore, when we find the poet's home a great, old-time mansion, so embosomed in the trees and vines that we can hardly catch satisfactory glimpses of the bay on which it lies, through the leafy windows, of which an overhanging roof prolongs the shade. No greener, quieter, or more purely simple retreat can be found; none with which the owner and his tastes and occupations are more in keeping (*Homes*, 65).

It is with this last phrase, the point of the owner's "taste and occupations," that the subject of the essay reaches its highest point of interplay between author and house. Once again there is a question of whether or not this is the denomination of the architecture of the poet's house or a description of his poetic style. But of course, in keeping with the central conceit of the essay (and the tendency of American readers), they are one and the same. When one enters the house, particularly the library (a naturally potent metaphor of the imagination abiding within the material architecture), one simultaneously enters into the style of Bryant's poetry. The reader is told that "of all the house this is the most attractive spot" (*Homes*, 72). It is attractive especially for one who reads books in homes and homes in books. Only the barest architectural description is afforded the room. The reader is told merely that it "occupies the northwest corner" of the house, which is a suspiciously bare description for what was just described as the most attractive room in the

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house. But then the description of its interior follows, which could just as easily describe not only the general style of Bryant's poetry, but its material, form, and influences:

> Here, by the great table covered with periodicals and literary novelties, with the soft, ceaseless music of the rustling leaves, and the singing of birds malign the silence sweeter, the summer visitor may fancy himself in the very woods, only with a deeper and more grateful shade; and "when wintry blasts are piping loud" and the whispering leaves have changed to whirling ones, a bright wood-fire lights the home scene, enhanced in comfort by the inhospitable sky without; and the domestic lamp calls about a smiling or musing circle, for whose conversation or silence the shelves around afford excellent material. The collection of books is not large, but widely various; Mr. Bryant's tastes and pursuits leading him through the entire range of literature, from the Fathers to Shelley, and from Courier to Jean Paul (*Homes*, 70).

It's all there, the influences, the forms, the habitual borrowing from others, in a word, the essence of Bryant's style, down to the specific details of his influence. Barely beneath the surface is the reference to the well-known symbols and descriptions of Bryant's "Snow Bound." Overall, the metaphor is simple: the library is the poem. By extension, the whole house becomes the poetry entire. The essayist wonders aloud whether or not the original builder of the house ("Friend Richard Kirk" called a "Quaker of the Quakers"—Curtis' prejudice reveals him to be the author of this essay) "knew that he was

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fashioning the house of a poet" (*Homes*, 83). The essayist seems wholly swallowed into his own metaphoric milieu, and comes to believe his own press.

This coincidence of architecture and literary oeuvre is just as obvious in the essay on James Fenimore Cooper. The essay begins with a biographical synopsis, and quickly moves to a description of Otsego Hall, the second structure William Cooper built in his Cooperstown and the one upon which Cooper based his descriptions of the fictional Templeton. In fact, the essayist's description of Otsego Hall mirrors very closely the descriptive style found in Cooper's *The Pioneers*. Curtis seems to confuse the novel and the biography: "Originally it (Otsego Hall) stood alone, with the lake before its doors, and the forest, which he has described so beautifully in *The Pioneers*, in full view on the right. But now the hamlet had grown to a village, and the village to a town, till the once almost solitary representative of civilization was surrounded by the all the signs of a thriving and industrious population" (*Homes*, 202).

Readers are told of the historical building, Otsego Hall, in the descriptive landscape style of the fiction. Further, beyond the confusion of the novel and the novelist lies a confusion of James Cooper, the son, and William Cooper, the father. Clearly it is William Cooper who deserves credit for the

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construction of the hamlet that grew into a town. But this is all part of the attempt to render Fenimore Cooper heroic as a writer as much as his father was believed to be heroic as a builder of towns, a quintessential pioneer and land speculator. Partly, too, this recalls the conception that one's childhood house had much to do with one's adult career, and that the more religious the home, the greater the "home feeling," the better chance one had to stake out success in the United States. This conception is summarized nicely in *The American Home* :

> The idea that famous people came from humble homes was most successfully exploited by William Makepeace Thayer. In 1853 in *Life at the Fireside*, Thayer used the term "incidental education" to describe the invisible but important influence of the home environment on children. In two books that he wrote in 1857—*The Poor Boy and Merchant Prince...The Life of Amos Lawrence* and *The Poor Girl and the True Woman...Life of Mary Lyon*—Thayer arrived at a form of biography that he later brought to perfection in *From Pioneer Home to White-House* (Abraham Lincoln), *From Farm House to White-House* (George Washington), and *From Log-Cabin to White-House* (James Garfield) (Handlin, 21).

The idea that famous people came from certain, limited varieties of houses (log cabins signified a particular type, just as pioneer mansions hewn out of the wilderness signified another) was an accepted notion in the 1850s. Cooper himself meant something of this when he closely coordinated father and

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architecture upon speaking of the inspiration for *The Pioneers* as coming from a rememberance of Otsego Hall: "Happening to recollect that the pediment of the entrance to the paternal door upheld the columns, instead of the columns upholding the pediment, I introduced that fact in the book as characteristic of frontier architecture, and this first gave me the idea of saying anything about the house of my father" (quoted in Taylor, 258). This anecdote reappears in the novel *The Pioneers* as follows:

> On a stone platform, of rather small proportions, considering the size of the building, Richard and Hiram had, conjointly, reared four little columns of wood, which in their turn supported the shingled roofs of the portico....As the steps lowered, the platform necessarily fell also, and the foundations actually left the superstructure suspended in the air, leaving an open space of a foot between the base of the pillars and the stones on which they had originally been placed. It was lucky for the whole fabric, that the carpenter, who did the manual part of the labour, had fastened the canopy of this Classic entrance so firmly to the side of the house, that, when the base deserted the superstructure in the manner we have described, and the pillars, for want of a foundation, were no longer of service to support the roof, the roof was able to uphold the pillars (*The Pioneers*, 60).

The clownish architect Richard Jones, who tried to remedy the problem of the over-conspicuous roof of Judge Temple's house by painting it parti-colored, rebuilds Cooper's actual structure in the novel. (1)

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Cooperstown was recognized as the original for Templeton in *The Pioneers* in its own day. Contemporary magazines like the *Port-Folio* or visiting travelers such as Charles A. Murray easily made the connection (Taylor, 413-415). Cooper's covering ambiguity on this point only reinforces the validity of connection. He tries to cover his tracks in *Notions of Americans*, but to no avail: "(the novel) is said to contain some pretty faithful sketches of certain habits, and even of some individuals who were among the earlier settlers of this very spot. I cannot pledge myself for the accuracy of this opinion, nor could any one be found here who appeared to possess sufficient information on the subject to confirm it" (Taylor, 414). Cooper has taken this deliberately evasive position on the matter before. "*The Pioneers*," he asserts in bald contradiction to his earlier statements on the matter, "contains a pretty faithful description of Cooperstown in its infancy" (Cooper, *Letters, Vol. 4*, 73). The coincidence of the two houses, Cooper's boyhood home and Judge Temple's mansion from *The Pioneers,* would have been obvious to Cooper's audience. This audience was predisposed to know about such things; presumably at least some portion of the audience of *Homes of American Authors* was also counted the audience of Cooper. In order to better mythologize the circumstances, Cooper's return home to Cooperstown after sundry career experiences is ascribed the greatest imaginable serendipity.

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Without the locale of Otsego Hall run in combination with his "quiet little house" in Mamaroneck, it is presumed that Cooper's literary career would never have been launched. The famous story of Cooper's writing of *Precaution* is preceded by the assertion that "Few men have been more favorably situated during this decisive period of life" (*Homes*, 186). The home was the author's muse. The situation of the house is an almost perfect example of the pastoral ideal of the nineteenth century: "the house was not so near the to the city as in these days of railroads and steamers, but near enough to make an excursion easy, and enable him to see his friends" (*Homes*, 186). Such a manifestation of the pastoral ideal—complete with bourgeois trimmings—was an extremely potent image for the Americans of the Victorian era. Leo Marx's analysis in *The Machine in the Garden*, in which the details of how literary pastoralism, of the kind found in Virgil's *Georgics* and *Bucolics* or Spenser's *The Shephearde's Calendar*, is manifest in Romantic American literature, is only the precursor of many analyses. In sum, the point Marx makes is a good one: the settings of American Romantic literature reflect the settings of Classical Pastoralism, but they are poised between the country and the city. In American Pastoralism, the two terms "country" and "city" have been replaced by the terms "past" and "future," with all their cultural and economic implications. Marx was generally talking about the image of

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the self, but the image of the house was just as potent an image to the contemporary mind, and this image was poised between two terms as well: between the ideals of the past—the so-called "age of homespun" and the ideals of the coming modern world. This house is the space of what was known as the "Home Religion." It was also the space in which presidents were raised and authors built their homes out of the wilderness. In confusing William Cooper's building history with the son's, and in confusing James Fenimore's fictional houses with his own, *Homes of American Authors* was merely presenting metaphors in the manner that its audience expected.

Later in the essay, a biographical synopsis and publication history of Cooper is followed by an analysis of *Gleanings in Europe*, wherein Cooper had "singular tact in choosing his houses," which implies an equation of architectural and design sense and literary merit (*Homes*, 199). Inasmuch as the article is a thinly disguised defense of Cooper as a relevant American author and deliberately glosses over his unpopularity at the time, this statement is a way of saying a man's character can be gleaned from the character of his house. The special pleading uses Cooper's houses as a defense. The author clearly thinks that such a metaphor—once again, the metaphor of the writer as his house and his house as an example of his character—will be both understood and possess great potency. It is Curtis' strongest argument to this

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point. In Paris, it seems, Cooper "occupied part of a handsome Hotel in the Rue St. Maur, keeping his carriage, and the service required by a genteel and modest establishment" (*Homes*, 201). This constitutes a defense to an American public willing to accept, if not actually searching for, gentlemanly literary characters to fill its pantheon of celebrities. Cooper's "style of living was an admirable illustration of his conception of the duties and position of an American gentleman" (*Homes*, 201). It seems Cooper is all right, after all. His choice of house and style of living vindicate the unpopularity of his reactionary politics in the Jacksonian era.

If one returns to the description of Otsego Hall, one can see how there, too, the special pleading of Cooper's case is wrapped up in descriptions of his house: "Still, early associations and its own natural beauty, bound him to the spot; and to a mind like his, which looked upon the grave without fear, there must have been a deep pleasure, though a melancholy one, in the thought that his would lie amid the scenes which had suggested some of his most beautiful creations" (*Homes*, 212). Cooper's literary works, and his boyhood home, are gathered unto the sacred soil of America. Finally, Cooper's infamous property-rights politicizing did more than grip (and ultimately undo) his personal finances. It changed his writing every bit as much as it ruined him financially. Real-estate wrangles and legal investigations drove him away

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from Romance and into political allegory. The plots of his novels became confused with his plots of land.

In the essay on Longfellow, the mystification of architecture—its power to inspire and stylistically entwine the author's work—is complete. The physical structure of Cragie House is credited with inspiring Longfellow's poetry. The house does so primarily through its expression of the spirit of previous inhabitants, in combination with the its particularly heavy suffusion in historical memory. Cragie House haunts itself. President Washington, of course, "slept there," using the downstairs a parlor as a study during bivouac in the Revolutionary war, thereby giving the house the stamp of approval for memorialization. To sum up the story, the owner of the house during the war (the original owner was Col. John Vassar, and the current owner was his son John) lost the house because he was a Tory during the occupation when the provincial government "purchased" the house before "the beginning of serious work with the mother country" (*Homes*, 355). After the battle of Bunker Hill, the house became Washington's headquarters: "The southwestern room upon the lower floor, at the right of the front door, and now occupied as study by Mr. Longfellow, was devoted to the same purpose by Washington" (*Homes*, 274). The reader is also told that the room behind the study on the lower floor, now Longfellow's library, was the room of the aides-

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de-camp. Also, the "southwest room, upon the lower floor, was Mrs. Washington's drawing-room" (*Homes*, 274). Presented with all this meaningful association, it becomes more and more apparent that the reader is given such microscopic detail because the house, with its myriad and potent historical associations, will function as talisman for inspiring Longfellow's work. The historical associations inhabiting the house will work upon the author's imagination. Here, the house does not so much reflect the authors work, as inspire it. Recognizing the historical characteristics of Longfellow's poetry, the essay notably foregrounds Cragie House's historical pedigree; Jared Sparks, Edward Everett, and most important of all, George Washington (and his wife and entourage) were occupants of the house. It is predicted that Longfellow will become the "Washington of poetry." In order to avoid anyone missing the point, Longfellow has been assigned the status as the "father of American poetry" (*Homes*, 258). The reader is specifically told that Longfellow bought the house in 1838, and that he set to work in the southwestern upper chamber—in which Washington had also slept—to writing *Hyperion* (1838-1839) and *Voices of the Night* (1840). The room gains a pedigree as a significant room—and by extension, the house gains pedigree as a significant house—owing to the mythic presence of George Washington. The essay begins as a long fantasy of Longfellow's first arrival at Cragie

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House and the Romantic and historical associations Longfellow conjured up during the building's renovation. Upon being shown Washington's room by Mrs. Cragie, the essayist muses upon the possible thought of his Longfellow character: "He felt whoever fills the places once occupied by the great and good, is himself held to greatness and goodness by a sympathy and necessity as sweet and mysterious" (*Homes*, 269). The "silence of the ancient mansion" is as "the still air of delightful studies" (*Homes*, 270). The house is Longfellow's muse as much as it is Curtis'. Now there are two authors (along with diverse historical personages) mixing into the conception of one house. Curtis notes that "many of the peculiarities and memories of the mansion appear in his verse" (*Homes*, 273). Further, "With the old house and its hostess, and its many known and unknown associations, there was no lack of material for thought and speculation" (*Homes*, 272). In this hallucinatory milieu of literary and architectural associations, the Longfellow character runs across a woman reading Voltaire who is then instantly transformed to Helen of Troy. The literary associations flow too fast, and the associative program of the essayist explodes out of the decorous bounds of its rhetoric to bare assertion of symbolic meaning.

Yet another aspect of the confusion of author and architecture is manifest in the book. The "traveler" who will "make a legend" here is a

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device meant to conjoin Longfellow, the reader, and the narrator into a single voice. This traveler uses the house as his muse:

> The traveler on the high road before the Cragie House, even if he knew nothing of its story, would be struck by its quaint dignity and respectability, and make a legend, if he could not find one already made. If, however, his lot had been cast in Cambridge, and he had been able to secure a room in the mansion, he would not rest until he had explored the traditions of its origin and occupancy, and had given his fancy moulds (sic) in which to run its images (*Homes*, 273).

Finally, as if all of this were not enough to convince the reader of the significance of the house in terms of Longfellow's work, the author adopts a gnomic tone, and states that "He who has written the Golden Legend knows, best of all, the reality and significance of that life in old Cragie House" (*Homes*, 274). The essay ends in an elaborate interplay of literary and historical facts using Longfellow's typical metaphoric pool. So the confluence of material house and the poetic conceits are taken to the extreme.

Homes of American Authors did not neglect to work its way on the best known literary shrine in its day, Emerson's Concord home. In *Nature*, Emerson said "my house stands in low land, with limited outlook, and on the skirts of the village" (Emerson, *Essays*, 266). Here and elsewhere, Emerson made much of his Concord home. Suffice it to say that the editors of *Homes of American Authors* were well aware of the significant position Emerson's

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house held in his public image. As was the case in the Longfellow section, the literary and historical pedigree of the house is sketched at the outset. Before being told—repeatedly—that the "Orphic Alcott" built the "summer house which adorns the lawn," the grounds and house are described in such terms as would be appropriate for a self-reliant Yankee Everyman. The essay even makes sly excuses for Emerson's less-than-sterling stay at Brook Farm. The house and grounds are described as what Brook Farm should have been but was not:

> The estate, upon passing into Mr. Emerson's hands, comprised the house, barn, and two acres of land. He has enlarged house and barn, and the two acres have grown to nine. Our author is no farmer, except as every country gentleman is, yet the kindly slope from the rear of the house to a little brook, which, passing to the calm Concord beyond, washes the edge of his land, yields him at least occasional beans and peas,—or some friend, agriculturally enthusiastic, and an original Brook Farmer, experiments with guano in the garden, and produces melons and other vines with a success that relieves Brook Farm from every slur of inadequate practical genius. Mr. Emerson has shaded his original bare land with trees, and counts near a hundred apple and pear trees in his orchard (*Homes*, 245).

The justice of Emerson's landscaping predetermines the justice of his prose. Carrying the mystification of author in terms of architecture to its furthest extension yet, we are told that a wooden church in Concord square is

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constructed in the "most Classical style of Yankee-Greek." The author declares that he does not envy Athens its Forum, because Emerson and Channing had spoken at the little wooden church.

Moving from Emerson's town to his house, Curtis states that the study "is not only the study of a scholar, it is the bower of a poet." He then feigns surprise over the fact that the house is a "plain white (one) by the wayside" and not a "porch of philosophy" or "academic grove" (which constitutes the popular imagination of the proper house for a writer possessing such "spoken eloquence") (*Homes*, 248). However, the more familiar reader will "not be surprised to find the 'walking eye-ball' simply sheltered, and the 'endless experimenter with no past at my back,' [dwelling in] houses without ornament" (*Homes*, 248). This seeming contradiction reflects the inherently contradictory style of Emerson's work itself. The author knew more than he spoke when he personified the house as the American scholarly archetype. Earlier, the town of Concord was sketched as a pastoral retreat against the technological advances of the nineteenth century. It was noted above how pervasive a device architectural imagery imbued with pastoral Romance was in this period. Much is made of Concord as a pastoral retreat. Concord still contains "many an Elizabethan-Gothic-Grecian rural retreat" (*Homes*, 255). The book hints that such structures are more naturalized, even chthonic, to the

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landscape of New England. They are directly contrasted to the buildings of the modern age: mills and factories. Then there's the pastoral slowness and "lethe" of the river—a well-known quality of the Concord River. The town, the river and most of all the buildings are all, like Emerson's work, best seen from an earlier age. Architectural and historical equivalencies come to bear on the text.

"In Mr. Emerson's house, I said it seemed always morning. But Hawthorne's black ash trees and scraggy apple-boughs shaded a land in which it seemed always afternoon" (*Homes*, 302). So begins the section devoted to description of Hawthorne's Old Manse. With its connotative reference to *Mosses from an Old Manse*, as well as the material reality of the fictional Pyncheon estate in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne's Manse is perhaps the likeliest candidate for confusion of house and work. Having saved the best for last (Hawthorne's essay comes toward the end of the book, Curtis and Putnam, were, after all, smart publishing men well attuned to the need for an attractive wrap-up), Curtis runs away with his metaphor as he does nowhere else. Here, in Hawthorne's home, as was the case for the homes of Longfellow and Emerson, is a literary pedigree: "Occasionally Emerson, or Ellery Channing, or Henry Thoreau—some Poet, as once Whittier, journeying to the Merrimac, or an old Brook Farmer who remembered Miles Coverdale,

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with Arcadian sympathy,—went down the avenue and disappeared in the house" (*Homes*, 296). Similarly, as was the case in the homes of Bryant and Cooper, an author's literary style is reflected in the architecture of the house. But this instance is the most substantial of all: the house's architecture contains within itself not only the style of Hawthorne, but all of the influences on that style. The Manse is described as "Arcadian," we are told that the "hanging gardens of Semiramis were not more fragrant than Hawthorne's hill-side during the June blossoming of the locusts," and it is assceiated with "Our Lady of Shallot" (*Homes*, 296-297) Most significant of all, it is associated with Gothicism, both literary and architectural:

> If it were afternoon,—one of the spectrally sunny afternoons which often bewitch that region,—he would be only the more convinced that there was something inexplicable in the whole matter of this man whom nobody knew, who was never once seen at town- meeting, and concerning whom it was whispered that he did not constantly attend church all day, although he occupied the reverend parsonage of the village, and had unmeasured acres of manuscript sermons in his attic, beside the nearly extinct portrait of an utterly extinct clergyman. Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis are nothing to this (*Homes*, 297).

Almost no distinction is made between Gothic architectural elements and Gothic literary elements. Curtis imagines a tour of the house, with himself entering as an unseen guest who "disappeared into the house" and "mounted

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to those mysterious stairs to that apocryphal study" (*Homes*, 300). The study is as apocryphal as the work. He explains that his methodology is attributable to the "peculiarity" of Hawthorne's "genius" being in such harmony with the architecture of the house. It is because of the building's "pensive silence (that) seems the trance of memory musing over the young and lovely life that illuminated its lost years" (*Homes*, 303)

In his own work, Hawthorne had prepared the ground for this personification of the home, and this empowers Curtis' language to intimately associate the author with the Old Manse. Hammering the point home, Curtis ascribes the power of composition almost solely to the building, and not to the writer "Already with the *Blithedale Romance*," which is dated from Concord, a new interest begins to cluster around 'the Wayside'" (*Homes*, 308). The house begins to assert itself in the writer's work. Hawthorne and the Wayside conflate as did Emerson and his house, Longfellow and Cragie House, and Cooper and Otsego Hall. Such correspondences had become the accepted norm by mid-century, and are made without comment or explanation.

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Chapter Notes, Chapter 4

(1) Michael Clark, in what is otherwise an well reasoned investigation of the coincidence of the architectural imagery of the novel and buildings in Otsego county, "Caves, Houses, and Temples in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers,* " misses the joke here. He offers various solemn interpretations of the passage, including one that proposes how Cooper "emphasize(s) the history of ideas" that "we can see in this extended description, perhaps, the conflict of larger forces: the rational Neoclassicism (represented by the house) at odds with the irresistible romantic force, the landscape (particular the frost)." Is Clark proposing a reference to "Frost at Midnight" here? I take this passage more simply: Cooper is just trying to sketch a funny character and illustrate how far toward the ridiculous attempts to bring civilization to the wilderness could go.

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Chapter 5 - Biography: Hawthorne and His Houses

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That easy passage between states of being and light that Hawthorne proposed as an essential quality of Romance style in the introduction *The Scarlet Letter* applies as well to the manner in which he conjoins material and imagined houses in his fictions. Material houses can be those in which he lived or with which he had some personal connection, or they can be re-imaginations of possible buildings. In Hawthorne's various fictions, as well as in his journals and letters, the interplay between material and imagined houses finds expression in the details of the design of interiors, both architectural and psychological, and the style of exterior architecture, both symbolic and actual. This intertwining of actual and fictional houses is everywhere evident. There is a proposal in *The American Notebooks*—dated just after his moving to West Newton—of writing a story about building a house and setting it over an opening to hell:

> To contrive a story of a man building a house, and locating it over the pit of Acheron. The swarm of hell shall breathe up from the furnace that warms it, and over which Satan himself shall preside. Devils and damned soul shall be continually rising through the registers. Possibly an angel may now and then peep through the ventilators (*Centenary* 8: 313).

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This ultimately unwritten story's central plot device will be developed into a hyperbolic loss of a central hearth symbolically bringing moral deterioration down upon the characters. (1) Something very like this had appeared earlier in the story "Fire-Worship," in which the "sacred trust of the house-hold fire has been transmitted in unbroken succession from the earliest age" (Hawthorne, *Short Stories*, 338). It would later transmute to certain aspects of "Ethan Brand" and "Earth's Holocaust." One need look no further than Clifford's diatribe on the modern house—and infer Hawthorne's voice in the words of his character—in "The Flight of the Two Owls" section of *The House of Seven Gables* to grasp the extent and degree of intellectual consideration the image merited for Hawthorne. Clifford begins his disquisition with a crazy generalization: "In the early epochs of our race, men dwelt in temporary huts, or bowers of branches, as easily constructed as bird's nests." He asserts that: "This life possessed a charm, which, ever since man quitted it, has vanished from existence. And it typified something better than itself." He wraps it up in a series of rhetorical questions over the status of humanity and houses such as: "Why should he make himself a prisoner for life in brick, and stone, and old worm-eaten timber, when he may just as easily dwell, in one

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sense, nowhere—in a better sense, wherever the fit and beautiful shall offer him a home?" (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 260). Mere architectural imagery entirely dissolves into speculative philosophy. Perhaps this is meant as a parody of Thoreau's philosophy—to which Hawthorne had been recently exposed. Clifford certainly reaches conclusions similar to Thoreau's in *Walden*, however different the source and circumstance. Nevertheless, here the material house (the actual Ingersoll estate) inspires Clifford's fantasy on the symbolic and social meaning of architecture as typified by the Pyncheon estate, the house he holds in his "mind's eye":

> It is my firm belief and hope, that these terms of roof and hearth-stone, which have so long been held to embody something sacred, are soon to pass out of men's daily use, and be forgotten. Just imagine, for a moment, how much of human evil will crumble away, with this one change! What we call real estate—the solid ground to build a house on—is the broad foundation on which nearly all the guilt of the world rests (Hawthorne, *House of Seven*, 263).

The Ingersoll house on Turner street has often been proposed as the model for the *House of the Seven Gables* (2). Regardless of this house's status as the eponymous original for the book (and it will forever remain an open question, inasmuch as Hawthorne never

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explicitly defined the house as the original), it is almost certainly the source setting for Hawthorne's children's collection *The Grandfather's Chair* (Wiley & Putnam, December 1840) as well as its sequels *Famous Old People* (January 1841) and *Liberty Tree* (March 1841). In *The House of the Seven Gables*, other material buildings in Salem are fictionalized. First among these is Uncle Venner's "farm," based upon the Salem Almshouse designed and built to the specifications of Charles Bulfinch. This building and the Salem railway station, which is also foregrounded in the novel, were famous structures of their day, and functioned as something like tourist attractions. (3) This tour-guide aspect is infrequently noted in Hawthorne's fiction—with the exception of *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne had hit upon the marketing concept of novel as tour-guide much earlier than is usually supposed. Hawthorne is possessed by actual buildings when composing his novels; he is, in this, one of the foremost literary architect of his period.

Architectural imagery appears in Hawthorne's fictions in at least as great a proportion as it does in the work of almost any other American novelist of the time. The omnipresence of this imagery moves far beyond *The House of the Seven Gables*, seemingly the only source of the image for the vast majority of literary criticism. Even a

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cursory glance at the short stories of the *Twice-Told Tales* alone reveals that this is a pervasive image (as well as revealing its typical uses) in Hawthorne's work. "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure" is the work in which the material of *The House of the Seven Gables* is worked out in detail; this is also true of "The White Old Maid" and "The Three-Fold Destiny." When taken together, this group of stories probably deals more extensively and in greater detail with the imagination of a cursed mansion than the entire novel. Along these same lines, "Howe's Masquerade," "Edward Randolph's Portrait," and "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," together comprise the "Legends of the Province House" series I, II, and III, respectively. Architectural structures as symbolic reflections of individual character are minutely presented in this series; as the title suggests, it is the binding motif. In "Wakefield" the husband and wife are ensconced in and separated by the two symbolically turned houses. Readers are informed in "Sunday at Home" that "By dwelling near a church, a person soon contracts an attachment for the edifice. We naturally personify it, and conceive its massy walls, and its dim emptiness, to be instinct with a calm, and meditative, and somewhat melancholy spirit" (Hawthorne, *Short Stories*, 98). For "The Ambitious Guest," it is the destruction of the

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house, not the death of the characters, that carries the greatest weight of emotional pathos. "Snow-Flakes" is an impressionistic fantasy of observing buildings from the sky—and thereby coming face to face with the sublime. Contrast between the "ancestral mansion" and domestically blissful "summer-house" defines the drama in "The Lily's Quest." The mansions, architectures, houses, and households of these stories come to be, by sheer weight of authority, a central leitmotif of the collection. House imagery binds the *Twice-Told Tales* together. The reasons for the extent are myriad, not the least of which are certain singularities of Hawthorne's biography. Hawthorne moved from house to house and town to town a great many times in his life, and his inability to find a satisfying home in his earliest years is reflected in unsettledness that finds expression in his characteristic fictional figuration of the house. As one example of his personal struggle to find a suitable home, the image of the house is determinedly affected by troubles traceable to events in his journals and letters, which throughout his career are the workspaces upon which he sketches the material of his fictions. Hawthorne himself was not at all happy with his peripatetic existence. On July 17, 1853, he disembarked from the *Niagara* at Liverpool. After brief stints at the Waterloo Hotel and Mrs.

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Blodgett's boardinghouse, the family finally settled into what would be their regular apartments at Rock Park. By September 2, Hawthorne had begun to openly lament his situation in his notebooks (he seems to find solace in the dreary weather that corresponds to his depressed interior state):

> We got into our new house in Rock Park yesterday. It is quite a good house, with three apartments, besides kitchen and pantry on the lower floor; and three stories high with four good chambers in each story....It was a dismal, rainy day, yesterday; and we had a coal fire in the sitting-room; beside which I sat, last evening, as twilight came on, and thought rather sadly how many times we have changed our home, since we were married (quoted in Mellow, 430).

Parallel anxiety finds voice in his fictions, where the typological ground of the image of the house will become one place at which the discrepancy between desired versus achieved is located, a discrepancy that is an essential component to Hawthorne's fiction. No wonder Hawthorne took time to pay a visit later in that depressed year in Liverpool to the home of the English poet Coventry Patmore. Patmore's "An Angel in the House" was one of Hawthorne's favorite poems, which he considered to be "a poem for happy people to read

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together" (Mellow, 449). In Patmore's popular and somewhat sentimental style, Hawthorne must have felt that he had found an accessibility and ease of expression (as well as a celebrity) for which he personally longed. Patmore's angel in the house might very well be the Victorian archetype of this prototype of Phoebe Pyncheon—and clearly she functions in this sentimental role without irony—but this same figure could also be the troubling demon that would keep Hawthorne from finding a satisfying home in life, and lead him instead to imagine troubled and unstable houses in his fictions. Melville directly borrows Hawthorne's own typology in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in the August 17 and 24, 1850 edition of *The Literary World.* That Hawthorne made much of house imagery was not lost upon his contemporaries, and Melville makes the connection between material and imagined houses right up front, beginning the essay with this image: "A papered chamber in a fine old farmhouse—a mile from any other dwelling, and dipped to the eaves in foliage—surrounded by mountains, old woods, and Indian pond,—this surely is the place to write of Hawthorne" (Melville, *Writings, Vol. 3,* 22). The same powerful ascription to house imagery that Hawthorne evinced in his fictions, Melville gives in his review; what better way would there be to

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illustrate, however subtly, an innate understanding of Hawthorne's fictional milieu than to borrow from the style? Clearly, the interplay of house, writer, and fictional product seen so many times in contemporary writings, Hawthorne's included, was not lost on either Melville or Longfellow.

For Hawthorne, the counterpoint between material and imagined spaces is not limited to exact houses lived in at the time of compositions. Yet this can be true, as it is in the case of the Old Manse. The "Introduction" to *Mosses from an Old Manse*, was written at J. T. Fields' behest while Hawthorne was living in Emerson's eponymous Concord house. Elaboration upon the device of the Old Manse as architectural scripture of the fictions to come exclusively occupies the first five paragraphs. After minutely describing the architecture and appearance of the building, Hawthorne hyperbolically suggests "It was worthy to have been one of the time-honored parsonages of England, in which, through many generations, a succession of holy occupants pass from youth to age, and bequeath each an inheritance of sanctity to pervade the house and hover over it, as with an atmosphere" (Hawthorne, *Short Stories,* 181). Beyond the house's obviously significant placement in the title of the work, the manner with which its

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figure is examined throughout this introduction confirms the contention that Hawthorne's writings illustrate qualities taken from his actual living situations. Hawthorne's mosses (his stories) come from within the Old Manse (the home wherein he lives) both biographically and in the fiction. Note the apotheosis of the Old Manse:

> I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue; and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the Old Manse, well worth those hoards of long-hidden gold, which people seek for in moss grown houses. Profound treatises of morality;—a layman's unprofessional, and therefore unprejudiced views of religion;—histories, (such as Bancroft might have written, had he taken up his abode here, as he once purposed), bright with picture, gleaming over a depth of philosophic thought;—these were the works that might fitly have flowed from such a retirement (Hawthorne, *Short Stories*, 180).

Oblique references to Hawthorne's work are braided into the prose. The fantasy is that the houses and the writer are spiritually joined even as the material and imagined spaces of the house and writer's imagination come together.

Hawthorne isn't merely fictionalizing when he virtually deifies and literally extols the Old Manse. He really believes the house to be significant and symbolically powerful. (4) In the case of *Mosses*, the

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interplay is tautological: the actual Old Manse house literally frames the composer of the fictions—Hawthorne working in the upstairs study—just as the framing device of the house encloses the fictions. Perhaps the celebrity of the house itself suggested this framing device to Hawthorne, the Old Manse, was, after all, clearly associated with Emerson, the preeminent literary figure of Concord. Perhaps too, Fields' nudge to Hawthorne to use the device was motivated by his own conception of the marketing strength that would inevitably come from proper manipulation of the celebrity of the house. Built for the Reverend William Emerson and after his death occupied by Emerson's grandmother's second husband Ezra Ripley, it eventually found its way into Ralph Waldo Emerson's possession. The Old Manse was as famous a house as there was in mid-century America. It is safe to reason that Fields (and likely Hawthorne, who had far less compunction than Melville regarding "writing the other way") believed that curiosity about the enigmatic Emerson might motivate more then one customer to buy Hawthorne's collection, under which terms the work would be functioning as revelation of the meaning of the house, of Emerson and his philosophy, as well as Hawthorne and his fictions. So Hawthorne writes of the house "Nor, in truth, had the Old Manse ever

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been profaned by a lay occupant, until that memorable summer afternoon when I entered it as my home." William Charvat, when speaking of what he terms the "literary economics" of the contemporary marketplace, points out just how beholden to his popular audience and the whims of his editors Hawthorne could be:

> We see Hawthorne as a short-story writer whose tales are often blighted by bald explanations of obvious symbolism; but we do not see the magazine and gift book audience which demanded these awkward and extraneous clarifications; nor do we see the trade conditions which led to his abrupt abandonment of the short story entirely in 1850. We see in his novels' wretched final chapters in which he tied the threads of story lumpily together as if he were afraid the whole plot might unravel; but we do not see that such devices were forced upon him by publishers in response to the demands of readers who wanted to know what finally happened to Miriam and Donatello, and whether Hilda and Kenyon got married (Charvat, 296).

The lesson in all this is that it would be wrong to judge Hawthorne's work solely on its merits as a conglomeration of literary device, to look at it with the narrowing perspectivism of New Criticism, without taking into account the historical and market forces behind his work. With or without Fields' encouragement, Hawthorne turned the possible marketing ploy of referencing the Old Manse to his own advantage, and

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here, as elsewhere, foregrounded the image of the house—so potent to him—in consideration of its certain popular appeal.

Hawthorne needed to make no stretch to put the Old Manse front and center. It was both his honeymoon retreat during a particularly pleasant time in his life—witness the well documented inscription of Sophia and Nathaniel scratched on the attic window on April 3, 1843—as well as the scene of his introduction to a salon environment after his self-imposed isolation in Salem. Between July and August of 1842, Hawthorne makes special and frequent mention in his journal that this house was the first place of his domestic bliss as well as his first real home. The altogether new and exited tone so unprecedented in his journal writings reflects something of his personal joy at finally finding a place to call home, in his own terms. He clearly felt a sense of relief at the supposed end of his peripatetic existence. Just before moving into the Manse, Hawthorne writes to his bride-to-be Sophia of his anticipation of the domestic bliss to come:

> Oh, truest wife, what a long widowhood is this! Three evenings without a glimpse of thee! And I know not whether I am to come at six or seven o-clock tomorrow evening—or scarcely, indeed, whether I am to come at all....I saw Mr. Emerson at the Athenaeum yesterday. He

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> tells me our garden, etc. makes fine progress. Would that we were there. God bless us (*Centenary* 16: 444).

The garden reference is to that fact that Thoreau, whom Emerson had hired for the job, was puttering about out back (Mellow, 195). The house becomes for Hawthorne the locus of his desires—he implies that his sexual desire for Sophia must take place only at the Manse: "would that we were there." As much as this was finest house he had lived in yet, he came to feel that the stories written there were the best work he had done yet. In the end, the family was forced by financial circumstances to move from the place in 1845. (5) Just as actual houses tend to either fall to pieces or become inadequate living spaces, so, too, they symbolically collapse in his fictions. The fictional process itself, as in the example of the Romances he would never complete, would invariably self-immolate in similar fashion. His houses in his fictions and his domestic agenda both move toward the symbolic proposals of "Ethan Brand."

Yet another example of this bridge between actual homes and fictional devices can be seen in the specific case of the Herbert Street home. Hawthorne's early years in self-imposed exile at Herbert Street in his so-called "castle dismal" set the pattern for all of his future

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writing. Here he toiled away in self-imposed solitary confinement, coming to grips with his own authorial voice as well as what was up until then an almost debilitating shyness. As the author wrote from seclusion in the upper rooms, so the third-person narrative voice in of the *Twice-Told Tales* and the other stories written during the Herbert Street years manifest an otherworldly distancing from human society. Such characters and attendant scenes as Dimmesdale and his solitary nights in his closet or Coverdale mysteriously rummaging about his "hermitage" stand eerily close to Hawthorne's lonely existence at Herbert Street. If Whitman's poet observed the game even as he moved in and out of it, Hawthorne's narrators observed the world mostly from afar, only swooping down to observe and repair home to the greatest possible authorial distance; what is true of Hawthorne's voice was true of Hawthorne the man. As Richard Holt Hutton would claim in *The Spectator*:

> He had been called a mystic, which he was not, and a psychological dreamer, which he was in a very slight degree. He was really the Ghost of New England—we do not mean the "spirit" nor the "phantom"; but the ghost in the old sense in which that term is used as a thin, rarefied essence which is to be found somewhere behind the physical organization (quoted in Crowley, 105).

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Of course Hawthorne's social discomfort bordering upon agony has been well documented. Innumerable tales of his epic shyness and studied silences so out of step with this era of table talk, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's and Margaret Fuller's "conversations," are extant. Then there is his lifelong fear of outdoor encounters with acquaintances, which were so characteristic of the man. Fields tells a story of a time when Hawthorne and he were strolling behind the Wayside when they heard someone approaching. "Duck," Hawthorne hurriedly said "or we shall be interrupted by somebody," and promptly hid behind some bushes. According to Fields, Hawthorne then whispered "Heaven help me, Mr. ( ) is close upon us" (Mellow, 440). This is likely apocryphal if not exaggerated, but it is nonetheless a colorful version of an almost certain truth of the situation: Hawthorne, like his narrators from the Herbert Street years, often attended but rarely partook of the social existence of his fellow beings. His geographical hideaway in the house itself is simply another version of his hideaway behind the mask of fiction and the singular qualities of his narrative voice. The chamber of his room typified the constricted perspective of his typically unreliable third-person narrator.

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This remarkable characteristic of Hawthorne the man can be glimpsed in many of the distinct voice(s) of Hawthorne's narrators, who, like so many of Hawthorne' s typically reclusive characters, become wholly possessed of seclusion. The ultimate exemplar of a narrator duplicating Hawthorne on this ground of seclusion is Miles Coverdale. In describing his "bachelor-rooms" in the chapter "The Hotel," of *The Blithedale Romance*, Coverdale reveals himself to be every bit as reclusive and habitual an aloof observer of human beings as Hawthorne ever was:

> I established myself, for a day or two, in a certain respectable hotel. It was situated somewhat aloof from my former track in life; my present mood inclining me to avoid most of my old companions, from whom I was now sundered by other interests, and who would have been likely enough to amuse themselves at the expense of the amateur working-man. The hotel-keeper put me into a back-room of the third story of his spacious establishment (Hawthorne, *Blithedale*, 145).

From this location and with new perspective, Coverdale commences to observe, comment upon, and philosophize about the life going on below. He feels comfortable and very much like a writer thrilled by the possibilities opening before him now that "after several such visits to

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my window I found myself getting pretty well acquainted with that little portion of the back-side of the universe which it presented to my view" (Hawthorne, *Blithedale*, 147). But always he is tempered with characteristic reluctance: "Yet I felt a hesitation about plunging into this muddy tide of human activity and pastime. It suited me better, for the present, to linger on the brink, or hover in the air above it" (Hawthorne, *Blithedale*, 148). Fully half of the chapter is taken up by Coverdale's description of the houses he views from his boarding-house back window and speculations about the lives being lived in these houses. This is very like the exclamations of the narrator in "Sights from a Steeple" in *Twice-Told Tales:* "How various are the situations of the people covered by the roofs beneath me, and how diversified are the events at this moment befalling them! The new-born, the aged, the dying, the strong in life, and the recent dead are all in the chambers of these many mansions" (Hawthorne, *Short Stories*, 150). Hawthorne's location in his houses, as well as many other aspects of his dwelling habits—his seclusion, his peripatetic existence—as if he were actually "haunting" the space and from which he can obtain the powerful, authorial view, parallels his treatment of narrators' positions within texts. Edwin Haviland Miller suggests that

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Hawthorne's contemporaries recognized this quality in him: "From the rear of his study (at the Wayside) he looked up at the hilltop to which he fled when he sought to escape unwanted visitors and where he daily paced, in the words of his neighbor Bronson Alcott 'as if he feared his neighbors eyes would catch him as he walked.'" (Miller, 386).

First as an observer and then as a reluctant participant in Salem and Concord society, Hawthorne's interior studies in his various homes offer salient clues to the strength of correspondence between imagined and material house. First, there is the very great importance Hawthorne placed on the exact location and arrangement of his studies in his very many houses, whether in Concord, Salem, Boston, Liverpool, or Rome. The best descriptions of Hawthorne's many studies are all owed to the meticulous interior-decorator's eye of Sophia. Her description of the study at Lenox is typical. It can "boast of nothing but his presence in the morning and the picture out of the window in the evening" (quoted in Mellow, 321). That autumn she wrote again to Elizabeth Palmer Peabody:

> Mr. Hawthorne said this morning that he would like a study with a soft, thick Turkey carpet upon the floor, and hung round with full crimson curtains so as to hide all the

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> rectangles. I hope to see the day when we shall have such a study. But it will not be while it would demand the slightest extravagance, because he is severe as a stoic about all personal comforts and never in his life allowed himself a luxury (SAH to EPPM, Sept. 29, 1850).

The inevitable inadequacies of the various studies in which Hawthorne worked fill the letters and journal entries of Sophia and Hawthorne. It is a theme to which their correspondence returns to again and again. Indeed, it marks a defining passion of their marriage. Of all his diverse studies, one quality is shared by those that are judged at least moderately successful: each commands the liveliest view of the street and is located in the highest position possible in the house. Hutton was right when he compared Hawthorne to a ghost: He does seem to haunt the attics of his various houses. Sophia's description to her sister of Hawthorne in his study at Mall Street in Salem (see SAH to EPPM, September 9, 1847), is entirely typical, as are her incessant complaints regarding the hopelessness of this study and so many others, from Chestnut Street to Liverpool (*Centenary* 16: 212-213). Hawthorne himself recognized the importance he placed upon the location of his study as it directly affected the quality of the work he would do there (*Centenary* 16: 359). Even Una, according to Hawthorne, came to

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know the singular importance of the location of the study to her father "Father, why do you write downstairs?" she asks, " — you never wrote downstairs before" (*Centenary* 8: 403).

Hawthorne frequently ascribes inadequacies he perceived in his writing to parallel inadequacies in his studies and the houses in which they are located. He habitually implies direct connection between the interior space of his houses and the interior space of his fiction in metaphoric (as opposed to symbolic) manner. (6) This fact was not lost upon his contemporary, Emerson, who wrote of Hawthorne in his journal in May of 1846: "Hawthorne invites his readers too much into his study, opens the process before them, As if the Confectioner should say to his customers now let us make a cake" (Emerson, *Journals*, 133).

In June of 1851, Melville would write to Hawthorne twice. Among the topics chosen are deeply felt opinions regarding writing as a vocation. The first letter is dated June 1, and the letter contains many well-known passages including Melville's complaint that "all my books are botches" and his assertion that "from my twenty-fifth year I date my life." The second letter of this month ends in Melville's coyly half-revealing to Hawthorne the "secret" motto of *Moby-Dick* (at this

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time still entitled "The Whale"): "ego non baptiso te in nomine...but make of the rest yourself" (Melville, *Writings*, 961). Between all this, Melville discusses his own writing habits, which are notably parallel to Hawthorne's (*Moby-Dick* was composed from the second floor study—also the highest room in the house):

> Since you have been here, I have been building some shanties of houses (connected with the old one) and likewise some shanties of chapters and essays. I have been plowing and sowing and raising and painting and printing and praying,—and now begin to come out upon a less bustling time, and to enjoy the calm prospect of things from a fair piazza at the north of the old farm house here (Melville, *Writings*, 190-191).

This is one of many examples of Melville's sensitivity in communicating to Hawthorne in Hawthorne's own terms—that bridge between material and imagined houses. From the cloistered Herbert street study to the symbolic struggle with the building of the tower at Wayside, Hawthorne always chose to look and write from above. Hawthorne's association of architectural space to fictional space was transparent to his contemporaries, just as much transparent as was the conjunction between material and imagined houses.

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Not only the houses themselves, but the singularities of the author's location within that house affect the fiction produced under those material circumstances. Once again, Coverdale functions as mouthpiece for Hawthorne, whose own biography and psychological landscape, like Coverdale's view from the window, was filled with row upon row of houses:

> Bewitching to me are all those nooks and crannies, where Nature, like a stray partridge, hides her head among the long-established haunts of men! It is likewise to be remarked, as a general rule, that there is far more of the picturesque, more truth to native and characteristic tendencies, and vastly greater suggestiveness, in the back view of a residence, whether in town or country, than in its front. The latter is always artificial; it is meant for the world's eye, and is therefore a veil or concealment. Realities keep in the rear, and put forward an advance-guard of show and humbug. The posterior aspect of any old farm-house, behind which a railroad has unexpectedly been opened, is so different from that looking upon the immemorial highway, that the spectator gets new ideas of rural life and individuality, in the puff or two of steam-breath which shoots him past the premises. In a city, the distinction between what is offered to the public, and what is kept for the family, is certainly not less striking (Hawthorne, *Blithedale*, 149).

This parallels to Hawthorne's enthusiastic description of his (and Emerson's) study in the "The Old Manse" Introduction from *Mosses*:

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"There was, in the rear of the house, the most delightful little nook of a study that ever afforded its snug seclusion to a scholar. It was here that Emerson wrote 'Nature;' for he was then an inhabitant of the Manse" (Hawthorne, *Short Stories*, 120). He continues in language heavily laden with architectural figuration to describe the view from his own, potent "back view." Remember that Hawthorne and Melville come together on this belief in the power of views from windows: both men liked the view from above, to be the writer who would "bury himself in a third-floor horror" as Mellow paraphrases it (Mellow, 317). Hawthorne would shut himself up in this study first thing in the morning and had standing orders not to be disturbed until mid-afternoon at the earliest (Mellow, 340, 355-56). Like Hawthorne, Melville had the habit of working from upper stories. In Melville, however, the view from above itself becomes a topic under consideration in the fiction. The view from the top floor study at Arrowhead farm in Pittsfield is where Melville chose to compose the majority of *Moby-Dick*, and that novel is replete with investigations into the meaning of such a position for the conscious mind: "The Mast-Head" is as much about the meaning of perspective in the abstract as it is about keeping a watch. Portions of *Pierre*, too, were written in the

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Arrowhead study. In this work much will be attributed to such a view on the philosophical speculations of Pierre. The book is even dedicated to the thing Melville saw directly out of his window from his writing desk—Mount Greylock—just as Hawthorne would write to Fields that while secluded in his second-floor study at Lenox, he often found himself "so far into a mill stone" as to be unable "to tell precisely when I shall be ready with my volume," and distracted enough into "gazing at Monument Mountain, broad before my eyes, instead of at the infernal sheet of paper under my hand" (*Centenary* 16:359).

Views from the windows at Herbert Street and the Old Manse leave residue in works written while Hawthorne lived in these spaces. So his workspace at the Salem custom house reappears with a vengeance in *The Scarlet Letter*. Hawthorne did not actually write any of the novel while at the Custom House office—only beginning composition upon his return home from losing his position (*Centenary* 1: if.). Of course the "Custom-House Introduction to 'The Scarlet Letter'" section of the novel openly describes and makes much of the view from the southwest corner of the building, of the author's watching the slow decline of the once vital port of Salem (*Centenary* 1: 3-45). Every morning, for three hours, for all of the years he worked at

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the Custom House—and the work there was by no means demanding; some days he would not work in any real sense of the word—Hawthorne looked out of his window at the goings-on of the port. That is to say, he looked at very little. By the time Hawthorne found work there, the economic significance of Salem as a port had long ago been eclipsed by Boston. So pretty much the same material presented itself day-in and day-out. Simultaneous to this monotonous occupation of his time, a sea-change occurred in his treatment of the allegorical style that had until them characterized his writing style; until now his treatment of allegory had been very little developed beyond that used by one of his primary influences, the allegory of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Hawthorne had previously openly aspired to produce this kind of allegory, citing the work often and lifting the style wholesale in such works as the "Celestial Railroad." Almost all of the works of the Old Manse collection, including "The Hall of Fantasy" and "The New Adam and Eve" make the greatest use of architectural and house imagery. But after looking out of that Salem office window at the relentlessly paltry material, no doubt spending his time considering, turning things over and over in his mind, he seems to have taken away from the experience a new sort of approach to the now problematized

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allegorical style of fiction. The old style allegory survives in *The Scarlet Letter*, as evidenced in its most obvious forms by the figures of Dimmesdale the "rake," Hester the "wronged woman," and Chillingworth the "revenger," but along with these relatively static figurations comes Hawthorne's new emphasis on individuality rather than representation. The allegorical types transform into objects to be observed and considered intensely, becoming in the process no longer mere symbolic archetypes, but psychologically penetrating character portraits as well. The powers of consideration he no doubt developed in his office solitude have finally paid the dividends hoped for since as early as the self-imposed exile of Herbert Street. In a letter to Fields just before the book came out, Hawthorne tellingly criticized his own style, which he recognized as new, in *The Scarlet Letter*: "keeping so close to its point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people and disgust some" (Mellow, 310). What is true for the "dark idea" of the novel's invention, is true of the characters within that novel. They stand like precious figurines lovingly held and viewed from every imaginable angle. Hawthorne turns the figures over and over, and in examining their dramatic and

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psychological possibilities, opens up new implications of slipping and interacting meanings and signification. This treatment is a stylistic breakthrough for him and the Romance style as a whole. Such methods resurface in the much later style of Modernism, in as diverse example as *Ulysses* and the *Alexandria Quartet*. Does this comes out of a writer who, because of where his office was located and because he had so little to occupy his time and thoughts, has gotten into the bad habit of considering very little overmuch? The achievement of the new allegorical style of *The Scarlet Letter* may be a consequence of Hawthorne's tendency to co-op himself indoors (and high up) whenever possible, a tendency that finally reaches its zenith in the upstairs office of the Custom House on the Salem wharf.

Hawthorne's works make another statement on the issue of houses in fiction. A distinct contemporary architectural notion was that of the "architectural folly." Today, nothing quite exists exactly akin to the popularity that architectural errors, overblown houses, or stylistic absurdities achieved in the mid-nineteenth century in America. The architectural folly was a part of popular vocabulary. Hawthorne brought his concentrated attention upon this version of house imagery, and made much of this unique contemporary notion in his fiction.

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The architectural usage of the term "folly" originated from the French *folie* meaning "favorite abode." According to Lancaster, in his *Architectural Follies in America*, the second denotation of the word surfaced during the thirteenth century in Wales, after Hubert de Brugh announced his intention to build a large castle that he would name "Hubert's Folly," thereby Anglicizing the French term. The British authorities razed the building owing to terms of a recently signed treaty with Wales. Thereafter the word folly came to hold the alternate meaning of a costly structure illustrating foolishness on the part of the builder. The two denotations existed side by side for centuries, the latter gradually gaining authority until the nineteenth century, when it came to exclusively denote a mistake by the architect and owner (Lancaster, 13-14). Well-known examples of architectural follies in America would be P.T. Barnum's Iranistan, Mrs. Trollope's bazaar, popularly known as "Trollope's Folly," or almost any of the work of Orson Fowler in the "octagon" mode. The notion of architectural follies and their connection to literature has previously been touched upon in discussion of contemporary conflicted attitudes toward Irving's construction of Sunnyside, the reactionary response to revival styles by conservative thinkers and authors, and Cooper's ironic descriptions of

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architectural designs in *Home as Found*, *The Pioneers*, and elsewhere. Follies have a kind of pedigree of usage in American literature beginning with Cooper and exhibiting themselves in unique fashion in Poe (Usher's house is the architectural folly *par excellence*). Alcott was known as much for his serially absurd failures in building as for his actual writing; the failures of Brook Farm are the failures of its buildings, phalansteries, or any of its structures, to stay above ground. A twentieth-century manifestation of the architectural folly symbolically treated is exemplified by Sutpen's folly in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* These and other writers foreground the folly, but it is Hawthorne who makes the most of the possible symbolic implications of the architectural folly in his writing.

Forced through poverty from an early age to live in homes supplied from the Mannning side of the family as charity, Hawthorne responded to this perceived humiliation in a life-long search for a better house and home for his own family. When speaking of the past, Hawthorne regularly idealized those large estates he visited on vacations or during summer months away from school. As early as October of 1818, Hawthorne moved with his mother to his uncle Robert Manning's estate at Lake Sebago outside of Raymond, Maine. Here

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they stayed at the charity of their uncle until the Summer of 1819. Hawthorne always recalled his stay at this house as the idyllic period of his youth (Mellow, 20). While there, he visited the ruined estate of Browne Hall in Essex County, popularly known as "Browne's Folly." (7) He reminisced years later in October of 1847 about roaming the grounds as a young boy:

> But there was one closet in the house, which everybody was afraid to enter, it being supposed that an evil spirit—perhaps a domestic demon of the Browne family—was confined in it. One day, three or four score years ago, some schoolboys happened to be playing in the deserted chambers, and took it into their heads to develop the secrets of this mysterious closet. With great difficulty and tremor they succeed in forcing the door. As it flew open, there was a vision of people in garments of antique magnificence—gentlemen in curled wigs and tarnished lace, and ladies in brocade and quaint head-dresses, rushing tumultuously forth and tumbling upon the floor. The urchins took to their heels in huge dismay, but crept back, after a while, and discovered that the apparition was composed of a mighty pile of portraits (quoted in Lancaster, 51).

Many typical images of his fiction, especially in the early stories—the mysterious dwelling-place, the "ancient" costume, the half-lit gloom—are all present in this passage. This somewhat apocryphal anecdote was likely colored after the fact. But if even the anecdote is entirely

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apocryphal, his telling the story so many years later suggests the significance that these times left upon his sense of the past. Further, Hawthorne's journals are replete with references not only to this, but other follies like it. To Browne's folly alone there are devoted multiple passages during this stay in 1847. He seems entirely obsessed with describing the house and considering its narrative implications; in fact, a full-blown fictional sketch based upon these (and other) journal entries appeared as "Letter from Hawthorne" in *The Weal-Reaf. A Record of the Essex Institute Fair, Held at Salem*, no.2 (Sept. 5, 1860), 14, and no. 3 (Sept. 6, 1860), 24 (*Centenary* 8: 592). On the fourteenth of October he described at length the grounds about the building: "the pastures at the foot of Browne's Hill were plentifully covered with barberry-bushes, the leaves of which were reddish, and they were hung with a prodigious quantity of berries" (*Centenary* 8: 159). After many long, Romanticized descriptive passages on the merits of these grounds, he elaborates upon the scene with a pieces of local history and architectural archeology:

> The cellar of the house which formerly crowned the hill, and used to be named Browne's Folly, still remains, two grass-grown and shallow hollows, on the highest part of

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> the ridge. The house consisted of two wings, each perhaps sixty feet in length, united by a middle part, in which was the entrance-hall, and which looked lengthwise along the hill (*Centenary* 8: 160).

Two weeks later he is at it again, now discussing "a walk, in warm and pleasant afternoon to Browne's Hill, not uncommonly called Browne's Folly" (*Centenary* 8: 274), and offering local anecdote after local anecdote attached to the house and its folly aspects, clearly ruminating about for a story in the unmistakable manner that characterized such entries in his journals. Hawthorne was working up ideas for a story based upon the historical example of Browne's Folly—and he will use just this material in his unfinished, last Romances.

Ten years earlier, the same thing occurred, this time during his seven-week stay at Horatio Bridge's house in Augusta beginning July 3, 1837. The house (and folly) in question was the Gardiner estate. During this stay, he went on a trip to nearby Gardiner where he found and described a house he saw as a paradise of grounds-keeping, but tinged with the inevitable destruction that characterized the architectural folly to Hawthorne. On July 11 he described the place in detail (including construction costs) and then lamented the unfinished

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quality of the estate. He discussed Gardiner's finances and reflected upon the moral implications of building a folly:

> Having been deeply engaged in land speculations, his splendid fortune has been put in great hazard, and probably much diminished. He is hard pressed for money; and some doubts are expressed whether he will be able to pay his debts. The work on the new houses is at a stand-still, for want of funds. Should he ever finish it, it will be too splendid a residence for his impaired fortunes; and when his estate shall be divided among his children, this mansion, estimated at its cost, will be more than the share of any one them, leaving nothing to support the expenses of such a style of living. This subject offers hints of copious reflection....the edifice is likely to be known as Gardiner's Folly, for centuries to come (*Centenary* 8: 41-45).

Here is the outline of Hawthorne's typical story in the mode of the impaired entailing of the "house" (both as structure and metaphor for family) bringing malediction down through generations.

Feelings of despair as early as the years spent in the "castle dismal," the Liverpool and London stays, as well as the inadequacies felt in living off of the charity of his uncles—who, in the case of Robert Manning in Raymond went so far as to build for Hawthorne's family a tiny house on the grounds of Manning's large estate—were the norm. Intense interest in follies and unfinished or ruined houses in his journals

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and letters reflect Hawthorne's anxieties. Experiences of uprootedness tempered by felt inadequacies and scrapes with virtual homelessness, all added up to a lifelong anxiety over how and where to build a home. It found its way into his fiction as myriad cursed and self-immolating houses, from houses built over hell to what one could rightfully call "Maule's Folly" of *House of the Seven Gables*. Eventually these anxiety-ridden architectural manifestations will end in the unfinished renovation of the Wayside, an ultimately problematic and unfinished renovation that parallels, both structurally and chronologically, Hawthorne's inability to complete his final Romances. Hawthorne's experience with the renovation of the Wayside amount to his own architectural folly. Of course the experience finds its way into his fictions; *Septimius Felton* in particular is actually set amid the ruin that the Wayside had become. (8) In the "Septimius Studies and Scenario," Study 1, one sees an almost seamless movement between Hawthorne sitting in his study at the Wayside and Septimius' internal musings. The actual house (the Wayside) becomes the setting in the fiction, just as the actual thoughts of the author become the narrative of the character. The folly of the Wayside becomes the folly of the unfinished Romances. Felton, like Grimshawe of *The Dolliver Romance*

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fragments (both thinly veiled portraits of Hawthorne himself, no different from so many of the progenitors in his fictions: Septimius the beautiful youth, Grimshawe the obsessed man of science, etc.), work from the same unsteady and inadequate upstairs study as Hawthorne at the Wayside ("Begin with a reference to a certain room in my houses, which I hint to be haunted" [Septimius Study 1, Centenary 13: 498]). Speaking of Septimius, Miller finds "the 'gay and beautiful young man' is secretly buried at the top of Hawthorne's hill, which he could see from his desk as he wrote. It (the Wayside) became Septimius' home and the center of Hawthorne's Romance" (Miller, 493-94). In Hawthorne's studies for Septimius, frequently the tone reflects his despair at being unable to complete—or even find his way into—his Romance, and often this despair is kin to the desperate prospect of the renovation of the Wayside. The two projects are equally confused (both in actual fact and in the mind of the author), and naturally suggest parallels to the writer searching for material with which to build a fiction. Hawthorne often muses about the process of writing the Romance (in fact, writing any Romance) simultaneous to worrying over the financial and architectural state of his house renovation:

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> I could almost swear, for instance, that there is such a haunting spirit, gliding about, sitting at my fireside, peeping through the twilight windows, shrinking into dusty corners, of the house where I have taken up my abode. If a man ever lingered about the house of his earthly abode, this man might be expected to do so, from the strong hold which he took of this house, the hill side, during his lifetime.
>
> Thoreau first told me about his predecessor of mine; though, I think he knew nothing of his character and history, nor anything of the singular fact, that here, in this simple old house, at the foot of the hill, and so close to the Lexington road that I call it the Wayside...here dwelt, in some long-past time, this man who was resolved never to die....This was all that Thoreau communicated; and that was many years ago, when I first came to live at the old cottage....It gave me a stronger interest in the spot; and according to my custom, I mused and meditated, and thought within myself, and tried to make out what manner of man this might be, that deemed it within his power to subvert the usual conditions of humanity. How did he mean to do it? Had he discovered, as he might suppose, the great secret which philosophers used to seek for? Did he think himself born of a frame unlike that of other mortals?
>
> Much time had now passed; and the contemporaries of Septimius were beginning to show a little of the wear of life; shrunken, dried, they were becoming, after the manner of New England men, when they begin to grow old (*Centenary* 13: 498-500).

The hinge is Thoreau's "legend of the man who would not die," which seems to drive the construction of the Septimius plot. Hawthorne writes to himself in his notes for Septimius that he should:

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> Make the impressions about the room, or chamber, more striking, and begin to connect this legend with the particular locality of the house. In the process of making repairs or additions to the old house, I may fable that a manuscript was found, containing records of this man, and allusions to his purpose to live forever. It might be a journal, extending over a long series of years. This should help me out, as regards Thoreau's legend, and also seem to account, on further perusal, for some of the strange phenomena of the east-room. (*Centenary* 13: 504).

Septimius is Hawthorne, desperately renovating the Wayside and haunted all the way to virtual financial and imaginative bankruptcy, and just as desperately trying to find a way to write again, even rehashing the old device of the found manuscript from the Custom-House introduction to his most popular work, *The Scarlet Letter*. The onset of perceived old age contributed to the confusion of fiction, house, and author, as Hawthorne, too, was growing old "after the manner of New England men." *Septimius Felton* is only another version of the characteristic interplay of actual house and fictional material in Hawthorne's fiction. The interconnection of actual residences to figures (both rhetorical and symbolic) in Hawthorne's fiction can be even more unlikely than those outlined above. The interplay works on the simplest

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levels of fictional structure such as choice of setting, symbol, or determining content as well as evincing a hand in the type and minute details of a chosen narrative voice. The haunts and troubles of the Wayside renovation are transformed into those of the incomplete Romances.

The method whereby known houses return to Hawthorne's fiction as follies is seen in the case of the original of the *Palazzo Monte Beni* of *The Marble Faun*, the Villa Montuato, which Hawthorne visited while on tour in Italy. Twisting fiction back into reality, enacting yet another level to the interplay of biography and house, this tower resurfaces in Hawthorne's renovation of the Wayside years later. Hawthorne purchased it from Alcott in 1848 after the failure of Fruitlands. Alcott had himself elaborately renovated the building from ruin. Hawthorne felt he had his work cut out for him. He wrote to Duyckinck describing the work Alcott had put into the thing. He states that Alcott "had wasted a good deal of money in fitting it up to suit his own taste—all which improvements I get for little or nothing. Having been much neglected, the place is the raggedest in the world. But it will make, sooner or later, a comfortable and sufficiently pleasant home" (*Centenary* 13: 548). But things did not go well, either in the case of

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this building or in the renovations of his last fictions. His own bizarre additions to the house—including the aforementioned tower—were never quite correctly done, either through Hawthorne's lapses in memory or his inability to communicate instructions correctly to the carpenters. (9) In the end, the tower remained inaccessible except from a dangerously haphazard constriction of stairs; it is a failure of construction reminiscent of the flaws his associated Romance of Italy, *The Marble Faun.* The design of the tower is oddly reminiscent of the tower at the Villa Montauto, even as it is predictive of the failure of coherence in his final Romances with which he wrestled in the crooked tower of his own construction. As the reconstruction of the now renamed "Wayside" (previously "Hillside") neared completion, Hawthorne began to feel better about his work (Mellow, 406). He jokes to Francis Bennoch that he was "now meditating a new Romance, which ought to be the most elevated of my productions, since I shall write it in the sky-parlor of my new tower" (*Centenary* 18: 35). What Hawthorne cannot know is the trouble he will face in the completion of his new Romance(s), just as he cannot anticipate the ultimately irresolvable troubles he will face in completing his new "sky-parlor." He will never adequately reconstruct this study—and the adequate

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study was entirely necessary to the successful completion of his books. This situation comes in entire contrast to his earlier authorial potency achieved from his elevated perspective. Hawthorne's inability to keep up with and control payments on his renovations parallel his inability to renovate his previously controlled Romance style. In his letter to Bennoch he overtly stated the resolution: to view from the study window is to have the power to write. What he has lost in the Wayside study is the power to conceive a fit design, the very power he found invigorating in his Salem custom house office, which is at once an office in the custom house and the imagined custom house of *The Scarlet Letter*. That is the authorial power in chemical combination with architectural stability that was necessary for Hawthorne to tap the creative skills that had always resulted in his best production. But by the end of his career, Hawthorne could no longer manage to gain power from the view from above; in the case of the Wayside, he could no longer the manage the house as well; and in the case of his last Romances, he could no longer manage his fictions. His writings had become more like the architectural follies remembered from his youth. The twisted tower of his Wayside study had changed from the tenor of the *Pallazo Monte Beni* to the vehicle of his barely sustained Romance

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style. His work had adopted the tortured style and weakened structure of the Pyncheon house.

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Chapter Notes, Chapter 5

(1) See *Centenary* 8: 145f. for a complete outline of Hawthorne's ideas on this subject matter.
(2) See NH to JTF October 1, 1859 *Centenary* 16: 369-370. Also, Mellow, 325, for an elaboration upon the idea that the house is a direct model for the Maule's estate. For a remarkable reconstruction of the fictional house in physical terms, see Davidson's introduction to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Riverside Literature Series, Houghton, Mifflin, 1883. That Davidson would even try such a thing attests to the strength of interplay between fictional and actual houses in Hawthorne's fiction.
(3) See Meeks, *The Railroad Station*, New Haven: 1956, p. 54 and plate 39; also, *Visitor's Guide* to Salem, Salem: 1902, pp. 76-77.
(4) For Hawthorne's description of his new house, see *Centenary* X: 13; also *Centenary* X: 5 and Cent. VIII: 323, which includes a detailed description of the view from his study window.
(5) For a poignant elaboration of the Hawthorne's dire circumstances, see SAH to LH August 24, 1845, *Centenary* 16: 115-117; see also, 117-118, fn. 2 for exact financial details.
(6) For examples of the metaphoric connection, see *Centenary* 16: 215-216, NH to H. W. Longfellow, November 11, 1847. Here, Hawthorne's description of his view from his Salem window is braided through with discussion of writing in general and his troubles with writer's block in particular. See also *Centenary* I: 4, 7-8 (the preface to the second edition of *The Scarlet Letter)*; compare this to complaints of writer's block at the Old Manse in *Centenary* XI, 379-382.
(7) See *Centenary* 8: 591-592 for a more detailed description of the following: "Browne's Hill is located in Danvers, near the Beverly line....William Browne built the hall around 1740. After an earthquake in 1755 the house was divided into three sections and removed to Danvers, where the builder resided until his death."
(8) See Miller, 491-494; also NH to GWC in *Centenary* 8: 557 on Hawthorne's failed attempts to compose a romance specifically about the Wayside and its history and inhabitants.
(9) For a detailed discussion of this renovation see Hawthorne's letter to Donald Grant Mitchell dated December 16, 1864, wherein Hawthorne suggests that burning down the building as a way to keep the costs (and his anxieties) from mounting "If only it would burn down! But I have no such luck." Here he revisits of the theme of "Fire Worship" many years after the fact. See also, NH to Ticknor, dated December 28, 1860 wherein Hawthorne details the exact costs of the renovation, both financial and personal. As the costs began to mount up, he asked his publisher Ticknor for a further advance against royalties, complaining that he had cost overruns of $1500 on an original $500 estimate.

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Chapter 6 - Apotheosis: Building and Collapse in Melville's Fiction and Poetry

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"If the Coliseum expresses the durability of Roman ideas, what does the Crystal Palace express?" Melville asks in his 1858 lecture "Statues in Rome," and iterates once again his preoccupation with architectural matters. (1) On no American author has so much critical attention been lavished as regards the metaphorical correspondence of the fine arts and fiction as on Melville. This is not surprising; no author of his time left as inclusive a record of having contemplated painting, sculpture, the arts scene, arts history, and architecture. The sheer quantity of architectural images and rhetoric in Melville's journals and letters, lectures and essays, and poetry and fiction give credence to his frontmost position in this criticism. During both of Melville's trips abroad, he spent much of his limited time seeking out architectural structures, museums, and galleries. His experiences with the fine arts and architecture on these trips invariably wend their way back into his fiction in myriad responses, which in turn can shed light upon essential elements of his aesthetic. (2) As Bryan C. Short suggests in his "Melville and Architecture": "Melville's response to architecture reveal an imagination at war with itself, a visionary sensibility in conflict with the evidence of vision. Architecture shines a Drummond-light on this key dichotomy in his aesthetic" (Short, 105). Whether or not one agrees with the assessment of Melville's imagination being "at war with itself," Short's analysis belies an essential truth: the correspondence of architecture

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and literature runs deep in Melville. So it is that Christopher Sten traces in Melville's literary architecture a dramaturgy of structures moving from high to low. Timothy Dow Adams asserts of Melville that "the biological analogy between a building and human anatomy, the proper balance between inner spirit and outward demeanor of both architectural forms and human beings, intrigued him." Hennig Cohen traces the image of the Knights Templars' Temple Church in *The Life and Adventures of Israel R. Potter*, *Clarel*, and elsewhere to good effect. (3) Certain works demonstrate great reflection on this score: *The Piazza Tales*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Pierre* in fiction and *Clarel* and *Timoleon* in poetry possess metaphors that correspond exceedingly to architecture. As was the case with Hawthorne, the correspondence that Melville draws between architecture and literature possesses a decidedly material bias. What is peculiar to Melville, however, is the manner with which materialist literary architecture is intimately associated with personal achievement. The proliferation of buildings in Melville's writings accords with Melville's notions of success or failure, whether as expressed in his characters or as revealed in the state of his writing career. The towers and buildings that seem always to collapse are less phallic symbols of sexual frustration than examples of Melville's' own intimations of failure—whether personal, professional, or creative. The theme of failure that runs through the

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uncollected stories is tied to images of architectural collapse, which are in turn tied to biographical troubles paralleled in his journals. The ruins strewn about the landscape of *Clarel* speak to the ruins of his late career. This is the essence of Melville's literary architecture, among the most material literary architecture of any writer of the period, since it is so intimately linked to the biographical facts of his writing career. In order to best illuminate this literary architecture, it is necessary to first examine the typical character of symbolic architecture in Melville's writings, then to reanimate the way in which these symbols are integrated to Melville's well-documented problematized perception (especially in the short fiction and *Moby-Dick*). Only then can the apotheosis of this literary architecture—architectural symbology in the final poems of *Timoleon*—be understood in all its implications.

Architectural symbolism is an essential component to many of Melville's works—the number of critical analyses on this score reflect that fact. In the short fiction, there is Jimmy Rose's obvious association with the rooms in which he lives, the wallpaper reflecting the signs of his cheeks, and so on. Delano is certain that Benito Cereno "associates goblins with the deserted body of man, as ghosts with an abandoned house" (Melville, *Library of America*, 222). In the novels, there is Chapter 41 of *Moby-Dick*, wherein the recesses of Ahab's mind stand as a simile to the Halls of Thermes beneath

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the Hotel de Cluny (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 437). The "Time and Temples" chapter of *Mardi*, with the implied correspondence between writing and building in "great towers take time to construct. And so of all else," is followed by diverse and learned references to many famous architectural structures such as Nero's house of Gold, the Strasbourg Cathedral, the Alhambra at Granada, and others (Melville, *Mardi*, 198). Redburn sees the binnacle on his trip to Liverpool as his "little house" that contains his compass (Melville, *Redburn*, 67). The coordination of literature and architecture in Melville's writing is at its height in the figure of Mr. Scribe from "I and My Chimney." Here the pun upon the architect as writer is a portrait of the author's tendency toward corresponding these metaphors. The figure also begins to suggest Melville's identifying form of literary architecture. The house of Mr. Scribe, the "griffin-like house of wood and stucco, in the highest style of ornamental art, graced with four chimneys in the form of erect dragons spouting smoke from their nostrils; the elegant modern residence of Mr. Scribe," is directly contrasted (and by this contrast, linked) to the house of the author—unmistakably Arrowhead farm (Melville, *Library of America*, 450). The fictional and material come very close. Because the observations of the narrator of "I and My Chimney" compose the fiction, just as the observations of the author compose the text, the two come even closer.

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Finally, the observations of Melville in the upstairs room at Arrowhead—where he composed both *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*—constitute a further blending of fictional and actual, here on the ground of seeing. This mixture of actual and fictional with a strong dose of observational and perceptual metaphors cooks up Melville's literary architecture. Bartleby, with his troubled perception and blocked views is another such figure as Mr. Scribe, and Bartleby, "a sort of innocent and transformed Marius brooding among the ruins of Carthage," symbolizes the ruins of a career: "He answered not a word; like the last column of some ruined temple, he remained mute and solitary in the middle of an otherwise deserted room" (Melville, *Library of America*, 441). Bartleby is an architectural symbol as much as he is a fictional character.

For Melville, heights prove compelling. He discusses Emerson's philosophy in a letter to Duyckinck on March 3, 1849, "I love men who *dive*, and the whole corps of thought-divers that have been diving and coming up again with bloodshot eyes since the world began" (Melville, *Writings*, 987). In Cairo he sits upon the pyramids and ruminates about God, even as the potential for a deadly fall is present: "The idea of Jehova born here.—When I was at top, thought it not so high—sat down on the edge. Looked below—gradual nervousness & final giddiness & terror" (quoted in Marovitz, 86).

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Yet, while he may profess a love of "divers," the view from above posed a particular set of problems, many of them writerly—which he expressed time and again in his writing as a problematized perception. In *Moby-Dick,* the influence of Melville's actual location in the Arrowhead farmhouse (again, in the top floor study, with his desk positioned as to get the best view of Mount Greylock across the fields) makes itself obvious. Its plainest example is that the view from high up stands as a metaphor for the narrator as creator, that is, the voice on high is the voice of authority, of God. Ishmael contemplates the epistemology of the creative act, and does so in metaphors of looking out a high window: "It maketh a marvelous difference; whether thou lookest out at it [the wind Euroclydon] from a glass window where the frost is all on the outside, or whether thou observest it from that sashless window where the frost is on both sides" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 634). Starbuck reveals his inmost character from heights: "I look deep down, and do believe" (quoted in Marovitz, 80). Pierre regards his mother as an imperious woman looking down from a tower: "High-up, and towering, and all forbidding before Pierre grew the before unthought-of wonderful edifice of his mother's immense pride" (Melville, *Library of America*, 95).

In the short stories, in particular, the question of "how one sees" becomes intricately wrapped-up with a problematized writing aesthetic. This

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position imbues the narrator's voice with special powers. Consider how the view on high empowers the book to perform two of its projects: the self-reconstitution of Ishmael and Melville's mockery of Transcendentalist rhetoric. Many instances of both occur in the novel, but two better-known examples come hand-in-hand with the view from above. First, the view helps develop a model of the self. Throughout *Moby-Dick*, the narrator and speaking characters are frequently positioned high up whenever their words are meant to connote speculative philosophizing. The substance of this very Melvillean gesture is unmistakable in *Moby-Dick*, where from this observational position, the voice of the narrator muses upon self-reconstitution. It is as if only from the view of taking it all in can the narrator be positioned (that is, be placed in a position of power) so as to turn inward and then advance the project of self-reconstitution:

> Lulled in to such an opium-like listlessness of a vacant, unconscious reverie is the absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange; half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 299).

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Melville clearly presents this model of the developing self as involved in the disorientation that comes from heights. Following the events of the inversion at the tiller, three successive paragraphs enact the process of self-construction at a higher order. First, there is an emotional descent, then a recognition and control of morally evil (parallel to libidinous) drives, and finally an integration of these drives into a higher conceptual understanding of the self. Thus, in an allegory of moral intelligence, the image of the "Catskill eagle" (being the achieved self) is free to both descend and ascend the moral field, all the while flying on a higher metaphorical plane (elegantly punned as "plain"):

> And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become visible again in the sunny spaces. And even if he forever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 734).

One source for this imagery is likely Asher Durand's "Kindred Spirits" of 1849. The painting is an allegorical depiction of Thomas Cole and William Cullen Bryant viewing the Catskill Mountain Grove. It was painted as a public expression of grief for Durand's mentor Cole, who had died a year

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earlier, and was commissioned by the merchant Jonathan Sturgis as a gift for Bryant after having heard him deliver the "Funeral Oration" for Cole. The painting can be said to have made Durand's name. Reynolds, in "Melville's Catskill Eagle," makes a strong case for the painting as a source for this passage in *Moby-Dick.* He points out that Melville was still living in New York at the time, and that through Duyckinck he attended dinners and openings at which both Bryant and Durand were present (Reynolds, 12). In any case, Durand's eagle is an uncomplicated allegorical version of the ascending soul, while Melville's differs in this: his is an allegorical version of the constitution of a psyche—of a self.

Second, the view from above is used to mock Transcendentalism. The project of writing a self is a contrivance not only of *Moby-Dick*, but also of its contemporary philosophical cousin, Transcendentalist rhetoric. Looking at the position in these terms helps to explain the final passage of "The Mast-Head" as a joke at the expense of Emerson. The penultimate sentence of the section transmutes the vocabulary and imagery of Emerson's *Nature* to comic effect. Instead of the familiar figure of Emerson stomping across the Boston common with his head in the "blithe air" becoming a self as "transparent eyeball," one gets this:

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> There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise forever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists! (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 257).

Allusiveness is key. Melville kicks the "pantheist" transcendentalists right off the powerful position high-up. By allusion to the famous (or, in Melville's case, infamous) opening of *Nature* Melville asserts his own virtuosity as well as the superiority of his aesthetic position as he plunges Emerson into the sea. The contest between speculative philosophies is fought from above. Not by coincidence does the uniquely allegorical quality of *Moby-Dick* now pick up in earnest. At this point, Ahab enters like Shakespearean figure ("The Quarter Deck" begins with the stage direction "Enter Ahab; Then, all") and the central dramatic conflict of the novel is able to begin. From the top of the mast head comes the novel's allegorical dynamic of self engaged with meaning. Of course, Ahab's unique speaking style is prepared from above—the position high-up is the position of authorial power. In *Moby-Dick*, one sees the intense moral and intellectual associations Melville is wont to make in

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regards to the view from above. It is a position of speculative clarity after which Melville's narrators, characters, and authorial voices long. It is a position frequently associated with—and thereby beholden to—architectural heights. Yet it is a position from which falls occur; falling, failure, and descent—these are the marked connotations for Melville's biography and the substance of the material aspect of his literary architecture.

Working within the closer, more pressurized short-story form, Melville whittles the dynamic of his metaphor down to its barest bones. Eventually, perception in the abstract earns a part in the dramas of the short stories; it becomes part of the drama itself. In certain stories, manner of perception is elevated from the status of nice philosophical argument to the position of actual matter of the prose. Such stories can be about perception as much as anything else. Melville further engages perception not only as an epistemolgy of seeing—although this is an important aspect of his treatment—but also as a way of valuing human beings. Moving from the position of the perceiver to the position of the perceived makes all the difference in these valuations. How a character is perceived—and how a character perceives—dictates his or her value as an individual.

Perception and value are manipulated here in interconnected ways. Character is defined as both the fictional character standing-in for human

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beings (the familiar status of a character in a story) and the moral, social, and intellectual quality of a person—a person's character. Perception means not only the mental and physical act of seeing, with all of its myriad philosophical, aesthetic, and moral consequences, but also perception in the sense of judgment—how one person or character perceives another. The stories of *The Piazza Tales* emphasize such notions of perception and character, and they do so with reference to architectural metaphors.

The Piazza Tales, rather obviously, presents architectural metaphors up front, but it can also be read as a disquisition on the discovery of an aesthetic of landscape. How one perceives one's surroundings is the central issue of the story "The Piazza." The only substantial action anyone takes is the narrator's travel across the view from his piazza to better understand exactly what it is he sees in the distance. Along the way almost nothing happens to him. He does, however, rename the landscape he sees through various literary stylizations. Through the lens of literary reference, the narrator rewrites the landscape before him as Shakespeare, Milton, and Cervantes. Likewise, Greek mythology and a generalized "fairy lore," as well as Spenser's *Fairie Queene*, make cameo appearances in the prose. The action of the story is the renaming of landscapes with icons of literature.

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After staring from his piazza toward the mysterious prospect across the "shifting" mountains, all the while confusing his literary readings with descriptions of the landscape, the narrator finally embarks toward the distant prospect:

> How to get to fairy-land, by what road, I did not know; nor could anyone inform me; not even one Edmund Spenser, who had been there—so he wrote me—further than that to reach fairy-land, it must be voyaged to, and with faith I took the fairy-mountain's bearings, and the first fine day, when strength permitted, got into my yawl—high pommeled, leather one—cast off the fast and away I sailed, free voyager as an autumn leaf. Early dawn; and, sallying westward, I sowed the morning before me (Melville, *Library of America*, 626).

The action itself is minimally important here; he only goes for a ride. What is important is the manner in which the action is perceived. Sailing metaphors are brought forth out of nowhere, dramatizing the action as a kind of crusade. Spenserian language creates a tableau of "fairy-land" that never leaves the narrator on his journey. Later on he will invent his own fairy lore of the woods in which he rides. The way is dramatic, and the drama is the perception. How the narrator rewrites his landscape becomes the defining action of "The Piazza."

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When he reaches the "fairy-mountain house" and finds his "fairy-queen sitting at her fairy window," refiguration asserts itself. The narrator looks back to whence he came and finds it unrecognizable: "Downwards, directed by the tunneled pass, as through a leveled telescope, I caught sight of a far-off, soft, azure world. I hardly knew it, though I came from it" (Melville, *Library of America,* 626). The prospect itself, or more precisely, perception through landscape, has completely altered his vision. Nor in any way can perception be trusted:

> From the piazza, some uncertain object I had caught, mysteriously snugged away, to all appearance, in a sort of purpled breast-pocket, high up in a hopper-like hollow, or sunken angle, among the northwestern mountains—yet, whether, really, it was on a mountain-side, or a mountain-top, could not be determined....from the piazza, a nigher and lower mountain will, in most states of the atmosphere, effacingly shade itself away into a higher and further one (Melville, *Library of America,* 624).

It would be hard to think of a more substantial landscape element than a mountain range. Yet these mountains are profoundly mutable: "These mountains, somehow, they play at hide-and-seek, and all before one's eyes" (Melville, *Library of America,* 625). Perception becomes mutation. This explains the story's focus upon the hallucinatory "fairy-window": "through

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the fairy-window, a broad shadow stealing on, as cast by some gigantic condor, floating at brooding poise on outstretched wings, I marked how, by its deeper and inclusive dusk, it wiped away into itself all lesser shades of rock or fen" (Melville, *Library of America,* 631). It also explains the prominence of the piazza; being at once the title of the story, opening setting, and name of the collection. The fairy window and the piazza are both of man-made frames through which reality is figured and refigured into art. They stand for the artistic process, which is a kind of "framing," or Coleridgean "understanding," whose investigation is the matter of *The Piazza Tales*. Architectural and perceptual metaphors combine.

Without the transforming power of aesthetic perception, mere reality is exposed. Thus, the central irony of the story is that both the narrator and Marianna are deceived by what they perceive: each thinks of the other's house across the landscape as somehow magical and wonderful—but up close, reality surfaces; the prospect has deceived them. Aesthetic figuration can both promise and disappoint. But this does not in any sense take away the dramatic power of aesthetic viewing. The story opens with the setting figured as painterly landscape, describing the mountain view as a very "paradise of painters," and comparing the prospect to a gallery of paintings: "for what but picture galleries are the marble halls of these same limestone hills?—galleries

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hung, month after month anew, with pictures ever fading into pictures ever fresh" (Melville, *Library of America,* 621). Painting is a most direct manner in which to aestheticize landscape. To speak of "landscape" is in some sense to speak of landscape painting. So when Melville refers to painting in the context of these stories, he brings to mind the subject of painterly aesthetics in general. In its metaphoric choices, the opening paragraph anticipates the drama to come. A similar reference to the painterly aesthetic is foregrounded in "Bartleby the Scrivener."

In this story, Bartleby is characterized (as much as anything else) by his peculiar habit of staring—more often than not out of windows. When the narrator comes to realize that Bartleby has been living in his office, every weekend staring out upon a deserted downtown New York, the narrator compares Bartleby to one of the great "lookers" of all history: "and here Bartleby makes his home; sole spectator of a solitude which he has seen all populous—a sort of innocent and transformed Marius brooding among the ruins of Carthage" (Melville, *Library of America,* 420). Bartleby becomes a mythical spectator, while his manner of perceiving clarifies his character. But Bartleby prefers to stare at the most unlikely prospect: brick walls. The day that Bartleby decides to write no more, the narrator discovers that "Bartleby did nothing but stand at his window in his dead wall revery" (Melville,

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Library of America, 422). Later, when the narrator finds him in jail, Bartleby is still staring away: "And so I found him there, standing all alone in the quietest of the yards, his face towards a high wall" (Melville, *Library of America,* 428). Certainly, this obsessive looking at nothing makes obvious reference to emptiness. This is more than just nihilism. In order to discover the particular form this meaninglessness takes, one must return to the first description of a brick wall in the story:

> My chambers were up at No. — Wall-street. At one end they looked upon the white wall of the interior of a spacious sky-light shaft, penetrating the building from top to bottom. This view might have been considered rather tame than otherwise, deficient in what landscape painters call "life." But if so, the view from the other end of my chambers offered at least, a contrast, if nothing more. In that direction my windows commanded an unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall, black by age and everlasting shade; which wall required no spy-glass to bring out its lurking beauties, but for the benefit of all near-sighted spectators, was pushed-up to within ten feet of my window panes. Owing to the great height of the surrounding buildings, and my chambers being on the second floor, the interval between this wall and mine not a little resembled a huge square cistern (Melville, *Library of America,* 436).

The reference of the "spy-glass" is to a specific kind of painterly aesthetic, and possibly to a specific picture. Probably, Melville has in mind here panoramic art in general, and the landscape paintings of Frederick Edwin Church in particular. Church's most famous painting, "The Heart of the

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Andes," created a public sensation when it was shown flanked by black crepe curtains, lit by a gas-jet and surrounded by local tropical vegetation (Novack, 71). It was strongly recommended that the viewer look at the painting through a spy-glass in order to recreate the sense of actually being at the site. The acts of framing and looking through spy-glasses are two exemplifying gestures of this aesthetic. The program of this landscape aesthetic was to "raise the feeling of admiration for nature" and to gain "knowledge of the works of creation, and an appreciation of their exalted grandeur" (quoted in Novack, 112). These are the judgments of Humboldt in his influential work *Cosmos* (Darwin, among many others, was known to be a great admirer of Humboldt). A central feature of this aesthetic was for the observer to engage in the visual dynamic between microscopic detail and panoramic vision, entering thereby the region of the sublime. Thus, the spy-glasses, and thus, too, the iconographic peculiarities of such hugely intricate paintings. Central to any complete analysis of "Bartleby the Scrivener" is this: The panoramic style was the absolutely current, landscape style contemporary to the period in which the story was written. Viewed with this in mind, the narrator's reference to this style in his description of what will become his view of the world is much more than a simple joke. Bartleby's view is anything but the view of panoramic landscape. In fact, his view amounts to nothing at all. "Bartleby

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the Scrivener" offers no alternative aesthetic, no possible landscape; there is no art in the vision of Bartleby the scrivener. Since Bartleby the scrivener implies Melville the writer, the moral would seem to be that there is no aesthetic value to the writings of Melville—a devastating self-commentary. This is nothing less than an abstraction of a material fall; but here it is a fall from the implied power of aesthetic vision in "The Piazza." While walls, windows, brickwork, and ruins are all architectural features, the descents from heights is not necessarily material. No one actually falls out of anything (except in the extreme case of White-jacket; and the powerful nature of this sole material example speaks to the smoldering immateriality of Melville's more common procedures). But the fall from heights in terms of vision, speculative philosophy, and the coordination to Melville's biography, is every bit as real as an actual fall.

This goes a long way toward elucidating the omnipresence of towers, heights, and ascents in the short stories. The stories are dramas of perception, so the view from high-up is an altogether natural position for narrator. This narrator's voice is, in one sense, reflective of the author's: both aspire toward omniscience. The two go hand-in-hand. So the opening of "Sketch Fourth" of "The Encantadas" can be read as a thinly veiled reference to Melville's authority as writer:

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> If you seek to ascend Rock Rodondo, take the following prescription. Go three voyages round the world as a main-royal-man of the tallest frigate that floats; then serve a year or two apprenticeship to the guides who conduct strangers up the Peak of Teneriffe; and as many more, respectively, to a rope-dancer, an Indian juggler, and a chamois. This done, come and be rewarded by the view from our tower. How we get there, we alone know. If we sought to tell others, what the wiser were they? Suffice it, that here at the summit you and I stand (Melville, *Library of America,* 577).

"You" and "I" here imply to the reader and writer, respectively. As Melville breaks the wall of narration and addresses the reader directly, he makes plain that the Rock Rodondo has always been bound-up in the meaning of writing itself, despite his deliberate mystification of the writing process. This address to the reader is anticipated by a "prescription," which reads suspiciously like a synopsis of his life previous to his writing career. The passage is a preparatory "guide to living" for the aspiring writer; which aspiring writer is, by association, any thoughtful reader. The Rock Rodondo becomes symbolic of reader-writer interplay, a drama of perception within the larger drama, a play within a play. Melville's meta-commentary has a dark implication, however: the possibility of failure in all its forms linked to the failure of perception.

Earlier in the story, the Rock Rodondo has been associated with dryness, death, infertility, and desert. Melville owes a debt of descriptive

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language to Dante's *Inferno*, what with the rock's hell-like aspect, Italiante qualities—it occupies "very much the position which the famous Campanile or detached Bell Tower of St. Mark does" (Melville, *Library of America,* 573), and moral hierarchy of birds and fish—very like the hierarchical positioning of a boluses in Dante's Hell. Likewise, "The Bell Tower" anticipates this negative vision of writing and art. In this story, once again the action is set high-up. Once again, the artist or "perceiver" is demonic and failed. Failure seems to be the fate of aesthetically minded characters in Melville's short stories. The stories are populated by dozens of these figures. Failure is central to the dramatized perception. Upon this issue of "failure," however, a wholly different drama of perception, completely unlike the problematized aesthetic, appears in the short stories.

This is a somewhat more material drama of human perception (at least the physical aspect of seeing is real enough) and less the epistemological perception in the abstract or perception in reader-writer dynamics seen earlier. In a word, it is simple opinion. What human beings think about one another comprises a large part of social reality; it also occupies a forward position among Melville's gang of characteristic themes. Questions about "who judges" and "how one judges" social worth (the secondary definition of perception seen earlier) composes some of the drama of the short stories.

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Thus, "The Happy Failure" questions the relative value of such terms as failure and success, "The Fiddler" brings into doubt the efficacy of knowing another person by career alone, and "Jimmy Rose" degrades all social knowledge to the status of mere surface, symbolically rendered in the fading wall-paper. These stories are about judging people; they propose that one can never really judge with moral certainty. Any assertion of final judgment is immediately disposed of any willful judgment comes off as a kind of immorality. Carry this out to its implied end, and one gets the racism of "The 'Gees."

In "The 'Gees," social judgment is given a moral spin while an actual moral position remains utterly intractable. This is not unexpected. For Melville to actually take a position on racism would conflict with his characteristic moral equivocation so clearly exhibited elsewhere. So the rhetoric of "The 'Gees" exists somewhere between racist rhetoric and ironic moralizing. It hints at, but never formally embraces, both of these positions. What is embraced wholeheartedly, though, is off-handed reference to human gullibility:

> 'Gees are occasionally to be encountered in our sea-ports, but more particularly in Nantucket and New Bedford. But these 'Gees are not the 'Gees of Forgo. That is, they are no longer

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> green 'Gees. They are sophisticated 'Gees, and hence liable to be taken for naturalized citizens badly sunburnt. Many a Chinaman, in new coat and pantaloons, his long queue coiled out of sight in one of Genin's hats, has promenaded Broadway, and been taken merely for an eccentric Georgia planter. The same with 'Gees; a stranger need have a sharp eye to know a 'Gee, even if he see him (Melville, *Library of America,* 597).

The "Genin's hats" reference is to John Nicholas Genin (whose shop occupied the storefront next to P.T. Barnum's American Museum), and recalls Barnum's place in the characteristic American love of "tall tales" and bogus freaks. In the context of the story, however, foregrounding American character traits also recalls that racist solutions to social problems can be joined to national character. The racist rhetoric of "The 'Gees" serves a larger purpose than expressing hatred. By reference to the father-figure of American deception, P. T. Barnum, Barnum's midway call to deception of "you won't believe your eyes," becomes "you can't believe your eyes." The call is recast as social judgment. "The 'Gees" is careful to never take a moral position on whether one should or should not believe one's eyes—the racist and tolerant positions, respectively. So the story takes an odd sort of moral position: any attempt to judge one another is devalued, including any attempt to judge by racist standards. To do so would be to devalue human relation, not because of any

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moral right or wrong, but because judgment is predicated upon opinion, a child of deception.

In one sense, this degradation of the possibility of social judgment has been anticipated by Melville's degradation of the rhetoric. Any final position, either moral or artistic, seems to be unworthy of Melville's support. But these seemingly disparate treatments of perception in Melville's short stories do, on occasion, come together. A simple example of this would be the narrator's combined judgments of society from a position high up in both the bell tower and balcony of "The Two Temples." From high-up he looks down in judgment. But combined skepticism toward both social and artistic perception is best exemplified, once again, in "Bartleby the Scrivener."

Bartleby's manner of perception was previously elucidated as if this were the central device of the story. However, Bartleby is also positioned objectively in the story. He is judged by the narrator. Just what it is that Bartleby tells the reader, how one comes to understand this character's motivations as a human being, are at least as important as his peculiar mannerisms. Bartleby is an allegory of perception; but Bartleby is defiantly enigmatic. He is nothing less than an embodiment of the inefficacy of perception. Bartleby's character cannot be understood or perceived clearly. The will to finally grasp some understanding of Bartleby's character is the

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driving force of the story's action. But Bartleby remains intractable. He works in silence behind a screen. He symbolizes perception blocked.

Melville's appended ending to the story, the rumor of Bartleby's employment in the "Dead Letter Office," is yet another example of Melville's devaluation of his own art. Bartleby is the sorter of dead letters, the last, pathetic stop along the line of unheard communication. Melville, like his characters who perceive and are perceived ineffectually, sorts his own dead letters in his writing. Bartleby's allegorical construction expands to include Melville's career, human society and art in general. Nothing is concluded. Only the drama of a problematized perception remains.

The notion of perception in Melville's work is a troubled one. This same perception is very often a perception from above, and is intensely involved in the material architecture—of the place from which the view is taken. Viewing from out of the windows in high buildings—investigating the world with a troubled perception—is metaphorically derived as a species of his own writing. Yet this personal allegory illuminates his inmost feelings about his writing career; it explains the fascination with such imagery in the first place, as well as the fact that the imagery is problematized, fraught with personal danger, and often associated with notions of failure, falling, or death. Falling from heights and collapsed towers in Melville are not Freudian

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symbols of erection and organism, but rather characteristic images that reflect the dreamed ascension of writing success (both monetary and intellectual) and inevitable failure and collapse. In this literary architecture, the writer is an architect or builder, the narrator looks out of high windows of re-imagined material structures, and the buildings or viewers (and sometimes both) fall to ruins—ruins of career, of character, of self. Its best specimen in fiction is *Pierre*.

Pierre is a downward spiraling *bildungsroman*, which traces a failed career, a precursor to Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. The failure of Pierre's book of speculative philosophy, of his loves, of his reconstructed family, stand in counterpoint to a series of more and more egregious houses and buildings. No other book of Melville's presents as forthright an architectural symbology as *Pierre*. At the outset comes the somewhat stable manorial seat of the Glendinning's, Saddle Meadows, which Curtis Dahl describes as symbolizing "indeed Pierre's handsome but strangely imprisoning father—a father who is both a high, guiding ideal whom Pierre must follow and a whited sepulcher from whom he must flee" (Dahl, 10). Then comes the picturesque (in all its implications) cottage of Mrs. Lanyllyn's, which is directly contrasted to the dark and mysterious Ulver farmhouse and the disturbing but only half-denoted houses in which Isabel seems to have lived upon coming to America. None of

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this symbolism is very subtle, which is entirely in keeping with the intended project of a popular novel—Melville's bowl of "country milk" that went very wrong. The Gothic architectural elements of these houses directly correspond to the binary aspect of Gothic literature, being at once free in form and troubling in psychological implications. The troubling psychological aspect of the Gothic moves to the fore as the novel progresses. This is true of the characters as well as the houses, to say nothing of the form of the novel itself. Melville runs into the same trouble that Brown encountered when writing in this way, as did Hawthorne in the last Romances and Poe in his only attempt at long fiction. Mixing Gothic architecture and Gothic literature caused remarkably similar structural difficulties for these writers. The descent intensifies when the action moves to New York City. The Watch House Ward is more deeply resonant of the id—sexually charged, chaotic, lawless—than any structure before. Glen's "cooery" is now a problematized Gothic cottage, set on the outskirts of the city, highlighting the separation from Pierre, as well as Glen's self-imposed isolation of mind. The mad house of the Church of the Apostles stands for a speculative mind engaged in an entirely debased philosophy, as well as the hopelessness of faith that overwhelms Pierre the character and the somewhat chaotic form that overwhelms *Pierre* the novel. Finally, the actual New York City landmark building "the Tombs" appears,

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just as it does in "Bartleby the Scrivener." The moral descent to perigee is complete, both architecturally and in the fiction, at the very moment that the correspondence between fictional and actual structures is at its apogee.

Other works evince the symbolism of a ruined career as architectural ruin. In *Israel Potter,* the eponymous character finally makes it back to the house that symbolizes all of his hopes and past, but it has fallen to "a little heap of ruinous masonry" (Melville, *Library of America,* 444). *Moby-Dick,* as on so many other scores, is replete with examples. In directly comparing architecture and writing, Melville makes a self-effacing gesture in asserting that "the architect, not the builder," will better make a "draught of a systemization of cetology," where cetology stands for speculative philosophy, the architect for the philosopher, and the builder for the writer of novels (Melville, *Moby-Dick,* 512). So he will leave his "cetological System thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower" (Melville, *Moby-Dick,* 305). The ruin in this is its incomplete state, in Melville's apology for his book, even as he defiantly asserts an ironic response as the discrepancy between the appearance of failure and reality: "For small erections may finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity.

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God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 197).

By the time of *Clarel*, architectural symbolism expressed as ruins will be thrown into overdrive, swinging from wild inspiration in heights—touches of the sublime out of Longinus—to bare ruins strewn about the ground of Palestine. (4) This same biographical material, the trips abroad, is part of the background of *Timoleon*. But *Timoleon* marks a turn from the despair of *Clarel,* so much a precursor to the typical setting of Modernist poetry after *The Waste Land*. *Timoleon* is the most lucid example of Melville's literary architecture even as it is his most uncharacteristic in its optimism. Views from above, the correspondence of towers and high buildings to the narrator's speculations, the descent into ruins likened to the failure of Melville's writing career, are all present in the extreme. But architectural symbolism in *Timoleon* functions as an apotheosis set against all that has come before. In this collection, literary architecture speaks of hope, however small.

The foregrounding of architectural symbology in this collection has been noted by Christopher Sten. He contrasts the important place of architecture in *Clarel* to *Timoleon*:

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> But in *Timoleon* (1891), the last work to be published in Melville's lifetime, many of those same questions are brought repeatedly to the fore and, for the first time a single volume—by Melville or any other poet of the nineteenth century—made the central subject....As a whole, the collection is profoundly concerned with the character, meaning, and effect of art, and of the visual arts especially, so much so that *Timoleon* ought to be recognized as the high point of Melville's lifelong preoccupation with the subject (Sten, 34).

The background source for the matter of these poems is generally the European tour of 1849 and the Near East trip of 1856-57. Therefore, they are kin to the other work that directly came out the experiences of arts and architecture, such as the "Statues of Rome" lecture, wherein not only the preoccupation with arts and architecture is part of the lecture's invention, but the significance of ruins in this rhetoric begins to be seen: "Governments have changed; empires have fallen; nations have passed away; but these mute marbles remain—the oracles of time, the perfection of art" (Sealts, 359). Ruins begin to have an oppressive effect on Melville, the results of which can be seen in his journal entries describing the effect of his visit to Rome: "Rome fell flat on me. Oppressively flat...the whole landscape nothing independent of associations" (quoted in Sten, 21). Later, Melville laments that "More *imagination* wanted *at* Rome than at home to appreciate the place...Ruins look as much *out of place in Rome* as *in British Museum*" (quoted in Sten, 21). The remnants of this oppression—reimagined as

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symbolically ruined structures—permeate *Clarel*, and reappear in *Timoleon*, but *Timoleon* finds a way out. William Bysshe Stein will describe this as a "shocking reversal of earlier attitudes" (quoted in Short, 115). A good example would be the virtual triptych of "The Parthenon," "Greek Masonry," and "Greek Architecture," which carries this optative mood of possible redemption through the art of architecture (Melville's literary architecture) as a binding motif. Melville finds "reverence for the archetype," and "blocks in symmetry revealed," whereas in *Clarel* and in so much of the earlier work there was only ruin and despair. It is as if Redburn really did get the chance to rewrite his father's guidebook.

However tenuously, Melville begins to question his own habit of monochromatically troping ruins as versions of his personal despair and speculative and artistic failure. In "the Garden of Metrodorus," the setting of ruins and abandoned buildings brings forth not simple disheartenment, but a plausible hope in as series of questions:

> Here none come forth, here none go in,
> Here silence strange, and dumb seclusion dwell:
> Content from loneness who may win?
> And is this stillness peace or sin
> Which noteless thus apart can keep its dell? (Melville, *Selected Poems*, 55)

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The scene begins to suggest possibility, as the voice of the poet leaves the questions unanswered, poised for multiple responses. While tenuous, this is nonetheless a sea-change from the previous, almost entirely negative and deterministic usage of ruins in Melville's literary architecture.

During "In a Garret" the fall from heights, which characterized Melville's literary architecture previously, is patently redeemed as it is mythologized by reference to the symbol of the heroically successful diver in Edward Bulwer Lytton's "The Diver": "gems and jewels let them heap—/Wax sumptuous as the Sophi:/For me, to grapple from Art's deep/One dripping trophy!" (Melville, *Selected Poems,* 187). Here, too, are echoes of Melville's visit to Saint Sophia in Constantinople, also evidence a new outlook upon the possibility of redemption from a fall and clarity of perception from heights. In an entire reversal of the gesture of the fall—and an off-hand revitalization of the admiration for men who "dive," Melville writes of Saint Sophia in his journal of December 13, 1856 that it: "looks as partly underground; as if you saw but the superstructure of some immense temple, yet to be disinherited. You step *down* to enter." In this poem, Melville is in the garret attic, as usual, but now he encounters positive implications in place

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of his lifelong troubled perception. The desire to dive and succeed has been replaced by the history of having done so.

Recompense is found in "Pisa's Leaning Tower." A certain obvious phallic imagery is overt in this poem, the leaning tower being presented as impending flaccidity, and so on:

> The tower in tiers of architraves,
> Fair circle over cirque,
> A trunk of rounded colon[n]ades,
> the maker's master-work,
> Impends with all its pillared tribes,
> and, poising them, debates:
> it thinks to plunge—but hesitates;
> Shrinks back—yet fain would slide;
> Withholds itself—itself would urge;
> Hovering, shivering on the verge,
> A would-be suicide. (Melville, *Selected Poems*, 60)

Bryan Short makes a sophisticated interpretation of the matter, yet nonetheless misses the mark. It is Short's contention that the leaning tower does symbolize aesthetic achievement. Short sees the tower as depicting in this context failure in "its ridiculous lean" (Short, 114). The tower depicts an intended perfection in art, but because the tower is falling, it is failed and, as he states "is clearly *not* 'the maker's masterwork'" (Short, 114). Short's summary of his

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own analysis takes architecture in *Timoleon* to mean nothing more than failure in entire: "finally architecture is revealed as exemplary of exactly that contextualized, figuratively unstable creative process which its age and solidity seemed earlier to contradict" (Short, 116). But if this is true, and if the tower of Pisa is not the maker's master-work simply owing to its lean, what is one to make of the fact that the tower—designating aesthetic perfection—clearly does not fall? There is nothing ridiculous in the lean of the tower—rather this lean, and the dramatized decision not to fall, amplifies the poignancy of the symbol: the tower of aesthetic success is merely a "would-be suicide." It is poised to fail, but in the end, does not. It stands forever as a monument of the threat of failure, and the strength of fine art to endure. Because it is the maker's masterwork, the tower holds together, and is a fitting symbol of the transformation of Melville's literary architecture from existential despair to an admittedly tempered, but nonetheless optative, mood. The vision of the Parthenon is the ultimate exemplar of this new literary architecture, wherein both literature and architecture are poised in perfect balance:

Seen aloft from afar

Estranged in site,
Aerial gleaming, warmly white,
You look a suncloud motionless

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> In noon of day divine;
> Your beauty charmed enhancement takes
> In Art's long after-shine. (Melville, *Selected Poems*, 71)

While the Parthenon is a ruin (in fact, can be thought of, for Western art, at least, as *the* ruin) it is nevertheless troped as perfect architecture, and suggests the perfectibility of Melville's writing. Art has a long "after-shine" after all, and the problematized view from above that so drove Melville in his earlier work, has found a native clarity. The symbol of the new literary architecture, of perfection in art, is "Seen aloft from afar." The problematized view from above is redeemed.

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Chapter Notes, Chapter 6

(1) See Sealts, *Melville as Lecturer*.
(2) An excellent and comprehensive introduction to this topic in general and the case of Melville in particular can found in *Melville and the Fine Arts*, Christopher Sten, ed. Sten's Introduction gives detailed accounts of this trips abroad and the arts Melville saw there, whether visits to architectural structures, galleries or museums or personal encounters with artists and arts critics. See especially the "Introduction," pp. 6ff. and *Melville Log*.
(3) See Sten, Adams, and Cohen.
(4) For virtually complete coverage of the significance of architecture in Clarel, see Marovitz, "Melville's Temples."

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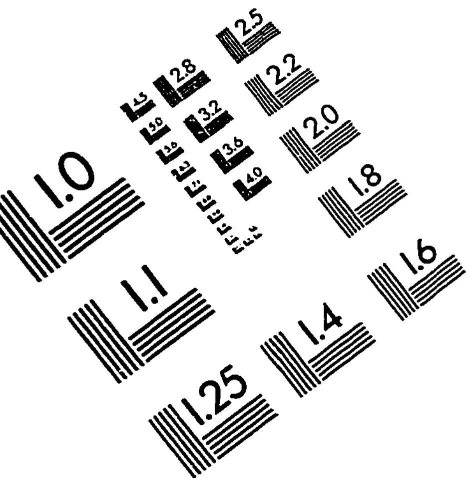
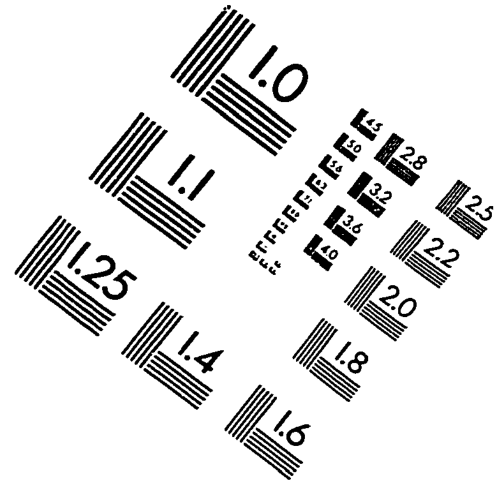
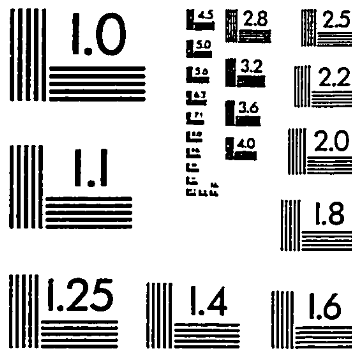
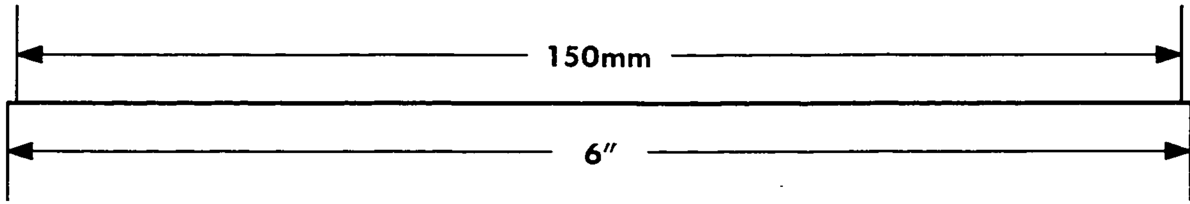
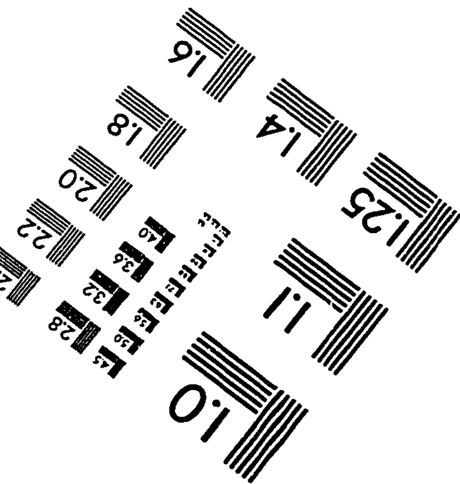
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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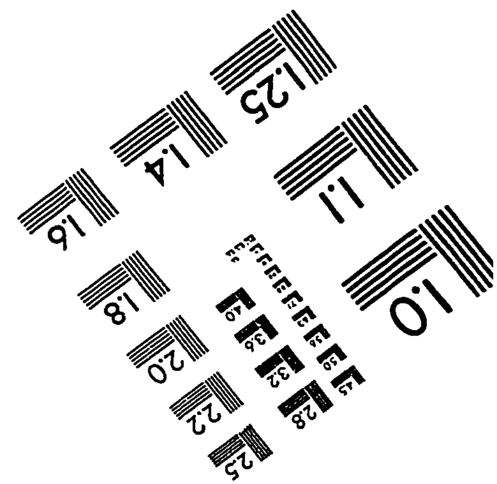

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