“A LAND OF PICTURE”: NOVELIZED ART AND VISUAL LITERATURE IN COLE, COOPER, AND HAWTHORNE, 1826 - 1860

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Title: "A Land of Picture": Novelized Art and Visual Literature in Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne, 1826-1860

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In this study, I use a blended-genre approach to reading canonical literature and art in the United States during the antebellum period. Acknowledging that the mediums of art and literature are both narrative-driven and dependent upon techniques of visualization, I examine works that show marked hybridity of form, identifying artists and writers practiced in synthesizing media and genres to create hybridized texts. I suggest that reframing the aesthetic canon to include a blended-genre paradigm provides an alternative mode of analysis for understanding the cultural work of American Romanticism.

I focus my study on canonical American Romantic art and literature for its powerful narrative voice in the construction of national identity, locating convergent practices in three major works: *The Course of Empire* paintings by Thomas Cole, *The Crater* by James Fenimore Cooper, and *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. I also identify blended-genre practice in Cole's poetry and prose, Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and selected short stories by Hawthorne. I consider how convergences circulated from one text to another and recover a submerged discourse of the time period.

Connecting Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne through *The Course of Empire*, I suggest their use of the cyclical theory of history as a foundation narrative for the establishment of American identity, and Cole's paintings as an influence used to explore the projected fate of the United States. I also suggest that an unexpected outcome of antebellum American Romantic art and

literature was the suppression of a unique American national identity even as Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne eagerly sought to provide a national art and literature for the emergent nation.

I consider the interdiscursivity of blended-genre practices and its production of discourses that challenged a "master narrative" of Manifest Destiny during the antebellum period. Reading beyond traditional genre boundaries, I re-envision the cultural work of writers and artists of American Romanticism, illuminate submerged discourses, and provide a new understanding of historical and cultural conditions within which art and text were created.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Melville famously wrote: "Whereas, great geniuses are parts of the times; they themselves are the times; and possess a correspondent coloring" (2313). When reading for correspondences, one might ask, as W.J.T. Mitchell does, in "Interdisciplinarity," what is this text trying to tell us? (544). If we read beyond medium and genre, will the text reveal "parts of the times" and "possess a correspondent coloring"? Using Wai-Chee Dimock's "kinship" theory of genre interconnection, I use a blended-genre approach to reading literature and art as a different way of looking at the canon in the United States during the antebellum period. Blended-genre compositions share characteristics from two or more mediums, as well as the transposition of genres common to both media. The word "genre" itself has a mutable connotation. The term "blended-genre" is meant to indicate a crossing-over of threshold categories, between media, disciplines, and aesthetic practices.

Reading through blended-genre, I consider the circulation of convergences from one text to another, creating what Dimock refers to as "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing," as a means to recover companion texts that have a "correspondent coloring," revealing a circulating, submerged discourse of the "times" (74). Through blended-genre analysis, I identify writers and artists who employed both literary and painterly techniques to achieve purpose and meaning in their texts. Acknowledging that both mediums of art and literature are narrative-driven and dependent upon techniques of visualization, I examine works that show marked hybridity of form, identifying artists and writers practiced in synthesizing both mediums and genres to create hybridized texts. I suggest that reframing the aesthetic canon to

include a blended-genre paradigm provides an alternative mode of analysis for understanding the cultural work of American Romanticism.

Although this dissertation has a wide compass, including not only literature, but also art and history, I do not claim to have expertise in the fields of either art or history. The focus of my study, visual literature and narrative art, is posed necessarily under the aegis of literature, within the interstices of art and history. My study of Cole is focused on his narrative and literary artistry, as demonstrated in his writings and use of literary narrative forms in his paintings. I center my study on canonical American Romantic art and literature for its powerful narrative voice in the construction of national identity, locating convergent practices through the use of blended-genre analysis, in three major works: *The Course of Empire* paintings by Thomas Cole, *The Crater* by James Fenimore Cooper, and *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. I also identify blended-genre practice in Cole's poetry and prose, Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and selected short stories by Hawthorne, as well as the emergent use of the cyclical theory of history as an organizing narrative structure within canonical works of American Romanticism. I consider the interdiscursivity of blended-genre, as well as the permeable boundaries of visual literature and narrative art, and how their production of discourses challenged the master narrative of Manifest Destiny during the antebellum period. Reading beyond traditional genre boundaries allows us to re-envision the cultural work of writers and artists of American Romanticism, illuminating submerged discourses and providing a new understanding of historical and cultural conditions within which art and text were created.

Henry James, in "The Art of Fiction," observed "the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete" (*Critical* 188). Cole, like James, was an artist of pronounced literary and poetic sensibilities, and well-positioned to

influence both his contemporary writers and artists as "father" of the Hudson River School. I suggest that both Cooper and Hawthorne were influenced by Cole's narrative art, particularly his series of allegorical and narrative paintings, *The Course of Empire*. In addition, I trace the paintings as a circulating discourse within Cooper's and Hawthorne's fiction, and name the cyclical theory of history as a narrative template found within the work of selected texts of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne. The cyclical theory of history, the idea that all nations were subject to rise and then fall, was prominent and widely accepted in the nineteenth century, finding its way from history and religion into European and American Romantic art and literature. Although the theory can be traced back to antiquity, in the antebellum United States, the cycle had two possible trajectories: the first, a pessimistic version, posited the inexorability of the cycle, regardless of human behavior; the second, a more optimistic version, allowed the possibility that moral virtue might preclude a nation's fall.

Connecting Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne through *The Course of Empire*, I suggest their use of the cyclical theory of history as a foundation narrative for the establishment of American identity, and Cole's paintings as an influence upon their compositions to explore the projected fate of the United States. Cole's aesthetic ability to "picture" the cyclical theory through visual narrative removed the theory from the philosophical realm into a narrative "origin myth," one that could explain the story of America to its people. The cyclical theory as an origin myth trounced the belief in American exceptionalism, offering instead an alternative history that ended in catastrophe. A foundational narrative or origin myth is meant to recirculate the story to maintain the identity of the culture, returning to the mythical origin to perpetuate its meaning. The use of the cyclical theory of history functions in this capacity in *The Course of Empire* paintings, *The Crater*, and *The Marble Faun*. However, the cyclical theory appropriates the

project of cultural-nationalism by embedding Old World influences within a New World cultural paradigm. The confluence of Cole's work in history painting as well as landscape, combined with the sublime elements of European Romanticism, created an American Romanticism that transmitted a "degradation story" of America's future, diverting the cause of cultural-nationalism and forestalling the development of a national identity. The infiltration of the Romantic sublime into American landscape art and literature, while matching the panoramic majesty and grandeur of the physical geography of the United States, also promulgated fearful and prophetic ideas that the United States, like Rome, would be subject to the cyclical theory of history, which ended in destruction. Therefore, an unexpected outcome of antebellum American Romantic art and literature was the suppression of a unique American national identity, even as Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne eagerly sought to provide a national art and literature for the emergent nation.

For the purposes of this study, the term "United States" will be used for describing the nation as a political entity and the term "America" for describing the idealized mythology constructed by cultural practitioners during the antebellum period. The term "America" transcribes the cultural-nationalism of the time period and also the psychic split between the divergent paths of the new nation. The term "United States" reflected the political and geographic designation of the nation, whereas, the concept of America was utilized for the idealistic and mythological iconography of the new nation. Therefore, America is frequently used in the discussion of national identity, particularly in criticism found within the fields of Art History or American Studies.

I use the term "cultural-nationalism" as an organizing precept for the nation-building process undertaken by nineteenth-century antebellum writers and artists. Although the term is often used within the context of post-colonial criticism, my discussion of the circulation of

British and European discourses suggests a post-colonial effect upon nation-building in the United States. While noting John Carlos Rowe's assertion, "It is possible to speak of early United States nationalism as itself a colonial project, insofar as the formations of the nation depended crucially on the transformation of British colonialism into national institutions and practices in a rapid, defensive manner," I consider the ways in which literature and art of the United States expressed cultural-nationalism within a colonialist project (80). The primary works under consideration in this study, although about *American* nation-building, are set outside of the United States, affirming them as transatlantic American Romantic texts.

I use the definition of nation-building offered by Sarah Corse, who argues that "high-culture literature" as opposed to market-driven "popular culture" has been used in the construction of national identity. Corse claims that "the development of an American nation and an American literature thus focused on the rejection of an English identity and the English nation" (33). Presuming that the materials of nation-building may be found outside of literature, within the iconographic realm of culture, I also acknowledge the influence of the visual in "constructing, maintaining, and disseminating cultural values, social relations, and identity formations" as does Larry Reynolds when he refers to Mitchell's "pictorial turn" ("American" 382). I use these definitions of identity formation and nation-building throughout this study and define the texts of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne within the category of "high-culture literature," as their works were considered within the cultural milieu of the upper class and/or as markers of upward mobility among emergent "middle-class arrivistes" (Wallach, *Landscape* 13). I also suggest that these texts, characteristic of the "pictorial turn," were used as explicit and implicit framing materials in the cultural construction of proposed nation-building. Noting the power of discourse art had during the nation-building period and the commodification of art in the nation-

building process, I argue that reading these texts in a new way reveals the ambivalent circulation of power that, ironically, worked to impede, as well as inform, the construction of an American identity. I also suggest that Cole's art is more powerful and influential than literature during the period of American Romanticism, and therefore, must be considered as a primary mode of discourse when examining canonical literature.

Cooper and Hawthorne, through intertextual correspondence with Cole's *The Course of Empire*, used Rome and its ruins to address the cultural tension prevalent during America's nation-building, implying that there could not be a New World American Paradise as it had already been infected with the European (Old World) knowledge of original sin. David S. Reynolds enumerates this "sharp divide" during the Age of Jackson, one in which "writers were confronted with the choice between competing styles: one pointing to democratic passions, average Americans, and working-class sympathies, and the other to a more elitist conception of culture, which meant sustaining subtle European techniques" (*Waking Giant* 238). The work of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne reveals ambiguous resistance to the capitalist trajectory of the rapidly changing nation, in contrast to the idea of nation as set forth by the Jeffersonian "old aristocracy," or the myth of the Agrarian ideal. This, in conjunction with the influence of European Romanticism, Byronic ideology, and the Americanized version of the sublime, synthesized and transmitted Old World discourses through New World rhetoric. Ironically, what may have been interpreted as canonical works that articulated national identity instead maintained Old World, British and European-influenced cultural paradigms.

The first chapter, "Thomas Cole: Poet and Painter," is centered on the biographical development of Cole as it pertains to the construction of nation-building cultural productions during the antebellum period in America. I discuss Cole's origins as well as his influences and

review the extant scholarship by art historians, particularly Angela Miller and Alan Wallach, who have long noted the need for further study regarding the literary qualities of Cole's paintings. I also argue that Cole's art reveals the use of Old World materials during New World nation-building construction of American identity. Ironically, what is seen as iconic American painting credited with establishing a separate and unique American identity during the nation-building period of the nineteenth century was heavily influenced by European Romanticism. Additionally, Cole's poetry and non-fiction writing reveal his practice of using art to inform literature and literature to inform art through an inseparable blended-genre synthesis. While recognizing Cole's stature as a visual artist has eclipsed his standing as a poet, I propose that his poetry deserves greater recognition as an exemplar of hybridized European and American Romanticism, marking transitional literary expression during the nation-building period.

The second chapter, "Desolate Fortune: Cooper and Cole," examines the parallel structures between Cooper and Cole, beginning with the influence of *The Course of Empire* upon *The Crater*. Providing the historical context of the literary use of *tableaux vivants* in the nineteenth century, I then offer a comparative overlay of *tableaux vivants* in *The Crater* as they correspond with *The Course of Empire*, as well as develop the narrative, literary, and allegorical correspondences between the two. Noting elite power structures embedded within the cultural productions of Cole and Cooper, I extend the work of Alan Wallach, who examines the commodification of both visual art and literature and its use as nation-building rhetoric in the antebellum period of nineteenth-century America. Cole and Cooper, creating a past for the nation through the evocative and sublime imagery of historical romance, also shifted the nation ideologically from an unspoiled American Paradise, to an empire within the vast panorama of time, producing an unsettling ambiguity about the future of the United States. Both engaged in

transatlantic mirroring of European art and literature into the American literary and visual landscape. By utilizing the same narrative framework, as well as similar literary and pictorial techniques, Cole and Cooper created a convergence of narrative art and visual literature. Both Cooper and Cole used the cyclical theory of history as a framing narrative, anchoring the story of America to the "Old World," positing America as a corruptible empire that must regain its morality in order to preserve its future.

The third chapter, "Of Graves and Monuments: Hawthorne and Cole," discusses the American "School of Catastrophe" in the nineteenth century, the influence of Sir Walter Scott upon Cooper, Cole, and Hawthorne, and the use of the cyclical theory of history in Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne. Tracing visual correspondences to *The Course of Empire* in selected short stories by Hawthorne, reveals the emergence of his use of the cyclical theory through pictorialism, "sketching" thematic and visual techniques later used in *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne, Cole, and Cooper, considered practitioners of the American "School of Catastrophe," shared Sir Walter Scott's historical Romance novels as an influence, utilized the cyclical theory of history as a thematic framework within their texts, and blended genres through visual literature and narrative art.

In the fourth chapter, "A Land of Picture: America in Rome," I consider Hawthorne's immersion within the visual arts and its manifestation in *The Marble Faun*. I connect Cole and Hawthorne, showing how *The Marble Faun* and *The Course of Empire* employed narrative structures with striking similarities in thematic content, allegorical meaning, and historical and cultural allusion. I complete a comparative overlay of the *tableaux vivants* of *The Marble Faun* as they correspond with scenes in *The Course of Empire*. I build upon the work of Rita K. Gollin and John L. Idol, Jr., as well as Judith Kaufman Budz, whose thorough analysis of the influence

of the visual arts in Hawthorne's fiction provided a foundation for establishing a cultural connection between Hawthorne and Cole. Also important is Robert S. Levine's essay, "'Antebellum Rome' in *The Marble Faun*," situating the novel within an American context—thereby marking parallels between Roman history and America's present (and predicted future) in both Cole and Hawthorne. Further developing the work of Susan Manning and David S. Reynolds, who suggest that Hawthorne used Rome as a displaced setting to explore anxieties about America, I argue that Hawthorne alluded to American art within *The Marble Faun*, using the cyclical theory of history as a narrative trope to circulate ideas about the uncertain future of the United States. Comparing Hawthorne's allegory of the Fortunate Fall to Cole's *The Course of Empire*, I argue for his part, along with Cooper and Cole, in holding back, rather than promoting, a unique and separate American identity, through the inclusion of classical European modes of history, literature, and visual imagery. Hawthorne, experimenting in *The Marble Faun* through the use of fragmentary *visual tableaux,* the cyclical theory of history, and Biblical allusion, creates an apotheosis of a blended-genre text. The use of ekphrasis in the novel is so prevalent that the visual narrative should be considered a primary discourse and the written text secondary. A dialectic on the cyclical theory of history, as well as the future course of the United States, Hawthorne attempts to reconcile the despair of the past with hope for the future, resulting in ambiguity rather than resolution.

In conclusion, I suggest that reading these texts together reveals America as "a land of picture," with kinship genres as generative modes of transmission during the nation-building era. The powerful influence of the cyclical theory of history, as visualized through Cole's *The Course of Empire*, circulated throughout canonical works of American Romanticism. Although Cooper and Hawthorne utilized the cyclical theory, the power of Cole's visual narrative of the theory

transformed it into American myth. Therefore, only with the *decline* of American Romanticism, as practiced by Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne, would the United States discover a unique and unfettered American voice, forged in the crucible of the Civil War. Ironically, as prophesized by Cole and the cyclical theory of history, destruction and desolation provided a *tabula rasa* for the new nation, liberating the repressed and enslaved Americans from their "voiceless" marginalization, and only then providing the landscape through which an inclusive American identity might be constructed.

CHAPTER 2

THOMAS COLE, PAINTER AND POET

Many scholars have written about the close connection between the visual and the written arts during the antebellum period of the nineteenth century in the United States. Although the connection between the two practices is often cited, scholarship regarding the effect of the kinship between the two "sister arts" during the nation-building period of the United States is limited. For the most part, scholarship has remained genre-bound; with few exceptions, art historians study Cole primarily for his influence upon other Hudson River painters and also for his part in creating an American identity through his iconic landscape painting. Studies of literature of the time period focus on printed text, fiction and non-fiction, newspapers, periodicals, or advertisements. Although commonplace to recognize the narrative capacity of paintings, few have seriously explored the ways in which art and literature either cross genre or blend, and the effect and influence of blended-genre upon the canons of both art and literature in early nineteenth-century America. Close examination of cross and blended genres offers new perspective through diffusive rather than strictly linear expression. Blended-genre recovers meaning that lies beyond the boundary of a linear genre. Expanded study of Cole's artistic vision, as a pre-eminent practitioner of both poetry and painting, offers the opportunity to explore the impact of blended- genre upon the articulation of a distinctive identity for the United States during the antebellum period.

Renowned for his place as the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, Cole was also a poet, a short story writer, and (albeit reluctant), speaker. He was a practitioner of American Romanticism in his paintings and writings; often times employing the picturesque and the sublime to convey his spiritual response to nature, as well as his conflicted and ambivalent

reaction to American progress. Influenced by both Wordsworth and Byron, Cole's landscape paintings and poetry may be classified as picturesque as well as sublime (Wallach, *Landscape* 29-30). His dramatization of Nature through personification exhibits elements of "Dark Romanticism" in both his paintings and his poetry. The tension between the real and the ideal—the idea of America as both Paradise and Paradise Lost—is a recurrent thematic concern. In addition, the paradigm of America as Paradise and Europe as Paradise Lost, posits Cole's work as transatlantic in nature. In addition, Cole's work, viewed as a meditation on "moral themes of universal application" and "an espousal of Christian virtues" often utilizes the allegorical to convey meaning and adds compositional elements of literary narrative to his paintings (21). Although Cole is best recognized as "the leading landscape painter in America," he should also be remembered as "a member of the intellectual community," enjoying a close friendship with Bryant, and "accepted in the literary world as a spokesman on aesthetics" (Tymn 871). Naming Cole as a "central figure linking literature and the arts during the early period of nineteenth-century romanticism," Tymn suggests that critical study of Cole's prose will provide "new ways of understanding American art" and a "fresh basis for evaluating and reacting to Cole and the period in which he lived" (v-vi).

Cole practiced as both artist and writer throughout his life. In 1825, Cole sold three landscapes, and also saw the publication of his short story, "Emma Moreton: A West Indian Tale," in the *Saturday Evening Post*. In 1827, Cole's illustration of a scene from Cooper's Romantic novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, was published. In 1835, while working on the commissioned series of paintings, *The Course of Empire*, Cole delivered a lecture on American scenery at the New York Lyceum and composed a twelve-part dramatic poem, "The Spirits of the Wilderness." In 1836, he completed and exhibited the panoramic five paintings of *The*

Course of Empire and published "Essay on American Scenery" in *American Monthly Magazine*. In the productive year of 1840, Cole completed four canvases, published a poem, "The Summer Days Are Ended," and an impassioned defense of art in "A Letter to Critics on the Art of Painting" in the *Knickerbocker*. In 1841, two more poems, "The Lament of the Forest" and "Winds," were published in the *Knickerbocker,* and Cole delivered a "Lecture on American Scenery" before the Catskill Lyceum (later published in *Northern Lights*). As Cole completed two more canvases and took on his first pupil, Frederick Edwin Church, his essay, "Sicilian Scenery and Antiquities" was published in the *Knickerbocker* in 1844. It is fortuitous that Cole began his prodigious career as a young man, since he died unexpectedly of pleurisy just ten days after celebrating his 47th birthday on February 11, 1848.

The Two Thomas Coles

Thomas Cole was raised in England and immigrated to the United States at the age of eighteen. A true Renaissance man, little in Cole's early life indicated his polymathic development as an artist and a poet. Apprenticed as an "engraver of simple designs for calico" at the age of nine, it was Cole's love of reading and his self-tutoring in the arts that account for his erudition in literature, visual arts, history, and architecture (Noble 16). Cole's upbringing, as a British born, naturalized American citizen, along with his interest in both the visual and written arts, shaped an individual whose work is marked by hybrid influences. Carl Pfluger notes the difficulty in reconciling what is seen as "two Thomas Coles" and questions how these two personas might best be understood" (630). Influenced by both European and American culture, Cole is the paradigm of a true transatlantic figure. It is important to consider not only the "two personas" of Cole, but also to better understand the ways he influenced other American artists, both writers and painters, of the time period.

Philippe Mahoux-Pauzin recognizes the irony of Cole's English upbringing in the "smoke-palled industrial belt of Lancashire," juxtaposed with his leading role to "inaugurate the first national school of painting in the young United States," noting further that one can "scarcely overrate the importance of Cole and the Hudson River School in the America of the 1820s" (90). Although Cole studied the European masters in both art and literature, he reveled in the sublime wonder and beauty of his adopted homeland, which resulted in a stylistic artistry influenced by the Old and the New World, as well as European and American art and literature. The juxtaposed "double consciousness" of Cole through hybrid domains, British and American, as well as painter and poet, fashioned a separate and unique American identity formed by diverse and competing influences. Therefore, seminal "nation-building" art, including Cole's allegorical series of paintings, *The Course of Empire,* may be best understood as facilitating the construction of a flexible, fluid, and transatlantic American identity.

Cole's preference for the British literature of his native land, including Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Byron, is well-documented (Wallach, "Cole, Byron" 377). Cole painted, according to Vesell, "with Wordsworth's doctrine, to obliterate unimportant aspects of a scene and to clarify the salient features which would eventually emerge on contemplation" (Noble xix). His sketch-books and letters to friends and patrons include references to Coleridge's "The Wanderings of Cain" and "Love," Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," "Moods of My Own Mind," and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso" (Noble, 313-24). Cole used a passage from Byron's fourth canto of *Childe Harold*'s *Pilgrimage* for the *Course of Empire* exhibition advertisements (Wallach, "Cole, Byron" 378):

There is the moral of all human tales;

Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,

First Freedom and then Glory—when that fails,

Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last.

And History, with all her volumes vast,

Hath but one page. ” (IV st. 108)

Paradoxically here, although Cole extols the virginal qualities of the landscape of the United States, he uses the corrupted past to frame it. Many writers and artists who traveled abroad used the antiquity of Europe as a foundation for articulating the present world they lived in, as will be explored in later chapters on Cooper and Hawthorne.

Joy Kasson has written extensively about the “European influences on the American imagination” during the first half of the nineteenth century and notes that “similar issues occupied artists in both media” (*Artistic Voyagers* 4), specifically those artists and writers who are most influenced by the imported European ideas regarding the sublime and the Romantic imagination. Kasson connects Cole to the great Romantics, including Coleridge, Keats, and Wordsworth. While noting the ‘kindred spirits’ of Bryant and Cooper, Kasson claims Cole’s preoccupation with the allegorical posits him more closely with Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville (“Voyage of Life” 54). Leon Chai posits “the nineteenth century . . . beginning with the Romantic period, pushes the concept of a canon to an extreme that verges upon self-contradiction and hence meaninglessness. By emphasizing authors rather than their works . . . such a canon loses sight of form” (3-4). From this premise, Chai concludes that “the Romantic canon emerges as a result of the primacy accorded to consciousness. The increasing significance of mind or self dictates a new relation to the literature of the past, one defined not so much by

norms embodied in the works as by authorial relation to the mind or spirit expressed in them" (4). A reconfiguration of American Romanticism through spirit rather than form re-envisions the canon. Chai believes "American Renaissance poetics shares a central concern with that of European Romanticism: the relation of 'modernity' to tradition . . . modernity consists above all of a specific mode of consciousness: subjective as opposed to objective, a literature of feeling and mind as against the literal rendering of the external world" (13). Transatlantic correspondences between European and American Romanticism, in both art and literature, may be recovered through a paradigmatic canon of consciousness, spirit, and the mind.

In her extensive treatment of Cole's position within the political and cultural constructs of the time period, Angela Miller argues that "painting was the mute poetry of national destiny, while poetry and rhetoric realized in vivid word paintings the march of American culture across the grand sweep of the continent" (87). The rhetorical power of Cole's imagery during this time period must be recognized for its effect upon both literature and art. These canonical paintings have become an iconic representation of the antebellum time period and are considered integral to the construction of an emergent national identity. Kenneth Myers argues that the "national landscape became increasingly important as a repository of cosmological, moral, and social truths" as well as "the major cultural battleground on which Americans contested the meaning of their lives and of their nation" (79).

Idyllic landscape paintings circulated powerful ideas about not only national identity, but the future of the United States. Cole understood his position of power as a cultural producer, saying, "The painter of American scenery has, indeed, privileges superior to any other. All nature here is new to art" (qtd. in Vesell 148). Cole and other Hudson River painters were considered to be cultural-nationalists, engaged in the work of creating a "distinctive culture" for

the United States (Schuyler 30). Wallach explains that acquiring works of art was "an occasion for assuming the patriotic responsibility of encouraging the arts in the young republic" ("Thomas Cole and Transatlantic" 209) and that "Cole's name was indissolubly linked to the cultural-nationalist project" (213). However, as a "conservative anti-modernist," Cole "shared none of the new generation's optimism, its faith in American democracy, American expansion, and American progress" (222). David Reynolds observes that Cole "projected into his paintings his worries over social problems," concluding that his series of paintings, including *The Course of Empire*, "suggest his sense of personal suffering and national collapse" (281-82). Angela Miller argues that "*The Course of Empire* vastly enlarged the expressive and intellectual content of the landscape genre" and that "among the nation's landscape painters, Cole was the one most directly indebted to the literary themes and oppositional stance of English romantic artists, and most at odds with the utilitarian values of urban-industrial culture" (24). Ironically, although Cole is inextricably linked to the establishment of American identity, the reception of his work may best be understood as a misrepresentation of conflicting beliefs that reached a wide, transatlantic audience.

Cole's imagery was widely known, not only within elite artistic circles, but also within mainstream culture due to the prolific transmission and dissemination of his imagery through the decorative arts (Earenfight and Siegel). His work was widely distributed through engravings that "would reach a much larger and geographically diverse audience." Indeed, according to Schuyler, "seven of the engravings were pirated by William Adams & Sons in their American Views series and transfer printed on Staffordshire china for export to the American market" (34). Cole's influence as a cultural producer was not limited to museum exhibitions or catalogs—his landscape images were on china used every day in American households. The mass production

of Cole's imagery as it was disseminated through prints and engravings, in gift books, and in fine dinnerware desired by a "growing middle class," argues Siegel, "fed both the body and the national spirit" (12). Cole's interpretation of American scenery and landscape and the perceived articulation of what it meant to be an American was far-reaching. The pervasive, iconic imagery of idealized American landscape found its way into other expressions of cultural-nationalism. Cole's visual influence upon literature of the time period has been under-evaluated and sometimes entirely overlooked. Importantly, he utilized literary composition techniques in his paintings, notably *The Course of Empire.* He was not alone in his use of blended-genre. Cooper and Hawthorne also practiced the blending of genres, producing "visual literature" in their writings.

The new nation, tasked with forging a distinctive and separate identity from that of Europe, called for new and unique art forms that would reflect the native character of the United States. Writers of the early nineteenth century, including Washington Irving, Cooper, and Bryant, worked alongside artists like Cole and other Hudson River painters to find creative and cultural expression for the emergent identity of the United States. In his introduction to *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole*, Vesell considers Cole, along with the other painters in the Hudson River School, to be "a common spirit of devotion to nature and a common background of aesthetic ideas," further noting "widespread ramifications in American literature as well as in other aspects of American culture" (xxvii). Vesell urges that "the concept of nature as expounded by Cole and the Hudson River School should be compared also with the ideas of a number of influential writers, particularly Cooper and Emerson. Both, in different ways, associated nature with virtue and civilization with degeneracy and evil" (xxxiii). Art historians have noted the thematic prevalence of anxiety in Hudson River landscape paintings, and scholars have

documented similar findings in American literature of the time. The influence and close practice of writers and artists generated hybrid art, or "extraliterary forms," "intersecting disciplinary formations," and "text networks . . . ranging across time, space, and narrative forms" (Levander and Levine, 4). Genre hybridity, pronounced in the paintings and poetry of Cole, illuminates the complexity of circulating art forms. Cole is credited as one "who accomplished in painting what Cooper had in writing, creating a new, powerful form which responded to national needs" (65).

Schuyler reminds us of the "important intersections of landscape and history" to "the development of an American national identity in the nineteenth century," noting specifically the contribution of Cole, as well as the writers Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, arguing that "American literature first became embedded in the American landscape" through their shared literary and artistic efforts (1). They established an iconic American landscape, one rooted in the ideal depiction of America as Paradise. The iconographic image of America conflicted with the antebellum political reality of the United States, which was far from ideal. Yet, many in the United States used the iconography of America to promote materialism and expansion, in spite of the artist's intent to sanctify or hallow the landscape. Cooper, Cole, and other writers and painters during the antebellum time period in the United States, actively created a unique identity, while, ironically attempting to preserve the past in order to stay the country's future course. The conflict between the ideal and the real, as conveyed through art and literature of the time period, produced a desire to return to the past rather than to march into the future. Vesell writes:

> The concept of nature as expounded by Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School should be compared also with the ideas of a number of influential writers, particularly Cooper and Emerson. Both, in different ways, associated nature with

> virtue and civilization with degeneracy and evil. Nature for them was synonymous with both personal and national health and was understood to be opposed to civilization as personified in the city, the bank, and the railroad. Civilization would produce sickness by encroaching on nature and finally by destroying it. Americans, particularly close to nature, were still virtuous, but with the march of civilization as measured by the progress of the axe through the forests, virtue would vanish, health would be destroyed, and the nation's personality lost. (xxxiii)

Cultural producers—artists and writers—were uniquely positioned as builders in the cultural construction of a New World American mythos. Cole and other Hudson River landscape painters enjoyed success among not only an elite and powerful class of patrons but also a growing middle-class eager to capitalize on the opportunities of the newly formed government of the United States. Ironically, writers and artists of the antebellum nineteenth- century United States looked to the masters of the Old World as a foundation for their ambitions. Cole, among many other writers and painters, followed in the tradition of studying the masters through extended travel abroad. With the support of his benefactor, Luman Reed, Cole set sail for Europe in 1829, so he might learn from the Old Masters, using their instruction not only as an imitative model but also as a foundation for discovering his own interpretative power in reflecting the spirit of the new nation. Bryant's "To Cole, The Painter, Departing For Europe," cautions Cole as he embarks upon his first trip abroad that

> Thine eyes shall see the light of distant skies;
> Yet, Cole! Thy heart shall bear to Europe's strand
> A living image of thy native land,

Such as on thy own glorious canvass lies. (127)

Bryant contrasts the natural beauties of nature in America with the "fair scenes" of Europe. America is glorified by:

Lone lakes—savannahs where the bison roves—

Rocks rich with summer garlands—solemn streams—

Skies, where the desert eagle wheels and screams—

Spring bloom and autumn blaze of boundless groves. (127-28)

In contrast, Europe is "But different—everywhere the trace of men, / Paths, homes, graves, ruins, from the lowest glen / To where life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air" (128). Bryant ends his sonnet urging Cole to "Gaze on them, till the tears shall dim thy sight, / But keep that earlier, wilder image bright" (128). Bryant feared that Cole's exposure to the works of the Old Masters might corrupt his artistic vision of the stark, virgin beauty of the American landscape.

Cole, heeding Bryant's advice, arranged a visit to Niagara Falls before his departure. In a letter to a patron, Cole wrote, "The falls of Niagara. I cannot think of going to Europe without having seen them. I wish to take a 'last, lingering look' at our wild scenery. I shall endeavor to impress its features so strongly on my mind that, in the midst of the fine scenery of other countries, their grand and beautiful peculiarities shall not be erased" (qtd. in Noble 72). Fortified by the sublime beauty of Niagara Falls, Cole set sail for London. However, Cole was not well-received in London, finding the British artists inhospitable and his work disregarded. Disappointed by his experience in London, Cole (alluding to Shakespeare), proclaims "their pictures are usually things 'full of sound and fury signifying nothing' " (qtd. in Noble 80). Nevertheless, Cole proved an apt student in spite of his initial disappointment. He had an enthusiastic response to Turner, particularly the *Building of Carthage*, which he judged a

"splendid composition, and full of poetry" (81). In a letter to his parents dated, Florence, June 7th, 1831, Cole reported, "I have seen fine collections of pictures here of the Old Masters, and hope to profit by them" (93).

Moral of All Human Tales: *The Course of Empire*

In Cole's journal entry dated August 24th, 1831, we begin to see his nascent ideas regarding *The Course of Empire*. Cole mused "[Volterra] must have been once much more populous and extensive than at present. It numbers now only a few thousands. In ancient times it was a stronghold, and experienced the varied fortunes of war—victory and defeat. Its streets have been often deluged with blood, and the scenes of terrible carnage" (95). Considering his report that he "sat under the ruin of an old Etruscan wall, and gazed long and silently on the great scene of desolate sublimity" (97), it is unsurprising that Cole executed *The Course of Empire* paintings immediately upon his return. His journal descriptions are preliminary sketches for the final two paintings in the series, *Destruction* and *Desolation,* illustrating the well-known idea of the time period, the cyclical theory of history. In this theory, the rise and eventual decline of a civilization is considered inevitable.

Although Cole promised to "keep that earlier, wilder image of American scenery bright amidst the glory and grandeur of Europe" (Vesell xx), he was, nevertheless, greatly influenced by his study abroad. The effect of his time spent in Europe was regarded as "launching Cole into the second phase of his artistic career lasting from 1829 to 1842, in which secular philosophical and historical themes fought for ascendancy in his landscapes" (Vesell, xx). In 1833, soon after Cole returned from his study abroad, his patron, Luman Reed, commissioned *The Course of Empire*, a series of five paintings that explored the rise and fall of mankind. Cole needed a series of canvases to compose the grand narrative sweep of history. The literary features of allegory

and narrative storytelling illuminate both the entanglement of Old World with New World as well as hybrid genres of art and narration. Painted from 1833 through 1836, this visual and literary text bridges from the nationalist literature of the revolution to the flowering of the American Renaissance. Cole's five paintings: *Savage State*, *Pastoral or Arcadian State*, *Consummation*, *Destruction*, and *Desolation*, are the literary and artistic articulation of the cyclical theory of history. The use of more than one canvas and the transition between scenes allowed for greater storytelling capacity. The multiple frames of *The Course of Empire* employed as compositional "chapters," marked Cole's use of the sublime in preference to the picturesque, creating a heightened, dramatized representation of the cyclical theory narrative.

According to Vesell, Cole contemplated the theme "for some time and for which he already had extensive notes which he wrote out in a full essay, his ideas flowing as readily into prose as onto canvas" (xx). Allan Wallach informs, "Cole's employment of an extensive written program for *The Course of Empire*, as well as his choice of a serial format, that in effect, overcame the temporal limitations of individual paintings, [reflected] his habitual identification of art with literature," also suggesting that Cole "quite consciously relied upon compositional techniques akin to the selection and compression inherent in poetic creations" ("Cole, Byron" 376). Elwood Parry explains, "What is interesting in creative terms is how Thomas Cole extracted the essence . . . from several sources and turned the whole to a different purpose—without troubling himself to explain the permutation process" also considering how Cole "repackages" ideas often found in poetry and literature ("Gothic" 31-32). Therefore, the painting is a translation from the written text to the visual text, or what Parry coins a "word-picture" or adaptations from original literary sources. Parry argues that Cole "knew this [his painting] could be read like the first and last chapters of one of Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, leaving all

the intervening events to the onlooker's active, Romantic imagination," arguing further that Cole "was able to synthesize the story-telling or figural elements he borrowed into an organic whole . . . creating a rich orchestration of narrative rise and fall" (44, 46). The chapter-like sequencing of each painting confers a cognitive experience most similar to that of reading a novel, the serialized paintings on multiple canvases more akin to "novelized art" than other more traditional single-canvas landscape paintings. Indeed, Cooper acknowledged his novel, *The Crater*, written in 1847, as an ekphrastic version of Cole's painting, both novel and paintings an artistic rendition of the cyclical theory of history.

Hugh Creon determines Cole's paintings as "a unique attempt to assess the merits of combined expression in the sister arts," arguing that Cole perhaps had "a lack of confidence in painting as a satisfactory mode of expression," which led to "exploration of both poetry and painting in search of adequate means of expression" (7). Creon suggests that Cole had chosen "essentially a literary theme" in *The Course of Empire*. Wallach advances the idea of multi-genre, noting Cole was "as concerned with history painting as with landscape" and that "one must agree with James Fenimore Cooper's contention that here [in *The Course of Empire*] Cole raised landscape painting 'to a level with the heroic in historical composition'" ("Cole, Byron" 375). Ferber considers *The Course of Empire* "Cole's greatest series," noting his interest in the topic "took root around 1829 during his first European sojourn" (190). Observing Cole's "orchestration of established landscape aesthetics, art-historical precedents, and literary sources," she confirms *The Course of Empire* was "essentially generic in its presentation of a dominant theory of history—that all societies were subject to the same inevitable rhythms of growth and decay" (190). Barringer assesses the paintings as a "higher style of landscape," arguing Cole "expanded the range of American landscape to embrace religious, moral and mythological

themes usually reserved for history painting" (87). Wallach maintains *The Course of Empire*, "in accord with traditional academic theory, was meant to illustrate universal truths," referring to Cole's selection of a motto for the series, a brief excerpt from Byron's *Childe Harold* "that recapitulated the inevitable historical cycle without reference to any particular nation" (91-92). Observing that "universality was by no means the entire point of Cole's series," Wallach asserts "Cole's allegory needed to embody a higher truth, a moral relevant to his immediate audience" (92). Cole's paintings and poetry, an expression of his wide-ranging intellectual interests, not only included the historical, literary, and philosophical, but also his moral and religious beliefs. *The Course of Empire,* manifesting Cole's auto didacticism and the synthesis of his varied intellectual interests, requires a correspondent, wide-angled analysis from multiple perspectives.

In addition to the influence of the paintings themselves, the exhibition descriptions of the paintings (written by Cole) were readily available to a reading public through publication in *American Monthly Magazine* and *The Knickerbocker* in November of 1836.[1] For comparative literary/visual textual analysis between *The Crater* and *The Course of Empire*, I have used Cole's more abbreviated descriptions of his ideas for *The Course of Empire* paintings:

> THE FIRST PICTURE, representing the savage state, must be a view of a wilderness,—the sun rising from the sea, and the clouds of night retiring over the mountains. The figures must be a savage, clothed in skins, and occupied in the chase. There must be a flashing chiaroscuro and the spirit of motion pervading the scene, as through nature were just springing from chaos.
>
> —THE SECOND PICTURE must be the pastoral state,—the day further advanced—light clouds playing about the mountains—the scene partly cultivated—a rude village near the bay—small vessels in the harbor—groups of

[1] See appendix for full exhibition descriptions.

peasants either pursuing their labours in the field, watching their flocks, or engaged in some simple amusement. The chiaroscuro must be of a milder character than in the previous scene but yet have a fresh and breezy effect.

—THE THIRD must be a noonday,—a great city girding the bay, gorgeous piles of architecture, bridge, aqueducts, temples—the port crowded with vessels—splendid processions, &c.—all that can be combined the show the fullness of prosperity: the chiaroscuro broad.

—THE FOURTH should be a tempest,—a battle and the burning of the city—towers falling, arches broken, vessels wrecking in the harbor. In this scene there should be a fierce chiaroscuro, masses and groups swaying about like stormy waves. This is the scene of destruction or vicious state.

—THE FIFTH must be a sunset—the mountains riven—the city a desolate ruin—columns standing isolated amid the encroaching waters—ruined temples, broken bridges, fountains, sarcophagi, &c.—no human figure—a solitary bird perhaps: a calm and silent effect. This picture must be as the funeral knell of departed greatness and may be called the state of desolation. (Noble 130)

Cole's sketch of the installation diagram for the five paintings of the series (see fig. 1) provides an organized framework for sequencing the allegory. Rather than viewing them horizontally, Cole chose to organize them through both thematic and metaphoric categories, including the beginning, middle, and end of the day represented through the rising sun, high noon, and the setting sun. The placement, in addition to providing transition between the paintings, also symbolically represents the passage of time. In addition to the chronology of a day, Cole used the seasons to represent the passage of time: the first two paintings depict spring; the middle painting

is summer; and the last two paintings show late fall/early winter. Cole also uses a single dominant feature against which the action is set; a mountain in the distance, allowing again for the perception of time passing and reminding the viewer that nature remains immutable while everything man-made is subject to decay. Wallach informs that "although the viewpoint varies throughout the series, the setting remains the same: a natural harbor surrounded by hills and mountains" (91). Cole utilizes the contrast of the picturesque with the sublime for dramatic effect, a compositional choice he also uses in his poetry. Wallach notes the contrast of "the sublime wilderness of the first painting with the Claudian pastorale of the second . . . the stormy mayhem of *Destruction* with the ominous tranquility of *Desolation*" (*Landscape* 91). Although each painting may be viewed and analyzed individually, together they offer a powerful secular critique of the precarious state of American Paradise.

The literary qualities of the paintings may be seen through Cole's placement and positioning within the framework of dramatic structure. Presented together, the first two paintings, the *Savage State* and the *Pastoral* or *Arcadian State*, represent the exposition of a civilization's rise leading to the largest painting in the center of the diagram, *Consummation*, or the climax of an empire's power. In accordance with the cyclical theory of history, upon which Cole's allegory is based, the next two paintings represent the falling action and denouement of the series, or the downfall of empire. Angela Miller concludes that "*The Course of Empire* lends itself readily to the dramatic terms of scene and actor, stage and protagonist" (32).

Cole's complex and sophisticated structuring of the series of paintings within a traditional narrative framework calls for its inclusion within the literary genre. As "novelized art," *The Course of Empire* was positioned to influence other literary practitioners of American Romanticism. Repositioning the paintings within either the genre of literature or blended-genre

illuminates the circulating power of the paintings outside the genre of art. Thematic parallels may be drawn between Cole's narrative paintings and literature of the American Renaissance, particularly with those practitioners of the "sister arts," Cooper and Hawthorne.

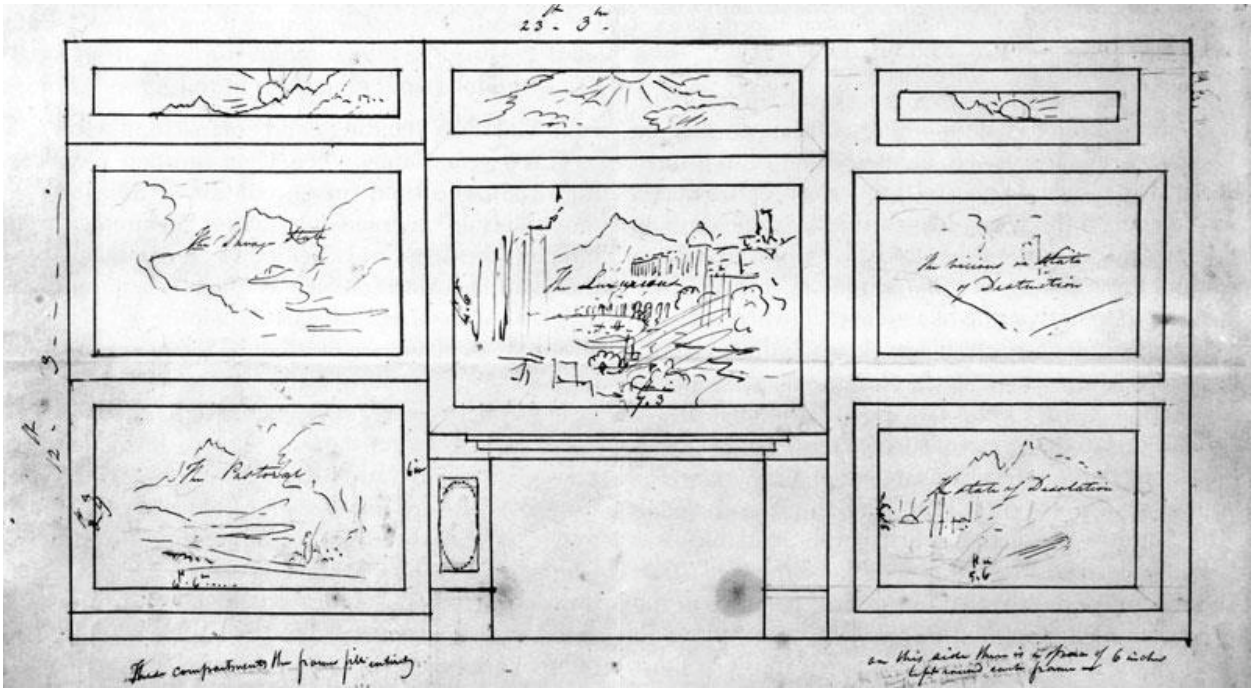

Fig. 1. Layout for *The Course of Empire*, 1833 (pen & ink over pencil on paper), Cole, Thomas (1801-1848) / Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund / Bridgeman Images.

Paradoxically, the impulse to restrain the course of civilization limited the development of a unique voice for the nineteenth-century citizen of the United States. Although intended as social criticism, the reception of these works was refashioned by a contemporary audience that desired affirmation of their Manifest Destiny. *The Course of Empire* was misread as a lesson on ancient Rome—rather than a prophetic warning that this could be the United States of the future. As late as 1853, the artist Jasper Cropsey "conceived, but never executed, his own contemporary recasting of Cole's *Course of Empire* . . . picking up the tale where Cole ended it," with the intention of "celebrating the chaste achievements of the republic as Cole's earlier work had

represented the corrupt forms of empire," one of many attempts to neutralize, ignore, or reframe Cole's prophetic narrative (145-6).

A preoccupation with the fall of man remains a constant motif from Cole's first study abroad and later, again, when he revisited Europe. Paradoxically, although Cole promotes the New World landscape as future, his narrative art is imbued with Old World constructs. In his travels throughout Europe, particularly as he experienced the ruins of Italy, the muses of Cole's art included not only the greatest works of art but also the haunting beauty of ruins and the poetic displacement of time. In a journey to Italy in 1842, Cole wrote, "There is a sad pleasure in wandering among the ruins of these cities and palaces. We look at arches and columns in decay, and feel the perishable nature of human art: at the same glance, we take in the blue sea rolling its billows to the shore with the freshness, strength and beauty of the days, when the proud Caesars gazed upon it" (Noble, 242). A journal entry dated February 26th, 1843 reveals the synthesis of his experiences and a transformative temporal awareness that parallels Emerson's conception of the Poet. Cole writes:

> How the soul is linked in harmonies and associations! A word spoken now recalls one spoken years ago. A strain of music, a single tone of the voice, wings the mind into the distant past. A mountain here sends one, in a thought, to a mountain in a foreign land; the streamlet, warbling at one's feet, is answered to by another on a far-off continent. Things not only suggest their like but their very opposite. A feather can remind us of greatness and empire; a mist, of Heaven; a rock, of the very lightness and mutability of things upon earth; a leaf, of the unchangeable nature of paradise. By this magnetism of ideas is the world of the mind drawn together, and bound (256).

Cole's romanticized and empathic response of what he had experienced in Europe reveals his affinity for moving from the present into the past as an artistic choice. When he sees a mountain "here," he is sent, "in a thought, to a mountain in a foreign land" (256). The associative quality of the past and the present, the New World and the Old World, is inseparable. Although Cole lamented the lack of associative qualities in the landscape and history of the United States in comparison to the antiquity of European artifacts and culture, he imagined how best to incorporate the past into the present through his art. The desire to create and convey the image of the United States, unfettered by European associations, was a conundrum for Cole and many other artists and writers who were in pursuit of articulating cultural independence. His mind was filled with the sensations and imagery of the European literary, historical, cultural, and artistic past. Cole's associative thoughts, ideas, and feelings, as well as his profound intellectual interests, found fullness of expression in his paintings *The Course of Empire*.

Intimate Friends, Cole and Kinship

In his introduction to *Thomas Cole's Poetry,* Marshall Tymn argues that "Thomas Cole needs to be recognized in American literary history as a minor but authentic voice for a generation of artists and writers who were eager to extol the resources of our virgin continent" (24). As an artist, Cole's use of literary techniques imbues his paintings with narrative structure, and as a poet, Cole's use of descriptive visual elements creates painterly prose. Cole's place as perhaps a "minor poet," also synthesizes the "two Coles," in a category of hybrid cultural productions—that of "novelized art" and "visual literature." A close reading of his poetry along with his other writings, reveals how one practice informed and influenced the other. Through examining the methods of his practice, we see that when Cole writes, he does so with artistic vision, and when he paints, he employs the literary. Although such methods may be

characteristic, at least to some extent, of all writers and artists, Cole's practice is notable for its pronounced employment of both literary and visual methodology to craft his written and visual texts. Because his methodology blends genres, Cole must be understood as an influence, for not only other antebellum artists, but also what has come to be considered canonical writers of American Romanticism as Cole "quickly aligned himself with the intellectual movement seeking to establish a uniquely American national culture" (27). Darker elements of Cole's oeuvre are compared with the thematic content and recurrent themes of "gloom and ruin" found in Edgar Allen Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntley* by Charles Brockden Brown, and *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper (Burns xix).

In addition to artists and writers going abroad and their close proximity within social circles, writers and artists shared aesthetic practices during this time period influenced their work. A consortium of writers and artists, including Bryant and Cole, met biweekly from 1827 to 1829 to discuss and develop their works in progress. At these informal roundtables, they set "a theme for varied illustration in poem, story, picture or statue," producing *Talisman*, a Christmas gift book of illustrations and literary contributions (Bryant II 863). This cross-pollination of art and literature, characteristic within the specialized culture of the Hudson River aesthetic, informed the commonality of purposeful artistic and creative productions. Commentary from the time period routinely notes parallel functions between art and literature. Membership within supportive and creative communities of artists and writers fostered blended-genre activity and within this kinship network, writers painted and painters wrote.

In his essay, "James Fenimore Cooper and Thomas Cole: An Analogous Technique," Donald Ringe notes, "of all the Hudson River painters, Cole is probably closest to Cooper in artistic imagination," explaining further that both "sought to convey through the use of landscape

a moral theme of universal application" (27). Ringe suggests a more intimate artistic influence between the two artists, explaining that Cooper utilizes an identical device—the use of a "single dominant detail" that "functions thematically in each series" signaling changes that have taken place in the narrative sequencing. He also notes the "strong contrast of light and shadow which Cole, even more than the other Hudson River men, loved to put into his work" (33). Ringe considers their work so much alike "in both form and content that one wonders if perhaps we may have here an example of at least indirect or subconscious influence" (36). The compelling correspondences between Cole and Cooper ask us to consider the effect of visual and textual transference, and the influence of one upon the other.

Recognition of blended genres, that is art within literature, and literature within art, requires reading for narrative structures in art and visual allusion in literature. A genre-bound conventional reading limits a reader or viewer's scope of interpretive understanding; a blended-genre reading foregrounds a text's multi-dimensionality. Although literature is often recognized for its visual elements and art for its narrative form, Cole's work should be analyzed as a blended- genre—composed of synthesized and nearly inseparable artistic and literary materials. To reconsider his work through a lens of blended-genre provides a more complete understanding not only of the cultural materials used in the construction of identity formation, but also their purpose, meaning, and effect. "Blended-genre" work calls for a different way of reading, one that recognizes the use of visual metaphor or *tableaux* in literature and the other the use of narrative compositional techniques and literary elements in art. An examination of Cole's methods provides an understanding of ambiguous and contradictory forces circulating through both art and literature, formulating and also restraining the establishment of a separate and unique identity for the United States.

Novelists use a number of painterly techniques, such as the arrangement of light and dark to "paint" a *tableau* within the narrative. Specific and vivid description recreates a scene upon the page, so the page becomes a miniature canvas. Interwoven throughout the text, scenes describe characters, provide physical setting, or establish tone or mood. Like an artist, a writer transfers imagery from one domain into another, importing not only visual imagery but also meaning associated with that imagery. Cole, and other Hudson River artists, utilized rich historical and literary narratives to compose their paintings. In doing so, they were drawing upon the past to interpret the present and future. In an 1825 response to Cole's early patron, Robert Gilmor of Baltimore, who preferred "actual views" to compositional paintings, Cole maintains that the greatest painters composed "something more than imitations of nature as they found it," further postulating, "if the imagination is shackled, and nothing is described but what we see, seldom will anything truly great be produced in either Painting or Poetry" (qtd. in Noble 63). In the earliest stages of his career as an artist, Cole established his preference for imaginative compositions over "actual pictures," utilizing not only well-known historical and literary narratives, but also his imagination to create fictional narrative.

Ringe suggests the close connection between Cole and Cooper in "artistic imagination" may be attributed to their shared belief that the greatest purpose of high art lies within its ability to promote high standards of morality. Cole and Cooper were both "moralists, who, not content merely with the accurate presentation of the external scene, sought to convey through the use of landscape a moral theme of universal application" (27). Ringe also reports that "Cole set out consciously to vie with the poet in the expression of abstract truth and frequently poured into his paintings more allegorical meaning than his canvas could hold" (78). Therefore, another

correspondence between them is through the use of literary and artistic techniques for the expression of deep convictions and firmly held moral beliefs.

Myers argues that "New discourses are created by individuals working within and frustrated by the limitations of existing structures of knowledge. Because they are necessarily constructed out of the cultural resources available, new discourses always incorporate elements of contemporary or older conceptual formations" (68). Other European artists had also painted these scenes. To accommodate the wide range and scope of nineteenth-century antebellum America as a subject matter, Cole repurposed classical scenes and enlarged their narrative capabilities through employing novelistic literary techniques. In order to accommodate his desire to convey complex narrative meaning, Cole paired paintings like "Past and Present," "L'Allegro and Il Penseroso," "Garden of Eden and Expulsion from the Garden of Eden," and the "Departure and Return," using the literary techniques of juxtaposition and biblical or literary allusion as compositional elements. Even the pairings proved inadequate to his desire to allegorize on grand philosophical topics, so Cole employed multiple, episodic canvases for those topics that required a larger canvas. The expansion to episodic narratives, *The Course of Empire*, *The Voyage of Life*, and the unfinished *The Cross and the World*, allowed for chaptered canvases that could be viewed individually or within a series. Movement between canvases transitioned narrative sequencing to read like a novel with introduction, body, and conclusion.

A Ruin More Sublime: Cole, the Poet

In *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange,* Meredith L. McGill considers the dialogic qualities of poetry and the "generative force of asymmetries between British and American poetic cultures" as well as "the circulation of poetry

in transnational context" (3). She notes the reductive nature of the modern study of nineteenth-century American poetry, explaining that only Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson have been considered as important American poets of the time period. McGill argues for "a canon that needs to be opened to not only culturally marginal but also culturally dominant poets and poetic forms." Importantly, McGill proposes the embodiment of culture as manifested in poetry and asks us to consider how "poetic measures test the capacity of language to accommodate change" (9). Study of Cole, as one who has been considered a "culturally marginal" poet, reinscribes the canon, revealing not only Cole's personal response to cultural change but also his effect on the culture as *an agent of change*. The ability to traverse the genres, as Cole does in his poetry and paintings, opens up new spaces for productive discourse about cultural shifts during the antebellum time period. Some of the thematic cultural work Cole manifests in his poetry may be traced back to post-Revolutionary concerns about the future course of the new nation.

The compromised path of civilization in the new nation is foreshadowed earlier in Philip Freneau's poem "The Wild Honey Suckle." In this poem, Freneau, the poet of the American Revolution, anticipates the nation's denouement, musing that Nature "must decay / I grieve to see your future doom; / They died—not were those flowers more gay, / The flowers that did in Eden bloom; / Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power / Shall leave no vestige of this flower" (13-18). Cooper imparts similar images of melancholy desolation in *The Last of the Mohicans*:

> Heyward and the sisters arose . . . from the grassy sepulcher . . . when they found themselves in such familiar contact with the grave of the dead Mohawks. The gray light, the gloomy little area of dark grass, surrounded by its border of brush, beyond which the pines rose, in breathing silence, apparently into the very clouds,

> and the deathlike stillness of the vast forest, were all in unison to deepen such a sensation. (151)

Reminiscent of Cole's final painting, *Desolation*, in his series *The Course of Empire*, these lines convey a prophetic foreboding about the nation's future through the combined portrayal of Nature with the ill-fated history of the Native-Americans, as if they are one. The poetic imagery in Freneau's poem, "The Indian Burying Ground," parallels the visual imagery in Cole's painting the *Savage State*, the first in the series: "By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews; / In habit for the chase arrayed, / The hunter still the deer pursues, / The hunter and the deer, a shade!" (370). Like Cole and Cooper, Freneau alludes to savage and civilized to forewarn the tragic fate of the nation, as the fate had been of all nations who were not "true" to their ideological beginnings.

In the poem, Freneau develops a comparison between the Indian and the "learned," suggesting the moral superiority of the savage in contrast with the civilized, developing an extended metaphor through the Indian's burial customs. Freneau reminds us that "The Indian, when from life released, / Again is seated with his friends, / And shares again the joyous feast." Freneau's implied audience, the "learned," are characterized as "Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way," / No fraud upon the dead commit," delineating the familiar as the Indian and the stranger as the learned (white men of European descent) who will act fraudulently against the Indian. The poem ends with the personification of "And Reason's self shall bow the knee / To shadows and delusions here," (369), revealing the first signs of a movement away from Enlightenment reason to early Romanticism in American literature. A highly respected poet-patriot during the American Revolution, Freneau was later abandoned by those who preferred to maintain a vision of the United States as not only indestructible, but also the "promised land" for the "learned" men, one in which they willfully may disregard "the ancients of these lands," the

Indian. Although Freneau characterizes the Indian as "barbarous," Reason is subservient to the Imagination.

Similar imagery may be found in poetry written by Cole from as early as 1819, when he was only eighteen years of age, to the year of his untimely and unexpected death in 1848. As previously mentioned, although Cole considered himself a poet-painter, his reputation was built upon his work as an artist. He was, however, prolific in writing poetry, composing more than 100 poems, in addition to fragments written "on assorted scraps of paper, backsides of budget sheets, and sales receipts" and others "scattered throughout his sketchbooks and journals" (Tymn 26). Cole's poems were compiled and edited in 1972 by Marshall B. Tymn in *Thomas Cole's Poetry: The Collected Poems of America's Foremost Painter of the Hudson River School Reflecting His Feelings for Nature and the Romantic Spirit of the Nineteenth Century*. Tymn considers Cole "an important early spokesman through the words of poetry as well as through his painting" of the American Romantic period (5). Noting the parallel development of landscape painting with literary trends in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Tymn writes that "poetry, like the visual arts, was a vehicle for great variety of expression," a genre where Cole "continually experimented with meter, stanzaic patterns, rhyme schemes, figurative language, rhythm and poetic devices" (23). Although most of Cole's poems were unpolished, with a select few revised for publication, Tymn argues that "Cole's informal approach to the craft of poetry does not negate its worth as a necessary guide to his romantic philosophies" (24). Just as an artist's preliminary sketches for a painting may reveal the thought process for a finished work of art, analysis of Cole's poetry is useful for discerning transatlantic and hybrid genre patterns in the construction of his allegorical and visual narratives.

Wordsworth's influence upon Cole is readily recognized through a cursory sampling of the titles of his early poetry: "To the Moon," "Twilight," "a lonely cloud is flitting round the brow," and "Lines Written After a Walk on [A] Beautiful Morning in November" (1825-33). Upon his return from his first European trip in 1832, Cole moves from the exaltation of nature to, in some cases, lamentation. Titles of poems written after 1833 begin to reflect "Dark Romanticism," elements of the sublime and/or a growing preoccupation with the defilement of nature. For example, "On seeing that a favorite tree of the Author's had been cut down," written in 1834, Cole reveals the presence of the "demon" in the garden—"What demon urg'd the speed of thine unpitying axe? Didst thou not know / My heart was wounded by each savage blow?" Other titles include "Thine early hopes are fading one by one," "The Lament of the Forest," "Oft when o'er Earth is spread the gloomy shade, and "The Summer Days are Ended." In one of the last poems of the collection, "Thy gloom O twilight suits my soul," the beautiful blue sky of hope in an earlier poem, "For the unsated eye—Over our heads / The Heav'ns' blue Curtain hung without a cloud" (41) is transmuted to "a cloud upon the sky / And it hath ta'en the saddest hue / No kindred clouds are floating by / Sojourning in the trackless blue" (199). The cadences of Cole's poetry and the choice of subject matter closely parallel those found in his landscape paintings. Using the metaphor of a curtain, Cole stages juxtaposed visual scenes of dramatic contrast. The sky of "heav'ns blue" is the canvas upon which Cole narrates the mutability of life—from an untroubled cloudless sky to one of "saddest hue." Poems with similar thematic and narrative content illustrate correspondences between his poetry and painting, as well as the use of ekphrasis and *visual tableaux*, and other signatory themes and literary techniques of Cole's blended-genre practices. In the early poetry, written from 1819 to 1836, the year Cole completed his *Course of Empire* paintings, one may see the development of the narrative theme in his

paintings, as well as Cole's desire to explore the full articulation of his artistic vision through multiple creative modes.

From one of Cole's earliest poems, "Fancy," written in 1825, when he was only 24 years old, Cole laments the inadequacy of language to convey his creative vision. Perhaps alluding to Coleridge's definition that Fancy, for the Romantic poets, was a "mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space," Cole prepares us for a disquisition upon a mélange of ideas and images. He begins the poem, "How vainly weak is language to express / Th' harmonious beauty of her heavenly song / The azure brightness of the summer sky / As true as pictur'd on the muddy stream" (32). Abandoning abstract language by the third line, Cole moves into specific visual description and metaphor for concrete visualization. In the first nineteen lines of the poem, Cole personifies language as a "wandring bashful Maid" with antithetical characterization. Language has "rich delighting strains," but also "harp's wild notes" / Amidst the din of the tumultuous world" (32). The juxtaposition of the world with nature is a theme common in Cole's paintings, as is the negative connotation of the civilized world upon the innocent. The innocence of language will be corrupted by the "din" of the world. Cole uses metrical as well as visual allusion to convey dramatic conflict. Language, paradoxically, has both "sweetest notes," but also "fiendish screech." Language that may be used as a "Silver Harp," is employed instead for "foul Criticism," and the "bashful Maid" transformed to "hideous snakes hissing strange discord." The narrator of the poem invites language to "stray with me through Nature's wilds," where "the flowers shall spring / And spread a carpet for thy weary feet" (32). Typical of Romanticism, Cole resolves the dramatic conflict of Janus-faced language through a retreat back to nature.

The poem "The Vision of Life," also written in 1825, is a poetic rehearsal of *The Course of Empire* paintings Cole will execute in 1836. The theme and visual imagery of the poem parallel in detail the last painting in the series, *Desolation*. Like the previous poem, "Fancy," Cole juxtaposes the linguistic and visual to provide dramatic contrast. Using literary elements of the sublime, the narrator of Cole's poem is "High on the swift and stayless wing of Time / Traversing free infinity's dim space." From this heightened precipice, the narrator has a vision of life:

> And looked below—it was a desolate scene
> That met my eye—Bare rocks and rugged hills
> And black pools and furious cataracts—Castles there were tattering in ruin
> Gardens laid out with the intent to beauty;
> But left unfinished, and nought but weeds
> And plants pale in the poisoned sickliness
> Could vegetate in that accursed soil—

In a reversal of the sequence of the paintings, Cole's narrator moves from a scene of desolation to one of heaven. Indeed, in a reworking of the sequence, the narrator, like that of Milton's Satan, is perched on the edge of the Universe, peering into the Garden of Eden:

> As palaces of clustered gems and gold
> That shone in sunny splendor on the clouds
> Vast rolling far beneath and fountains pure
> Mid quiet groves gushed as with living light—.
> And e'en the music of their warbling came
> Soft on the breeze . . . (34).

As in *Paradise Lost*, when Satan is consumed with envy, the Edenic scene is quickly displaced, "Those gorgeous scenes transformed, into the dark, / Dank, slimy haunt of serpents and of green dragons." The philosophical question that informs the composition of the paintings is also found here in the poem. The narrator asks, "Is this my destined lot, I sighing said, "thou spirit / Ne'er to find joy, but in the fading past? / Bliss sicklied with regret" (35). The question remains unanswered in the poem, but significantly Cole asks the same question eleven years later in his allegorical *Course of Empire* paintings.

In his poem "Mount Washington," written in 1828, we again see the outlines of the narrative arc found in the paintings as well as the signatory measure used to demonstrate nature's dominance over human existence, a mountain. In this poem, Cole begins with "Hail Monarch of a thousand giant hills! / Who settest proudly on the earth thy throne!" Like the mountain in *The Course of Empire* paintings, Mount Washington is a constant against which time is measured and history rises and falls. The omnipotent mountain, personified as "Monarch," watches in stoic silence as "Man's vaunted works . . . / Have risen and crumbled—oblivious night / Hath blotted empires out" (49). Cole paints a portrait of "lowly earth," juxtaposed with the imperious mountain, "a vast monument of power" that can "conquer time" and "measure out eternity." The poem is a brief narrative outline of the cyclical theory of history, also found in the paintings. The heightened emotion of the sublime introduces conflict between man and nature, and man's inevitable downfall from an ideal state.

This rhetorical trope is also employed in his 1833 poem, "Lines Written after a Walk on [a] Beautiful Morning in November." Through picturesque landscape imagery, Cole contrasts summer with late fall, as well as night and day, producing a dramatic and melancholy effect of lost beauty, "but slant between / The innumerable trunks the sunbeams play, / And weave with

shade, a mingled night and day" (62). This type of visual mottling, characteristic of Cole's stylistic choices as a poet and a painter, are also hallmarks of an artist working within blended-genre. Again, Cole provides a mélange of words that approximate not only the landscape, but Cole's practice—working the paint on the canvas to effect his artistic vision. He writes, "The Hudson lies below, a mirror'd heaven; / Stainless, save where the joyous hills are given / With grassy slope, dark rock, and breezy wood / In purple beauty to the wooing flood" (63). Cole's mimetic portrayal of the Hudson River as "a mirror'd heaven" introduces the concept of high (the reflected image) and low (the landscape), as well as the contrast of "joyous hills" with "grassy slope," foreshadowing Paradise and Paradise Lost. Written in 1833, this poem shows us Cole's ideas that found both thematic and visual expression in his *Course of Empire* paintings, demonstrating his method of using literature to inform his artistic practice. Often using this technique, Cole achieves a sublime and dramatic effect through layers of contrasting, mutable elements that are measured against an invariable constant. In this poem, and in his paintings, the mountain is the physical representation that measures the rise and fall of both individual human beings as well as entire civilizations. Foreshadowing the future of the United States, Cole issues a prophetic warning:

> The ebbing tide of time, is swiftly set
> Towards eternity; nor think that storm
> May soon o'ertake us, and our course deform—
> E'en now upon yon distant bark a change
> Is come—the west-wind in its boundless range
> Has breathed upon it gently, and a shade
> Deep blue and dark of rippling waves is laid

Athwart the lower heaven and from the stream

The pictured form is vanish'd like a dream—

(63)

The precariousness of human existence is conveyed through Cole's personification of nature, "the west-wind . . . has breathed," and the rapid movement of time. The earlier referenced "pictur'd form," that of the Hudson which is a "mirror'd heaven," is now "vanish'd like a dream." Creating a conflated, blended image of picture/poem, Cole reproduces landscape imagery in his poetry, and then in double mimesis, mirrors the "pictur'd form," multiplying the reproduction. Therefore, ideas inscribed through the cyclical theory of history (a nation inexorably cycles into destruction) are replicated and circulated through landscape imagery found in both his paintings and his poetry. Again, Cole creates a landscape picturesque that disappears, "vanish'd like a dream," as well as the passage of time through changing scenes, the same literary and narrative techniques he uses in his paintings *The Course of Empire*.

For Cole, art's purpose is to provide moral edification. In his later poetry and painting, explicit expression of his religious beliefs is found, but in Cole's earlier works, his ethical and moral beliefs are conveyed through Nature, the well-spring of God's authority on Earth and omnipotent witness to man's rise and fall through human error. As in his paintings, humans are minor characters in the great narrative sweep of Earth's history. The mountain, used to measure the course of history and empire, anchors the narrative scenes of unbearable beauty and desolation:

The mountains are before me; the strong chain

That binds to central earth the prostrate plain—

They like high watch-towers o'er the wide spread land

Upon the shore of heaven's ocean stand—

And I have thought that such might landmarks be

To voyaging spirits on th' etherial sea—

And they are still; and stern—with fixed look;

But beautiful like those who have forsook

All earthly thoughts for holier things on high

And hold communion with the sky—

Staging the scene he is about to paint, Cole situates the reader/viewer's perspective from the summit of the mountain, so that they, like the personified mountain, play witness to the ensuing scene of destruction:

—Alas! too soon must come

The conflict of the winds, that from the womb,

Of the vast circumambient shall be born

Giants—He of the south who howls in scorn,

And heaves the deluge on the shrinking land—

And He from the north puts forth his hand,

And shakes down heaven in the chilling drift,

And wields the viewless ice-bolt keen and swift—

E'en now upon the far horizons verge

A gloom uplifts; it is the foremost surge,

Of winter's darksome sea—

Paradoxically, Cole contracts the future through the geographic concept of the "shrinking land," while also expanding the temporal perspective through "far horizons." Uncannily, his prescient

use of the south who "howls in scorn," and the north who "shakes down heaven," pre-figure the catastrophic event of the Civil War. Cole uses wintry November as an extended metaphor to convey the same catastrophic events he prophesizes in *The Course of Empire*. As in the cyclical theory of history, historical time is metaphorically measured through the seasons, the "chapters" within a human's life span. Within the framework of the four seasons, the scenes presented in this poem, those of winter, posit American scenery within its final stages. As in other highly celebrated Romantic poetry, Cole warns of the brevity of life and love:

So quickly fly

All beauteous things, we gaze and love—they die.

Be it not mine ungrateful thoughts to raise;

Beauty though transient, sheds on us its rays,

To warm and vivifie—Transient is the sun;

But earth rejoices as his course is run— (65)

One can readily see how Cole used poetry to rehearse his paintings, and that he used the medium to "sketch," not only the narrative and thematic content of his paintings, but also to transcribe imagery of landscape scenes through *visual tableaux.* The poem, "Lines Written After a Walk on [a] Beautiful Morning in November," bears striking correspondence to the narrative and allegorical themes in *The Course of Empire* paintings, a linear progression from contemplation of the beautiful to the loss of that which has been found, with Hudson River topography in both. In an 1833 letter to his patron and benefactor, Luman Reed, Cole revealed his long standing contemplation of the ideas to be developed in the paintings, mentioning "a favorite subject that I had been cherishing for several years," and his hope to one day "embody" it. Cole explains his idea:

> The philosophy of my subject is drawn from the history of the past, wherein we see how nations have risen from the Savage State to that of Power & Glory & then fallen & become extinct. Natural scenery has also its changes, the seasons of the day & of the year, sunshine & storm, these justly applied will give expression to each picture of the series I would paint. It will be well to have the same locality in each picture. This location may be identified by the introduction of some striking object in each scene, a mountain of peculiar form for instance" (qtd. in Noble 129-31).

Cole composes using synthesized elements from the cyclical theory of history, the Romantic sublime, repetition, as well as a focal point, generating associative ideas about the rise and fall of nations. Essentially, he gives form to the cerebral ideas of the cyclical theory through descriptive and evocative visualization. Other poems also exhibit Cole's use of poetry as a sketchbook for working through the dramatic narrative found in the series. In "The Painter's Lamentation," Cole muses, "Does then the urn / Of Time contain, nought but unquick'ning dust / Of the past lov'd and beautiful? And must / Our dearest sunniest pleasure pass away / And endless night succeed the swift-wing'd day?" (70). Using landscape and history, Cole finds answers to questions he poses through haunting poetic imagery. In the same poem, Cole sketches the "endless night" that must succeed the "swift-wing'd day. Cole's final painting, *Desolation*, parallels the imagery in his poem:

> An emerald crown barbarian time did drop
> Relenting that the marble-columned pile
> That once stood there his rude hands did despoil.
> And Rome was at my feet, but far below,

Its ruined heaps still sparkling in the glow

Lay like a shipless sea—though wrecks were seen

Of duct and tower—many a golden chain

On its breast broken—ne'er to join again (70)

We see that Cole not only used poetry for purposes of artistic invention, but also used his paintings to inform his poetry. After the successful exhibition of his paintings in 1836, Cole revisits the subject of *The Course of Empire* through an ekphrastic rendering of the paintings in his 1838 poem, "The Complaint of the Forest." This poem, with slight revisions, was published in *The Knickerbocker* in 1841 under the title "The Lament of the Forest." Giving voice to the forest under siege, Cole personalizes the narrative, allowing the reader to engage directly with the tragic elements of human destruction to nature. Naming man as "He the destroyer," the poem moves the cycle of history from man's destruction of *civilization* to his destruction of *nature*, a sacrilege beyond the graveyard of his painting, *Desolation*.

In this poem, Cole laments the encroachment of the railroad upon the Hudson River Valley, recycling through the five scenes of *The Course of Empire,* beginning with the pastoral: "I sat beside a lake serene and still / Earth's off'ring to th' imperial sky, / Which the huge heav'nward mountains aloft held," which rapidly transitions into "A ruin more sublime than if a thousand / Roman colloseums had been pil'd in one," leading to the parallel destruction of man who destroys not only nature, but his entire race: "The remnants of our failing race were found, / Like scatter'd clouds upon the mountain tops--" (103). Cole is overt about the American setting of the poem: "the voice of the great Forest that arose / From every valley and dark mountain top / Within the bosom of this mighty land--," again offering this vision as a prophetic warning of what is to come to "one bright virgin continent / Remote, that Roman name had never reached"

(104). Comparing the ideal of America to the fate of fallen Rome, Cole composes a rhetorical argument through landscape imagery about "The land of beauty and of many climes-- / The land of mighty cataracts—where now / Columbia's eagle flaps her chainless wing--," quickly shifting into "The crashing world—And thus comes rushing on." Remunerating the ideals of the nation, Cole then warns "Our doom is near; behold from east to west / The skies are darken'd by ascending smoke." Doom for Cole, historically, may be posited in the nation's past and present failure to live up to the Revolutionary ideals of its founders and its lack of moral virtue. For Cole, that meant the attendant sins of unrestrained capitalism and man's assault upon Nature. Certainly, slavery, poverty, and other egregious societal ills contributed to his sense of despair. Reversing expansionist rhetoric, Cole draws darkness across the continent, specifically naming "Missouri's floods," "Hudson's rugged hills," "Erie's shores," and "dusky Arkansaw," ending the poem with the inexorable outcome of nature betrayed by man: "It ceas'd, that voice, --my answer was in tears" (106). This poem serves as a corrective to the misunderstandings of his paintings. Cole revises the imagery, adds specific geographical details of the United States, and corrects misconceptions about the paintings being a lesson on Rome, but the sentiment and narrative remain unchanged. Ekphrasis provides Cole with another medium with which he can retell the story of man's fallen state within the idealized American landscape.

Cole revisits this topic in his 1842 poem, "Mt. Etna," and his 1843 poem, "The March of Time." In these poems, Cole again reflects upon men who are wasted and wasteful in Mt. Etna, "yet thou, forever young, / Outlivest centuries! Beneath thy gaze / Nations have birth and death. Augmenting e'er, / Time that doth crumble temples, pyramids: / Hath watched thee grow until thy regal hand / Usurps the empyrean with its starry realms" (134). In "The March of Time," "kingdoms crushed . . . they speak no more." The idea of the cyclical theory of history found in

The Course of Empire narrative is a core literary, historical, and allegorical framework from which Cole mediates his artistic vision about the present state of America and its projected future.

We see the basic foundation of *The Course of Empire* narrative refashioned in his series of paintings, *The Voyage of Life*, depicting the narrative progression of a man's life from childhood through old age. Cole translates the paintings into poetry in "The Voyage of Life," a four-part ekphrastic poem written in 1842. Tymn explains that "the poem is a translation, in heroic verse, of Cole's allegorical series, the *Voyage of Life,* completed in the fall of 1840" (212). Again, there is a correspondence of life's stages to the four seasons of the year, beginning with the pastoral scenes of innocent childhood. The imagery in the poem is strikingly similar to the imagery of *The Course of Empire*; Cole again juxtaposes light and dark, paradise and destruction, foreshadowing loss. In this rendition, however, the denouement is altered. Scenes of desolation, "No hills of green, o gentle flowery vales / No breezes fresh from out the crystal deeps / No blithe birds warbling oft repeated tales; / But silence, leaden silence, such as keeps" (157) are relieved through rebirth into the afterlife. It is through his Guardian Angel that Cole's weary Voyager is brought out of the darkness into the light: "And love and newborn joy broke in like day / Upon his heaven-illumined soul. He turned / To gaze upon the beauteous one, when lo! / As from the clouds strange music 'gan to flow" (159). Cole resurrects mankind, replacing desolate silence with the sound of heavenly music. Cole, transposing empire to the individual and secular to the religious, reproduces and revisions the narrative structure of *The Course of Empire*, a grim denouement replaced with a joyous resolution found in the afterlife.

Of special note, Cole's ekphrasis of another artist's painting, "Lines suggested by a picture painted by Weir, in which a lady is seen sitting at a window gazing on the sea, whilst a

youth at her side is playing the guitar--," demonstrates his self-conscious and practiced use of translating picture into verse; in "Lines suggested by hearing Music on the Boston Common at night, Cole dabbles in musical ekphrasis; and, in a later untitled and undated writing, Cole considers how "Soft music floats upon the breeze; all things / Do then inanimate or quick appear; to feel" (194). Because Cole uses both mediums to conceptualize his art, analysis of his poetry provides a window through which we may better read the narrative features of his paintings. Through reading Cole's poetry and paintings as blended genres, a more comprehensive understanding of the circulating discourses found in both may be recovered.

Other Writings

Cole's published and unpublished prose pieces, including "Essay on American Scenery," and "On the Art of Painting," showcase his skillful use of literary devices, particularly that of metaphor, in his writing. Cole, sketching through the use of allusion and metaphor, also displays the influence of British poetry in his prose writing. In his "Essay on American Scenery," though alluding to the American writers, Cooper and Bryant, Cole also employs verses from the British poets, Charles Lamb and Edward Young, as well as the Scottish poet, John Wilson, illustrating the influence of the British upon his understanding of American Scenery. A parallel may be drawn between not only the thematic concerns found in both his writings and his paintings, but also the methods he uses to craft his writing and painting, suggesting a kinetic composing process between the two. A brief look at Cole's use of literary devices to construct his essay will show the dexterity with which he crosses from one genre into the other, establishing a prototype of Cole as a blended-genre practitioner.

The essay, originally published in *American Monthly Magazine* in 1836, was given as a lecture in 1841 to members of the Catskill Lyceum, and republished in May 1841 in *The*

Northern Light. Cole illustrates through vivid visual metaphor the parallel themes and imagery of his paintings, *The Course of Empire*, also exhibited in 1836. In the essay, Cole stipulates, "Poetry and Painting sublime and purify thought, by grasping the past, the present, and the future—they give the mind a foretaste of its immortality, and thus prepare it for performing an exalted part amid the realities of life" (3). He develops a comparative metaphor between the "quickening spirit" of Poetry and Painting and that of rural nature, "the exhaustless mine from which the poet and the painter have brought such wondrous treasures" (4). Again, the contrast between Reason, or "the realities of life," and Imagination, or "the exalted part," establish this conflict as a controlling principle implicitly embedded in a discussion of American Scenery. Like Freneau, Cole develops a dichotomy between "those whose days are all consumed in the low pursuits of avarice, or the gaudy frivolities of fashion, unobservant of nature's loveliness . . . unconscious of the harmony of creation" and that of "the page of the poet" who "describes or personifies the skies, the mountains, or the streams" (4). Quoting from Charles Lamb's 1798 poem, "Living Without God in the World," he further develops the divide between the two:

> Heaven's roof to them
> Is but a painted ceiling hung with lamps;
> No more—that lights them to their purposes—
> They wander 'loose about'; they nothing see,
> Themselves except, and creatures like themselves,
> Short lived, short sighted. (4)

For those unappreciative of American Scenery, Cole reserves harsh criticism, noting not only their ingratitude but also questioning why such bounty should be provided to those who lack

gratitude for the bounty they have been given. In a personification of nature as "she," Cole summarizes the allegory of his paintings, chastising those in mindless pursuit of progress:

> From the indifference with which the multitude regard the beauties of nature, it might be inferred that she had been unnecessarily lavish in adorning this world for beings who take no pleasure in its adornment, who in groveling pursuits forget their glorious heritage. Why was the earth made so beautiful, or the sun so clad in glory at his rising and setting, when all might be unrobed of beauty without affecting the insensate multitude, so they can be "lighted to their purposes?" (4-5)

Cole plays on the image of light, using the beauty of the sun as a source of ignition. Rather than using the beauty and "glory" of the light as nature intends it to be used, its energy is instead misdirected to the greedy "purposes," of those who are ungrateful. Cole's vivid description illuminates his facility as a word-painter, blending genres to express his understanding of the topic of American Scenery. In his writing, he embeds visual images within the written narrative; inversing this process of genre-blending in his paintings, embedding narrative structures within visual images.

The subject of American Scenery, as sketched by Cole, is poetic prose, replete with vivid descriptions, personification, and use of metaphor and simile. Cole describes the sunset as "a wreath of glory daily bound around the world" (5), the Catskills, "heave from the valley of the Hudson like the subsiding billows of the ocean after a storm" (8), and the lakes "stud like gems the bosom of this country" (9). For Cole, literature and scenery are inseparable. Nature is a volume to be read, the river scenery of the United States "a rich and boundless theme," with "hills that have a legend, which has been so sweetly and admirably told that it shall not perish but with the language of the land" (12). Nature speaks in an imperishable language understood

by the Poet and the Painter. Cole uses the visual component of figurative language to express his artistic understanding of American scenery, composing his series of paintings within the literary framework found in a novel or a drama, through chapters, tropes, historical and literary allusion, with staging and transitions between scenes.

Metaphor is a marker for blended-genre, useful for making the abstract visible in written text. The green hills of the Catskills "recede like steps by which we may ascend to a great temple, whose pillars are those everlasting hills, and whose dome is the blue boundless vault of heaven" (12). Cole's personification and use of extended metaphor to convey nature's inexpressible beauty dramatizes the conflict between humans and nature. In nature, one may find "a mountain whose foot is clothed with deciduous trees, while on its brow is a sable crown of pines;" the sky "breathes over the earth the crystal-like ether;" at sunrise and at sunset, "the serene arch is filled with alchymy that transmutes mountains, and streams, and temples, into living gold" (15). Cole, mythologizing America as Paradise through romantic literary metaphor, exhorts us to "Look at the heavens when the thunder shower has passed, and the sun stoops behind the western mountains—there the low purple clouds hang in festoons around the steeps—in the higher heaven are crimson bands interwoven with feathers of gold, fit for the wings of angels—and still above is spread that interminable field of ether, whose color is too beautiful to have a name" (15). Personification through metaphor composes America as a living, resurrected Eden, an image that weaves Old World and biblical associations into the American landscape. Ironically, Cole "names" that which is "too beautiful to have a name," the United States, as an American Paradise. He paints the American skies as "robed in purple and gold, and in the westering sun the iced groves glitter as beneath a shower of diamonds," extending the metaphor of Paradise from the eastern United States to the "westering sun" and north to the "iced groves."

This expansive rhetoric not only parallels Hudson River paintings, but also advances the ideas found within expansionist rhetoric of the time period, that of America's manifest destiny to take over the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Through metaphor, personification, and allusion, Cole succeeds in rectifying the "grand defect" in American scenery, that of the "want of associations." Comparing scenes of the old world with those of America, he finds that "Yet American scenes are not destitute of historical and legendary associations—the great struggle for freedom has sanctified many a spot, and many a mountain, stream, and rock, has its legend, worthy of poet's pen or the painter's pencil," further explaining that "American associations are not so much of the past as of the present and the future" (16). Yet, he has already introduced the past into this composition. In *visual tableaux*, Cole composes a picturesque America:

> Seated on a pleasant knoll, look down into the bosom of that secluded valley, begirt with wooded hills—through those enamelled meadows and wide waving fields of grain, a silver stream winds lingeringly along—here, seeking the green shade of trees—there, glancing in the sunshine: on its banks are rural dwellings shaded by elms and garlanded by flowers—from yonder dark mass of foliage the village spire beams like a star (16).

This scene, typical of Hudson River landscapes, provides picturesque imagery of an idyllic garden. He then juxtaposes this image with the lament that "the beauty of such landscapes is quickly passing away—the ravages of the axe are daily increasing—the most noble scenes are made destitute, and oftentimes with a wantoness and barbarism scarcely credible in a civilized nation." The "noble scenes" pictured by Cole, desecrated through an assault upon Nature, disfigures the vision of America as Paradise. The "wantoness and barbarism" of unchecked

capitalism, mistreatment of Native-Americans and enslavement of Africans, signify the United States as uncivilized. He concludes that "Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet. Shall we turn from it? We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly" (17). Cole uses visual imagery as rhetoric, presenting argument and counter-argument through carefully constructed scenes of America as Paradise and then as Paradise Lost, narrating an American mythos through the blended-genre composition of words, as well as concrete and abstract imagery.

Using the pseudonym "Pictor," Cole espouses his belief in the power and influence of painting in a letter published in the *Knickerbocker* in 1840. He proclaims the influence of painting to be "far more extensive than many of you have ever dreamed of. In ages past, it has made moral and religious impressions on the mind and character of nations, which are not yet effaced. It is an engine capable of great good, or great evil. It speaks a language intelligible to all nations, and to all ages" (qtd. in Tymn 62). As the influential "father" of the Hudson River School of Painting, Cole's narrative paintings, as well as "painted prose" must be considered for the story they tell of the United States and also for how that story circulates within the nation-building rhetoric of the nineteenth century.

As with his "Essay on American Scenery," Cole uses vivid description and metaphor in his short story "Emma Moreton," notable more for its use of visual imagery than for its literary merit. Noble claims, "We see there the first wrestlings of genius with the grander forms of the visible world" (31). It is a highly sentimentalized story, with characters and a cliché plot device similar to that found in the beginning of Cooper's novel *The Crater*. Both the short story and the novel have two young lovers separated by the daughter's father, who wishes to provide his daughter with a mate of comparable social standing and/or wealth. In both stories, the young

woman, obedient to her father, accepts her fate to be separated from true love. The daughter, left alone upon the death of her mother, is friendless and in the care of a withholding, unreasonable, and greedy father. In both stories, the male suitor retreats to the sea, where he may rise in social standing and exemplify the American Dream of success through rugged individualism.

Cole's tendency to conflate genres is noted by other scholars, including Ellwood Parry who comments on Cole's painting, *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, suggesting that Cole "turned a landscape image into a theatrical experience" (*Art* 77). He does this by composing two scenes within one frame, using a rock formation to demarcate Paradise from Paradise Lost, with Adam and Eve staged within the scene of desolation. Cole, limited by the commonplace materials of art or writing, borrowed from other genres in an attempt to fully express his narrative vision. Cole sought out landscapes for their dramatic and sublime pictorial possibilities, including the volcanoes of the Caribbean. In 1819, Cole visited St. Eustatia in the West Indies, using the location as a setting for his short story "Emma Moreton." From this visit, Cole produced sketches of the volcano, a geographic feature Cole would not have experienced in either England or the United States. Parry makes the case that "it is hard to think of a more effective emblem of the wrath of God" (77). As an uncontrollable force of nature, the volcano adds drama to the short story in the same way it does in the painting. In both stories, the male suitor retreats to the sea where he becomes a man capable of reclaiming the love he has lost and the lovers are reunited.

As in *The Course of Empire*, the protagonist of the tale is Nature herself. The narrator "ponders upon the silence and secrecy of her workings." Description of nature comprises the very long first paragraph of the story, with Emma Moreton and Edward Vivian mere footnotes to the greater drama of personified nature. The scenery not only provides a setting for the

melodrama, but upstages the action of the story. The landscape is "where the sublime and the beautiful are united—where the heart of man feels its own nothingness, or rises with the most ecstatic emotions—where the lips are sealed in reverence, but the soul feels unutterably." The composition of his description is a study in the transfer of visual image into metaphoric imagery. Like his landscape paintings, there are "rocky towers of a mighty mountain," "the gloom of some deep and secluded valley," and "the rushing clouds of the Atlantic" (77). A mountain is juxtaposed with the "summit of a high perpendicular cliff" and the "graceful low-lands." This visual imagery recreates the pastoral scenes of the first two paintings of the series, *The Savage State* and *The Pastoral or Arcadian State*. Like the paintings, "there are seen the dwellings of the planters, peeping from shady groves . . . [and] the summit of a high perpendicular cliff." Each element of nature, the sun, the mountain and the cocoanut tree, is personified offering a dramatic landscape scene, painted in words. The sun was "just dipping his broad edge into the distant waters, which reflected his golden light, and each object in the Island was clothed in one of the richest tints of heaven." The mountains were "bathed in the flood of colour" and the "princely cocoanut tree, as it vibrated its plumed head into the breeze, seemed transmuted into gold." Amidst this landscape scene, Edward and Emma, the archetypal Adam and Eve, are found "breathing the Elysian atmosphere of love and happiness" (78).

Cole foreshadows the same narrative trope he explores in *The Course of Empire*, the changeability of life's landscapes from the idyllic to the desolate. The narrator warns "How changeable and fleeting are all earthly scenes and feelings! The sun, which had just been shining so splendidly, was gone and the glow of heaven had vanished." The "sunshine of enjoyment" Edward and Emma experience with each other is juxtaposed with "a melancholy twilight brooded round their hearts." Genre-blending is overtly revealed as Vivian says to Emma, "The

moon is pressing over the hill, in time to light our parting scene" (79). Artistic metaphor is used to describe Emma, whose "form was light and graceful, and that flowing line of beauty which painters and sculptors so much admire" (79). He uses artistic terms to describe her beauty—"harmony in parts and motion" and "the beauty of her face . . . owing to the proportion of its features" (80). This tendency to reveal himself as an artist writing prose may be noted throughout, not only in his descriptions but also in his use of artistic metaphor to describe and narrate the actions of the characters, such as, "She was tracing with the tender pencil of memory, the delightful pictures of yesterday" (81). When Cole is writing it is often with the vision of the painter, and as an artist, he composes narrative, literary structures within his painting.

Because Cole believes it is the purpose of art to instruct, he uses allegory as story-structure to his paintings, and metaphor and personification to express abstract ideas in his poetry and prose. The personification allegory he uses in the short story is similar to that used in his "Essay on American Scenery" and *The Course of Empire* paintings. Nature, the innocent protagonist, is engaged in a dramatic conflict with the corrupt villain, Greed. Emma's father, Mr. Moreton, "had eagerly sought wealth, but it long eluded his grasp, and it was not until the last few years, that he could congratulate himself on his final success; but 'the more we have, the more we want,' is a true adage, which was clearly exemplified by the avarice and avidity of Mr. M." (80-81). Cole uses Nature to picture the conflict between Emma and her father. Separation from Vivian extinguishes Emma's "sunny ray of bliss," propelling her into "the portals of a dark and melancholy night" (83). Explaining the hardships that Edward Vivian and Emma Moreton endure, Cole sketches the "road of life," as follows:

> The commencement is often bright and sunshiny, but as the pilgrim advances, clouds and fogs darken his path, and the sun which shone so cheeringly when he

> first started is hid, or only gleams through the darkness, at distant and uncertain intervals. Shadow rests over shadow, and the gloom deepens into darkness. (83)

Four stages in the road of life are depicted through personified allegory: the first, commencement; the second, advancement of the pilgrim; the third, darkening clouds; and the fourth and final stage, darkness and gloom. Cole employs allegorical formations that use personification and extended metaphor to convey meaning, in both the short story and his *Course of Empire* paintings. In a later passage, Cole again illustrates Emma's despair through a reticulated series of nature scenes, writing:

> The human soul that has its verdant plains, its wide spreading seas, its dark and trackless wilderness: its verdant plains, where the roses of hope vegetate and blossom; its wide seas, where the bark of thought glides o'er the unruffled tide of contentment; its trackless wildernesses, where the mind wanders in the twilight gloom, and conjures up the dark and fearful phantoms of future ill. (85)

Personified nature is used to convey the allegorical trope of progression and regression, abundance to decay, hope to despair, contentment to gloom, all leading to "fearful phantoms of future ill." Personified nature advances the storyline, the narrator offering, "But hopes ofttimes grow up on the most scanty soil only to wither in the noonday drought" (85). Cole describes Emma's devotion to her selfish father as follows: "Though the tree be hollow and heartless, the ivy still will cling to it, and affectionately throw its long tendrils round the supporter of its youth" (87). For Emma, thoughts of Edward Vivian are like "a balmy breeze through her soul." Months passed, and "the hurricane of her grief subsided" (87). Through *deus ex machina,* Emma's father is "dropped into the grave," and the lovers reunited metaphorically through nature: "the summit of a precipice which rises some hundreds of feet, the eye commands an extensive, beautiful

prospect" (88). Emma, thinking of the dead, "looked upon the grave as a bed," where "the earthly curtain was drawn over their faces, and the roof of their chamber would soon be covered with grass and with flowers" (88). This imagery parallels Cole's final painting of the series, *Desolation*, the allegorical graveyard of civilization, this imagery and trope repurposed again in *The Voyage of Life*. Using a simile and extended metaphor to describe Emma's state as a "poor bereaved orphan," Cole writes:

> She was like a delicate flower which has been thrown by the heedless blast upon a rocky islet. The clime was rude and foreign to its nature, but the neighbouring plants protected its infancy, but one by one they withered and were torn from its unshielded side, by the rushing wind, and it was now a lovely blossom that bends its humble and graceful head. (89)

The literary techniques of personification, metaphor, and allegory portray Nature as a benign protagonist, one through which Cole depicts a human's progress through life, ultimately revealing his belief that those who are obedient and humble will prosper, and those who are arrogant and greedy will die lonely and miserable. Vivian notes Nature's witness to their happy reunion, as "The moon was again gilding the mountain tops with her silvery radiance" (90). Their union was "happily consummated" and Emma Moreton "reaped the reward of her duty to a dying parent" (90). Cole's short story, an *étude* of early Romanticism in America, inscribes his preoccupation with the conflict between idealized Nature and the corruption of civilization. Mr. Moreton represents the morally compromised values of the middle-class in early nineteenth-century America, in conflict with the traditional Biblical belief that "the love of money is the root of all evil." Emma Moreton, aligned with the power of Nature, is rescued from the base motives of her morally corrupt father. God, found in Nature, is on the side of the virtuous.

Although unworthy of her loyalty, Emma remains "dutiful," to her father, therefore, morally superior, allowing her to transcend the corruption of civilization.

Although Cole uses a North American geographic setting, the moral of Cole's short story, the corruption of civilization, corresponds more closely with the sublime aspects of European Romanticism than with American Romanticism. Emma triumphs, but it is a solitary victory achieved only through the death of her father; the defect of civilization remains unchanged. Therefore, Cole's short story is a template for the hybridity of his vision: Old World values imposed upon the setting of the United States. Although Emma and Edward prevail, society is nevertheless moribund, constricted by the superficial and corrupt. They live above the constrictions of society, but do not effect change. The juxtaposition of the idyllic and the corrupt, themes found in Cole's writings and his paintings, signal Cole's fearful preoccupation with the loss of American Paradise. Inevitably, Cole's transatlantic allusion to the course of European civilization provides a counterpoise to the prevailing spirit of frontier optimism, restraining rather than fortifying a unique national identity.

Other writings reveal the pervasive influence of European intellectual thought upon his work, including that of German Romanticism, notably Schiller, whom he references in his unpublished "A Lecture on Art". Considering the present and future state of American Art, Cole (quoting Schiller) writes, "the pathway to the land of knowledge" goes through the "morning-gate of beauty," further advancing Art as "the great humanizing principle" (104). He considers the alphabet for its symbolic primacy, arguing "it may be said that all literature originated in the Arts of Design" (105). Proclaiming that true art is eternal, Cole composes a *tableaux vivant* of *Desolation*, the final painting in *The Course of Empire:*

> Nation after Nation, Age after Age will pour its tribute into her lap as she sits on the earth imperishable as Time himself. And although much of her treasure through the wreck of Nations and the violence of man has been scattered and lost; yet man repents himself and digging among the ruins discovers many of her lost jewels, rejoices in the mutilated statue and the mouldering picture, and we inherit a priceless possession in laws and works from those who labored in the precincts of the Parthenon, and the Halls of the Vatican. (105)

Commenting on art's narrative power and its influence in history, Cole reminds us, "There was a time, and in some countries it yet exists, where multitudes unable to read have been taught by pictures." Arguing for the profound narrative capacity of "true art," Cole tells us "Painting and sculpture are the vehicles of sentiment, passion or information; they are no more profane, holy or virtuous than eloquence, than poetry; like these they may minister to each and every feeling of man; they have power, but that power is subservient to the will of society" (107). Cole balances the power of painting and poetry against the will of society, suggesting that although art may be temporarily silenced, it will prevail over time.

Comparing art in America with art in Europe, he finds "the American does not seem to have time for Art; he is embarked on the great stream of business, in which there are few eddies and places of anchorage" (115). Considering the progression of art in the United States, Cole believes that "the Orb of Art as it revolves will take new phases and reflect forms before unknown" (117). Cole's intellectual proclivity for hybrid formations may be found in his recommendation to synthesize the old and new, advising that Americans should look to the "great principles which governed Greek and Italian Art, and as new requirements, new aspects in Society present themselves to apply those principles" (117). Importantly, Cole conflates the old

with the new, and painting with poetry, arguing the forms to be indistinguishable in their ability to persuade society through "true art." Although unpublished and undated, this essay is nevertheless important in substantiating his belief in the "sister arts" of poetry and painting, the influence of German Romanticism to inform his analysis of American art, his belief in the narrative power of painting, and that, because the good is the beautiful, the highest purpose of true art is moral instruction. Most notably, Cole puts these precepts of art into practice through his series of paintings, *The Course of Empire*, as well as other serialized paintings, synthesizing the Old World with the New World, using visual narrative and allegory to compose "novelized art" for moral instruction.

As may be seen from this brief compendium of Cole's creative output, painting, prose, and poetry were co-mingled throughout his working life. Tymn reminds us that although "America's interest in her scenic wonders found expression in the early poems of William Cullen Bryant . . . parallel to the literary search for new material was the development of landscape painting by the Hudson River School" (xiv). Linking the literature of American Romanticism to art, Bryan Jay Wolf argues that works of art "are texts, and they are meant to be read," and they "share with the author . . . the curse and blessing of double consciousness" (xiv). Wolf argues that there is a narrative thread, "often an invisible one, present only in the silences and interstices of the text," and that we must interrogate these silences for what they have to say about the nineteenth century. He credits Cole with the creation of the American Sublime, and claims that his paintings are "as rooted in a literary culture as it is in specific visual sources" (xviii). In the epilogue, Wolf argues that "what unites each of these painters to a larger tradition of American Romantic writing is a concern for consciousness and language as the organizing centers of

reality" (240), noting that Cole had "faith in the capacity of the landscape to provide an adequate visual correlative for the drama of the soul" (245).

Cole's British and American double consciousness, coupled with his poetic and aesthetic appreciation for the sublime—darkness, solitude, silence, vastness, and the infinite—informs and gives expression through hybridity of form. These artistic/literary qualities of American Romanticism are also characteristic of Cooper and Hawthorne. Cole, as practitioner of both narrative as well as imitative arts, was positioned to influence writers, particularly those, like Cooper and Hawthorne, who used elements of Romanticism in their writing. Cross-pollination of art and literature, characteristic of the American Renaissance and the specialized culture of the Hudson River aesthetic, informed the commonality of purposeful artistic and literary productions, designed to articulate a unique American cultural identity. American Romanticism attracted proponents of expansionist American exceptionalism through a primary discourse of sublime American landscape, while paradoxically circulating a secondary discourse, the cyclical theory of history, antithetical to the cultural-nationalist project. Cole's landscape narrative, composed of contradictory dialectical narratives, propelled cultural-nationalism forward through the panorama of American landscape, but backwards into the past through the cyclical theory, creating a conflicted ambiguity that ultimately held back the establishment of a national art and literature.

CHAPTER 3

DESOLUTE FORTUNE: COOPER AND COLE

In the painting, *Kindred Spirits*, by Asher B. Durand, Thomas Cole and William Cullen Bryant stand together on a cliff, overlooking a picturesque Hudson Valley landscape. This iconic portrait, often featured in literature anthologies about the American Renaissance, has come to represent the time period and the American landscape as a pastoral. Although writers and artists during the antebellum period in the United States often produced and projected the United States through picturesque imagery, other representations circulated beneath the image of America as Paradise, particularly with elements of the sublime. While producing texts with features of the picturesque, Bryant, Cole, and Cooper, among others, at the same time circulated imagery or narratives challenging the picturesque,[2] conveying ambivalence about the future of America, and sometimes dramatically prophesizing a catastrophic outcome. Their work discloses the competing tensions of the picturesque ideal in conflict with dispiriting reality. In addition to the pastoral qualities of the image, *Kindred Spirits* has also come to represent the connection between the "sister arts" of poetry and painting during the nineteenth century, with Cole and Bryant the iconic representation of its practitioners. Although the kinship between artists and writers is well-established, other practitioners like Cole and Cooper are so closely related in the methods and purpose of their art that closer study is warranted, not only for the parallels one might find between them, but also for the ways in which their texts may have ironically repressed rather than promoted the establishment of a unique American identity.

[2] In American landscape painting, according to Alan Wallach, "feelings of sublimity resulted from experiencing portrayals of threatening objects and situations," whereas the picturesque "generally meant landscapes relatively untouched by modernization" (*Landscape* 30).

Poets and Painters, Kinship Practitioners

Bertha Monica Stearns discusses the "union of literature and art" in this time period and how "the growing fame of American writers found expression in the works of native painters . . . led [by] Bryant, Irving and Cooper," (29). Stearns tells us that the "narratives of James Fenimore Cooper, appearing as they did at a time when there was a lively demand for pictures based on stories, provided a rich mine of material for artists" (38). Although Cole and Cooper were not close friends, their political and philosophical beliefs, as well as their well-established immersion in both literature and art, brought them within the same cultural spheres of influence. Philosophically and politically, Cole and Cooper were well-matched. Both were dismayed by the destruction of the natural environment, feared Jacksonian "mobocracy," and the rapid change that had occurred in the name of progress. Additionally, their creative processes, informed by European Romanticism, the cyclical theory of history, and Archibald Alison's aesthetic theory of associationism, led to intertextual practice, particularly in the translation of visual into written text (Cooper) and narrative into visual text (Cole). Both engaged in the cultural-nationalist project, their works were poised to construct an ideological framework for the United States, at a time when the new country looked to the establishment of an articulated and distinct identity, separate from that of British or European influence.

Not always within the same physical proximity, Cooper and Cole were friends with the same people, read the same magazines, and contributed to the same journals. They associated within the social circles of artists and writers in New York City through the *Bread and Cheese Club* and later *The Sketch Club,* whose goals included "the cross-fertilization of art, literature, and other professions" (Callow 15). Members of these associations often collaborated on books, such as *The Talisman*, a collection of essays, illustrations, poetry, and short stories. Cole and

Cooper knew of each other's work and engaged in parallel creative pursuits: "they both specialized in depicting scenery; they both exploited the cycle-of-nations theme, Cole in the 'Course of Empire,' Cooper in *The Crater*; Cole drew and painted scenes from Cooper's novels; Cooper praised Cole in print" (Callow 61-62). As Cooper composed poetic imagery through vivid description in his novels, Cole transcribed narrative into his paintings, hybridizing their art forms and positioning their works within closer aesthetic proximity. In a letter to Horatio Greenough, the American sculptor, Cooper asks Greenough to "Remember me to Cole. Tell him I forgive him for not coming to see me when in Paris, but it is a sin that may not be repeated. His art, and yours, and mine is to work up nature as fine as possible and to tell the critics to be damned" (Parry, *Art* 115). The artistic community of the nineteenth century, engaged in the creative pursuit of establishing cultural identity for the nation, often found themselves in the same locales, among other artists and writers. Common between them was sensitivity to critical reception of their art as well as the tension between their own artistic vision and the demand for what they believed to be an inferior aesthetic by an uncultivated public. According to James T. Callow, Cooper "enjoyed associations with a small group of artists" and was "a man strongly influenced by the world of art," concluding that writers "developed severe cases of art on the brain" (52). They "praised artists in magazines, travel books, and novels; employed the techniques of landscape painters; analyzed architecture with the enthusiasm of devoted amateurs, and wrote letterpress for engravings in gift books and periodicals" (90). This close-knit artistic camaraderie contributed to a flourishing cultural scene in New York City of both writers and artists, as well as facilitated the transfer of philosophical, aesthetic, and compositional techniques across genre boundaries.

Comparing a scene in Cooper's novel, *The Crater,* to Cole's painting, *The Titan's Goblet*, Mumford Jones pronounces, "Certain it seems that painter and poet influenced each other, and there is a working relation between the landscape painting of the Hudson River men and the descriptive techniques of New York writers like Irving, Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant" (143). A close association between Cooper and Cole is particularly noticeable; an *esprit de corps* that emanated outside the discrete genres of painting and poetry. Ian Marshall claims, "Cooper's early fiction, especially that set on American ground, shows the same concern with the rise and fall of empire" and further postulates that some of Cooper's works, "Taken in chronological order . . . (in terms of historical setting) . . . provide an outline of Cooper's version of America's 'Course of Empire'"(2). Inflections of the cyclical theory of history found in Cooper's novels and Cole's paintings undoubtedly contribute to the thematic and narrative correspondences noted by Marshall. Their compositions, characterized by similarity in literary techniques, scenes of Romantic landscape, and the picturesque and sublime, are also parallel in their use of a narrative framework that is essentially the same, that of the cyclical theory of history. Cooper's oft-quoted commentary on Cole's paintings supports Marshall's observation regarding Cooper's narrative use of the rise and fall of empire. In a letter to Cole's biographer and friend, Reverend Louis Legrand Noble, Cooper states, "Not only do I consider the *March* (sic) *of Empire* the work of the highest genius this country has ever produced, but I esteem it as one of the noblest works of art that has ever been wrought" (365). Other important connections between Cooper and Cole support the close associative nature of their work, including Cole's commission to illustrate Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*.

James F. Beard refers to their relationship as an "imaginative kinship," and believes that "only one native artist, Thomas Cole, was equal to the depth and immensity of Cooper's

conception," also noting that "Cooper and Cole were neighbors in Greenwich Street in New York and exchanged visits at about the time Cooper was writing his romance [*The Last of the Mohicans*]" (5). He adds that "In the works of both men, there is a passion for exactitude of representational detail, and, at the same time, a striving towards the harmonization of those details which reaches at times beyond the expressive limits of their media" (6). Cole's engraving *Schroon Lake* and Cooper's essay, "American and European Scenery Compared," are found together in *The Home Book of the Picturesque: Or American Scenery, Art, and Literature*, a slim volume of essays and illustrations published in 1852 after Cole's death. So well-matched are Cooper and Cole thematically and stylistically that modern editions of Cooper's novels continue to be illustrated with Cole's paintings. [3] With a desire to articulate beyond the boundary lines of either genre, both men straddled the sister arts of blended-genre, engaging in the cultural transmission of an American mythos through landscape imagery, nature, and Romantic elements of the sublime.

Joy S. Kasson believes Cooper's close relationships with artists when he was in Europe accelerated his understanding of aesthetic principles and aligned his compositional practices and techniques more closely with visual artists, noting that "Cooper was creating literary analogues to the artistic efforts of his friends" and that he "found his interest in the Old World given new direction by the concerns of visual artists." She contrasts this with Cole, who she says "took his view of European history from literary sources—notably Byron" (140). Another important influence upon American Romanticism, particularly Cooper, was Sir Walter Scott, whose novels explored the boundaries of history and romance through placing historical figures within a picturesque and sublime landscape setting (Dekker, "American"). Cole tried to establish himself

[3] The cover art for the 2005 Signet Classics version of *The Last of the Mohicans* is the 1830 Thomas Cole painting, *Distant View of Niagara Falls* (Art Institute of Chicago).

as a history painter and then turned to landscape painting when he did not succeed. Both Cooper and Cole used historical subjects and elements of the sublime and picturesque to dramatize conflict between the real and ideal, their art expressing tensions present in antebellum society. Common among Scott, Cooper, and Cole was the genre of historical Romance, as well as the shared use of literary pictorialism and visual narrative.

H. Daniel Peck proposes that Cooper's "image of America, almost pictorial in a certain way, was so tightly structured that when he was confronted with the realities of Jacksonian democracy . . . he began an insistent argument with his country which he sustained for the rest of his life. The nature of his response suggests that he would not, perhaps could not, depart from his initial conception" (8). These idealized conceptions of what the nation should be or could be were organized around tropes of the Romantic sublime. An idealized conception of America as Edenic would inevitably lead to the Fall. Nevius contends that "Cooper's imagination in his later years, seeking refuge from the gross realities of the present, finds it in the realms of memory or hope, in the recreation of a pastoral age or in a vision, however transient, of utopia" (86). Through the importation of the dramatic structure of the cyclical theory of history, and/or the Biblical allusion to the Fall, the fear of Paradise Lost permeates Cole's novelized art in *The Course of Empire* and Cooper's visual literature in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Crater*. Ironically, the idea of American Paradise, transmitted through Romantic and poetic landscape iconology, is a stimulant for ideas of American exceptionalism rather than a deterrent to the cycles of *Destruction* and *Desolation*.

Cooper's novels and Cole's paintings were seminal texts in the creation of American identity during the nation-building era of nineteenth-century America. Their popularity and the wide dissemination of their images aided in the formation of an American cultural identity. So

closely associated is the work of the painters and writers of this time period that "small details presumably intended to spark the viewer's imagination, [elicited] a train of associations." For example, a "tiny figure of an Indian guiding his canoe past one of the islands" evoked "a flood of associations—with the early history of the United States, with the military skirmishes of the French and Indian Wars, and with the novels of James Fenimore Cooper" (Katz 95). Therefore, Cole's and Cooper's landscape imagery aesthetically captured the lofty idealism and revolutionary rhetoric of the nation's beginnings, providing a bridge from the past into the antebellum period. The power of Cole's and Cooper's visual imagery, originated in its ability to stir nostalgic recollection of the nation's past, while channeling the promise of its future through the Romanticized grandeur of sublime landscapes. Using poetic imagery, historical and Biblical allusion, and the personification of Nature, Cooper and Cole pictured a powerfully symbolic, visual narrative of American Paradise of wide-ranging cultural influence.

Richard Magee maintains that "No other author . . . had such a profound effect on American landscape painting as Cooper," suggesting that both Cooper and Cole "establish a backward-looking nostalgia" in the prose and paintings of *The Last of the Mohicans*. He further concludes that Cooper engaged in a "sort of imaginative reconstruction" to repair the destruction rendered by progress and that his "landscapes are elegies that lament a lost historical past and long for a semi-mythological epoch" (7). Both Cooper and Cole, through poetic, visual interludes of loss and memory, register a sounding knell for the idyllic past and fear for the future of the United States. Cole's and Cooper's use of blended-genre, both literary and visual, aligns their compositions, reinforcing the cyclical theory of history through both paintings and prose. *The Course of Empire* is a dramatic staging with all of the techniques necessary for literary art, including setting, characters, chapters, melodrama, suspense, and other elements characteristic of

literature. As a compelling narrative, the series of paintings may be read as novelized art, the narrative structure readily transferable in visual form and thematic function. An editorial from *American Monthly Magazine* in November 1836 indicated the positive reception and also the recognition that Cole had done something to "mark a new era in the history of painting. They [*The Course of Empire* paintings] constitute a grand moral epic; each picture of the series being as perfect in itself as a single book or a finished poem; and the whole together comprising a system which, for completeness and grandeur of conception, may be classed with the noblest works of imagination" (qtd. in Parry, *Art* 186). Parry considers the final painting, *Desolation*, as "the painted equivalent of poetry" (183). Within the context of a dramatic narrative or "a single book," it is the concluding chapter, or denouement. Cole's inclusion of a stag and a deer in the final painting "suggests that . . . a new dawn will come, and savages may again join in the chase" (185). Cooper's novel, *The Crater*, closely approximates, not only the allegorical intent of the artist, but also the structural method with which the allegory is conveyed. Similar and sometimes parallel images are embedded in *The Crater*, an imaginative re-creation of colonization upon a desert island, a setting where the founding ideals of America might be temporarily recovered and re-inscribed.

Cole's theatrical execution of the paintings finds a parallel in Cooper, who utilizes "a series of magnificent tableaus in which setting may enhance the dramatic moment as in an historical painting" (Nevius 111). Both combine the picturesque and the sublime to create tension within the landscape. The synthesis of the two creates a dramatic effect; the idyllic past (picturesque) contrast with heightened fear of the future (sublime). Cooper and Cole rehearse the drama of the Fall through juxtaposed landscape *tableaux*, the tranquility of the picturesque in contrast to the heightened emotion of the sublime, the dramatic staging a cathartic attempt to

alleviate the tension between the real and the ideal. Beard argues that Cooper had the type of imagination that "conceives best in visual images, and for which the act of writing is essentially an act of transcription from one medium to another. This visual composing was the stage of creation which gave Cooper his greatest pleasure," adding, "the best way to read much of Cooper's fiction is to read it rapidly, allowing the text to recreate the painter's image" (7). Considered as hybrid forms, Cooper's and Cole's work illuminates patterns of meaning undetected within the traditional boundaries of genre analysis. The narrative of the cyclical theory of history, recovered in both Cooper and Cole through blended-genre analysis, is a secularization of *Paradise Lost*. Therefore, Cooper and Cole, through *The Course of Empire* paintings and *The Crater*, injected Old World, European influences into the origin myth of the United States. The transmission of Old World influences, while inhibiting the development of an American art and literature, produced instead, a hybridized, transatlantic culture of art and literature.

In the preface of *Cooper's Landscapes: An Essay on the Picturesque Vision*, Blake Nevius recalls how his "interest in Cooper's landscapes . . . persisted vividly in my memory . . . long after the makeshift romantic plots and most of the characters had faded" (vii). Nevius believes that Cooper "habitually used a device similar to the commanding center in landscape painting" and that this technique had gone unrecognized by his critics and contemporaries. Jones considers Cooper "the first American novelist to conceive of novels in series" (137). Cole, who also felt limited by a single canvas, often preferred pairs or series of paintings (including *Past and Present*, *The Voyage of Life*, and *The Course of Empire*) that accommodated the expansive nature of his creative vision. Others, notably Donald Ringe, have examined the strikingly similar techniques used by both Cole and Cooper in their compositions. Cole's insistent use of literary

devices permeates his narrative, particularly within his serialized paintings, imbuing his work with *novelistic* features, establishing *The Course of Empire* as a fictionalized narrative, or novelized art. Historical narrative infused within the structures of literature and/or art created genre-blended texts of hybridized narrative forms, circulating a powerful discourse about America through multiple modalities. Often, Cole and Cooper used their art for political and social commentary, as well as in service to moral instruction. In a discussion of Cooper's last novels, Ringe points out:

> Cooper is doing much more than merely commenting upon the social evils of his times. Throughout all of his criticism of society, Cooper had pleaded with his readers to go back to principles in judging the actions of the moment, and had given ever clearer indications of what those principles might be. At the close of his career he treats contemporary problems in terms of a moral view, which although it had always been present in his tales, stands out most clearly in his last five books. ("Cooper's Last Novels," 583)

Cole parallels Cooper's perspective on society, using the allegorical to promote the highest purpose of art, moral instruction. Cooper and Cole believed that the only protection the United States had from the inexorable course of history would be through a nation's virtue. While romanticizing the virgin landscape, Cooper and Cole also lamented the encroachment of industrialization and commerce upon the land, and feared this as markers of the inevitable decline of the United States.

In *Waking Giant*, David S. Reynolds advances the idea that Cooper "in his five Leatherstocking novels tried to impose order and morality on the American frontier experience" and that his "frontier hero, Leatherstocking (or Natty Bumppo), embodies decency and common

sense," noting, also, that although Cooper "never was able to shed the racist view that Indians, like blacks, were fundamentally inferior to whites," he also "highlights the innate intelligence and morality of some Native Americans" (240). In contrast to Rochelle Johnson's assertion that Cooper promoted progress, Reynolds confirms that Cooper, along with Irving, "tried to resist the cultural changes brought by Jacksonian democracy" where "other writers embraced them" (241). The cyclical theory of history, positing fear of catastrophe, performs an act of dialectical resistance to cultural change. As a dramatic idea, it offered not only a history lesson on the regressive nature of empire, but also an antithetical counterpoint to social progress. Paradoxically, as influential cultural practitioners, Cole and Cooper implanted a lurking defect within the heart of the nation's predicted longevity: the catastrophic cyclical theory of history, a secularized version of the Biblical Fall. Even Cooper's stock characters serve a thematic purpose, providing balance to Cooper's essentially melancholic view of the future with some measure of hope.

Cyclical Theory of History in Cole and Cooper

The *Course of Empire* paintings, a "secular series," according to Wallach, allowed Cole to "set forth in allegorical form his pessimistic philosophy of history and his essentially agrarian-republican critique of Jacksonian democracy." Wallach also considers how the series "gave explicit meaning to the mythic-historical narrative," explaining that "for Cole and many of his contemporaries, cyclical theory stood as demonstrable historical law" (*Landscape* 90). W. Eugene Kleinbauer explains the influence of the cyclic or cyclical theory of history over time:

> Cyclical theories were widespread in Western art history until recent times. They were formulated clearly in the 18th and 19th centuries, but as theories of history

> they are very old, having occurred first in ancient Greece and Rome (with Plato and Polybius) and later in the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods (with Machiavelli and Vico). Since antiquity, various cyclical notions of evolution have been propounded: dichotomies (order-disorder): three-phase rhythms (rise-decline-fall, or thesis-antithesis-synthesis); and four-, five-, and six-phase rhythms (birth, adolescence, maturity, old age, and death). (24)

In addition to historiographic correspondences, elements of dramatic literary structure parallel key features of the cyclical theory of history, including thesis or purpose-driven meaning, a series of events that sequence from beginning to end, and implied character development of man who begins in a state of innocence, progresses to maturity, and then falls into corruption. Exposition occurs within a sequencing of stages: rising action as human existence reaches the apex of civilization, dramatic conflict, falling action, and then denouement, characteristic features of European and American Romantic literary narrative.

Ernest H. Redekop refers to the intersecting media of literature and painting as "a kind of conceptual cloverleaf, in which history, fiction, landscape and human artifacts intersect," also noting that a "historical-literary continuum" is condensed into "visual and temporal set-pieces" (1). The cyclical theory of history, a middle ground between the genres, is an inherently dramatic and literary idea, readily transferrable into works of art and literature, providing a fertile resource and foundation for imaginative and creative exploration of its themes. The panoramic physical landscape of the United States, matched by the territorialism of the expansive American imagination, was circumscribed by the cyclical theory, which questioned America's future as Paradise.

David Reynolds reminds us that "History is the crucible that produces masterpieces" (237) and that both Cooper and Cole were strongly influenced by the political currents of the time. Cooper preferred "harking back to the traditional world of the founding fathers" (239), while Cole's fears (as expressed in *The Course of Empire*) "were linked with his profound abhorrence of the social changes he thought were caused by Jacksonianism" (282). Reynolds argues:

> Before 1828, American writers, although they often experimented with American themes and characters, still wrote in a style that typically showed a strong European influence. This transnational influence never died away—indeed, American writers after 1828 were more responsive to it than the earlier ones had been—but it mingled with the styles and idioms of an emerging popular culture that was distinctly American. After 1828, with the increasingly sharp divide between the Jacksonians and their opponents, writers were confronted with the choice between competing styles: one pointing to democratic passions, average Americans, and working-class sympathies and the other to a more elitist conception of culture, which meant sustaining subtle European technique while shying away from the so-called vulgar emotionalism and unleashed imaginativeness associated with Jacksonianism. (238)

For conservative thinkers like Cooper and Cole, the cyclical theory of history worked well as an encoded metaphor for paradise found and lost. Stow Persons explains, "In the controversial tracts of [the Revival] one finds dressed in religious garb several of the characteristic ideas and attitudes more commonly associated with the secular thinkers of the following generation" (150). Cole and Cooper, of the following generation, use historicism rather than religion to explore their

more conservative and moral ideas in a contemporary mode that suited the age of secular and scientific rationalism. Persons notes a continuation of the cyclical theory for those "nineteenth-century romantics who searched the past for confirmation of their faith in the future" (163), and defines the cyclical theory of history in eighteenth-century America as follows:

> The new view of history which came into vogue among conservative thinkers in the years following the revival found the source of historical dynamics in the operation of the universal moral law, the effect of which upon history was an endless cyclical movement analogous to the life cycle of the individual organism. Societies and nations rise and fall in endless sequence according as they observe or disregard those universal moral laws ordained of God and graven upon men's consciences for their governance and happiness. Suggestions of the cyclical theme were to be found both in the writings of classical antiquity, especially the historians and moralists, and more recently in the popular English literature of the early eighteenth-century. It was subsequently to become a familiar theme in romantic thought. (152)

The cyclical theory as a secular model modernizes what is essentially a religious trope of the Fall, signaling impending doom. Persons postulates further that "the millennial expectation and the idea of progress represent such sharply contrasting interests and temperaments" that the "cyclical theory seems to have performed a mediating function in accommodating these theories of history to each other" (149). The cyclical theory, a discourse that circulates throughout Cole's, *The Course of Empire* paintings, Cooper's novel, *The Crater*, and Hawthorne's novel, *The Marble Faun*, is the mode of transmission for conservative, but not radical, ideas about the future of the nation. Cole's series of paintings, illustrating the cyclical theory of history, provided a

powerful visual argument for political and cultural restraint. The idea became a type of "meme" across genres, conjoining art and literature in purpose and theme. Cole, personifying the historical, created a vivid illustration of the cyclical theory, making it accessible not only to the general public, but also an influential aesthetic for other artists and writers. As a triptych, the works of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne, may profitably be considered together, not only for the influence *The Course of Empire* had upon Cooper and Hawthorne, but also for the circulation of conservative ideas within the movement toward the construction of a national identity.

Bold outlines of the cyclical theory are featured in Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans,* published in 1826. Cole worked on the illustrations for *The Last of the Mohicans* well before he executed his paintings. A reconfigured cyclical theory of history, a secularization of the Edenic trope of *Paradise Lost*, circulates through the novel. Read through the lens of the cyclical theory of history, *The Last of the Mohicans* may have been an influence for Cole's *The Course of Empire* series, and, in turn, *The Course of Empire* an influence for Cooper's novel, *The Crater*, as the correspondences between the two are remarkable. Callow notes, "Like Cole's landscapes of contrast, Cooper's books were saturated with theme, the landscapes "progressing always from a primitive to a civilized state, represent both parallel and contrast" (161). In a continuum, the cyclical theory is traceable from 1826, the publication date of *The Last of the Mohicans*; to 1836, the exhibition date of *The Course of Empire*; to 1847, the publication date of *The Crater*. Because the works of Cooper and Cole were well-known to the public, their ideas about the cyclical theory of history were widely circulated. As a prolonged discourse, transmitted through popular works of American Romanticism, the cyclical theory profoundly influenced identity formation of the new nation, introducing apprehensive doubt about the progression of the new nation through the idea that the United States might be another Rome, destined to fall.

Citing Lucy Maddox, who believes that "Cooper perpetuates the master narrative of the period" (82), Rochelle Johnson argues that Cooper promoted progress and empire at any cost. But, if one were to recognize the effect of the cyclical theory of history upon *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper's authorial intent would be understood as the desire to *hold back empire* rather than to promote it. Both Cooper and Cole were alarmed by progress, rather than engaged in the promotion of it. Johnson reads Cooper as a paradigm of American exceptionalism, while reluctant to place Cole in the same category. Both Cooper and Cole, fearful of the loss of an agrarian ideal, retreated into the past; Cooper through exploring the dangers of American progress through an idyllic, agrarian Pacific island in his novel, *The Crater*, and Cole through Roman ruins in his paintings, *The Course of Empire*. Johnson characterizes Cole's reaction to progress as one of sorrow and "regret," but mistakes Cole's words when he says, "this is a regret rather than a complaint; such is the road society has to travel" (83). Cole resigns himself to reality, not because he accepts the idea of progress, but because he believes that all nations inevitably cycle through these stages. Johnson, attributing Cole's beliefs to the influence of others, argues that the fault "may lie more with Cole's contemporaries, who craved endorsement of their nation's progress, than with Cole himself" (83). A comparative visual reading of Cooper's text through the lens of the cyclical theory of history reveals the same regret in Cole's paintings. Implicit in the American mythos is the idea of a New World unadulterated by the excesses and corruption of the Old World. However, while their iconography promotes this reading, it also simultaneously imports a regressive narrative, prophesizing the nation's eventual fall.

Cole, Cooper, and *The Last of the Mohicans*

Although other artists illustrated scenes for the *Leatherstocking Tales*, Cole's paintings of *The Last of the Mohicans* are remarkable for their dramatic interpretation of Cooper's text (see fig. 2). Callow states that "Cole's breadth of vision was equal to Cooper's" (189). These illustrations not only accurately convey the setting and plot of the text, but also imaginatively enter into Cooper's tone, mood, and meaning of the text. Considered masterful works of art, transcendent of mere imitation, Cole's interpretation of key scenes from Cooper's novel became the iconic representation of American Romanticism, incorporating sublime elements of nature's grandeur within a historicized setting: the French and Indian War.

Fig. 2. Landscape Scene from *The Last of the Mohicans* (1827). Reproduced with permission from the Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Gift of Stephen C. Clark, NO194.1961. Photograph by Richard Walker.

Cole's keen understanding of narrative and literary form, matched equally by the aesthetic, visual qualities of Cooper's literature, allowed for a fortuitous aesthetic translation of one genre into the other. *The Last of the Mohicans*, written in 1826, encapsulates the cyclical theory of history through foreshadowing the demise of a once powerful civilization, the Mohicans, also confuting the idea that the United States was without historical associations, an important consideration for the establishment of a distinctive cultural identity. Cole and Cooper, creating a past for the nation through the evocative and sublime imagery of historical romance, also shifted the nation ideologically from an unspoiled American Paradise, to an empire within the vast panorama of time. Within this paradigm, American Paradise, subject to the inexorable course of history, would cycle through to inevitable collapse. Providing a counter-argument to the optimism of America's future, Cole's illustrations, paired with Cooper's text, impart the idealism of Paradise, while also forecasting pessimism through elements of the sublime, producing an unsettling ambiguity about the course of America.

Ringe suggests an intimate artistic influence between the two artists, noting that Cooper utilized an identical device—the use of a "single dominant detail" that "functions thematically in each series," signaling changes that have taken place in the narrative sequencing. Ringe also identifies the "strong contrast of light and shadow which Cole, even more than the other Hudson River men, loved to put into his work" (33), considering their work so much alike "in both form and content that one wonders if perhaps we may have here an example of at least indirect or subconscious influence" (36). Examining these correspondences more closely, a comparative analysis between *The Crater* and *The Course of Empire* insists upon a transformative blending of art and literature.

Emergent cultural productions of this time period were subject to the influence of European Romanticism in literature and art, particularly the sublime and the picturesque. Artists, tasked with the creation of crafting a unique American identity, struggled with the lack of historical associations in the New World; therefore, they fell back upon the tropes of well-known European narrative, their artistic expression hybridizing characteristics of the Old World with an emergent New World aesthetic paradigm. Cole and Cooper lamented the lack of Old World ruins, which they imported, instead, through epigraphs, infusing British and European literature within their works. Cole, upon his return from Europe, grafted Roman ruins upon the American landscape in many of his paintings.

In Cooper's, *The Last of the Mohicans*, the scouting party enters the ruins of Fort William Henry, a scene "so chillingly in accordance with the past" that Duncan "stood for many minutes a rapt observer" (232). In this chapter, there is "destruction and desolation in his footsteps" and "the youth sought his own pillow among the ruins of the place" (244). This scene, eerily similar to Cole's painting, *Desolation*, ends with "they who lay in the bosom of the ruined work seemed to slumber as heavily as the unconscious multitude whose bones were already beginning to bleach on the surrounding plain" (244). Cooper describes this place of ruins as "abandoned with the disappearance of danger, and was now quietly crumbling in the solitude of the forest, neglected and nearly forgotten" (149). In a literary sense, these scenes produce a melancholic strain, a poetic longing for something that has been lost. Although Cooper laments the lack of historical associations, he has written them into Paradise. They are there in the forest, "intimately associated with the recollections of colonial history . . . in appropriate keeping with the gloomy character of the surrounding scenery" (150).

Tragic narrative elements are created through the tension between what might have been and what is no longer. Although Cooper attributes his inspiration for *The Crater* to *The Course of Empire*, the cyclical elements and *visual tableaux* were already in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The cyclical theory is relayed, not through Magua, but instead through the elder who thunders, "Who speaks of things gone! Does not the egg become a worm, the worm a fly, and perish! Why tell the Delawares of good that is past? Better thank the Manitto for that which remains" (370). This speech, emblematic of the cyclical theory, places Magua's "dark intentions," within the decline and fall stages of the historical cycle. He speaks of the Spirit who "gave this people the nature of the pigeon; wings that never tire: young, more plentiful than the leaves on the trees, and appetites to devour the earth . . . his gluttony makes him sick. God gave him enough, and yet he wants all. Such are the palefaces" (369). Cooper's concerns with the inherently destructive societal tendencies parallel those seen in Cole's "Essay on American Scenery, the allegory in *The Course of Empire*, as well as Freneau's poem, "The Indian Burying Ground." In the painting, *Consummation*, greed and pleasure, placed above God and nature, inevitably leads to *Destruction* and *Desolation*.

In an earlier chapter, Hawkeye gestures to the heavens and says, "Better and wiser would it be, if he could understand the signs of nature, and take a lesson from the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the fields" (149). When Hawkeye happens upon the decayed, abandoned, and neglected blockhouse, there is a poetic, melancholic strain of irrecoverable loss and nostalgia for the past. The phrase Cooper uses to describe what has happened to the Native-Americans, *desolate fortune*, is the re-creation of Cole's painting *Desolation*, and a staged version of the cyclical theory of history. Native-Americans, although arguably in a *Savage* state, have already cycled through *Destruction* and *Desolation* at the hands of their colonizers. Having passed

through all of the cycles, the tribes have prospered and lived in peace in the past. The American colonizers, former British colonists themselves, have assaulted the innocent Native-Americans through hegemonic greed and violence, making them the victims of *Consummation*, which will inevitably lead to *Destruction* and then *Desolation*. Implicit in this reading is the idea that even the innocent may cycle through the stages, questioning the premise that moral virtue may deliver a civilization from catastrophe. The cyclical theory of history, Romanticism, and the sublime inform the literary and visual compositions of Cooper and Cole from the early Jacksonian era to 1847 when *The Crater* was published. Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, written in 1826, precedes Cole's *The Course of Empire* series (1836) by ten years. In the midst of a New World buoyed by indefatigable optimism, both Cooper and Cole, create in its stead, a world that has fallen into sin and/or apocalypse.

Roberta Katz, in her study of Cole's Mohican paintings, argues that "perhaps the Mohican tale embodied some of his own conflicted views on an American national identity that he explored through fresh, inventive, and imaginative pictorial strategies" (58). In her study of Cole and Cooper, she delineates parameters to measure what she calls "literary landscape" (59), also useful as a visual literature measure in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Advancing that "Cole turned the wilderness landscape into a dynamic literary site," Katz proposes that the literary quality of the *Mohican* paintings is exhibited through Cole's use of literary pictorial strategies, including "settings laden with symbols of national purpose," "staging the natural setting as a *mis-en-scene* with theatrical contrasts of dark and light," and varying the landscape elements "to connect the mood of nature to the emotion of the story" (59, 61, 63). Katz claims that in Cole's paintings, "nature becomes an active narrative, literary, and moral voice in the human drama" (63). Images created through descriptive text, and text created through narrative images, are the

tools of visual and textual composition that transcend genre and create hybridized meaning. Katz suggests that "Cole seemingly enacted, in a visual mode, the new style of novel writing . . . that seem[s] to simulate the motion and action of Cooper's plots and counter-plots" (64). Conversely, Cooper's thorough and descriptive prose, as well as his ability to convey mood and tone through vivid description, turned the wilderness landscape into a dynamic *visual* site, rendering his work as *visual literature*.

Like Cole, who adds explanatory notes to his paintings, Cooper interweaves Old and New World ideology, adding a transatlantic subtext to the American setting, through the inclusion of epigraphs for each of the chapters of his novel. The epigraphs, from many of Shakespeare's plays, also include Burns, Gray, Pope, Scott and Byron, as well as the American voice of Bryant. The inclusion of Bryant's epigraph filters in both the past and the present, as well as an American voice influenced by European Romanticism: "Before these fields were shorn and till'd, / Full to the brim our rivers flow'd; / The melody of waters fill'd / The fresh and boundless wood; / And torrents dash'd, and rivulents play'd, / And Fountains spouted in the shade" (28). Presciently, it is through Bryant, a New World American, that Cooper signals the theme of the chapter, an elegiac meditation on the landscape of loss. What follows is the encounter between Chingachgook and Hawkeye. In a rendering of the past, Chingachgook laments what has been lost and apostrophizes his loss with, "Where are the blossoms of those summers! Fallen, one by one. So all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of spirits. I am on the hilltop, and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans" (35). This elegy provides historical dramatization as well as Romantic, literary

elements of the sublime. Charles Sanford analyzes the effect of Burke's sublime on American aesthetic practice:

> By reinstating the sublime, evocative of awe and terror, Burke intended that literature, and, to a certain extent, painting . . . should be measured by their sheer power in stirring emotions. Burke's treatment enthroned subjectivity and helped the romantic artist to free himself from the neoclassical aesthetic of imitation. American poets and painters turned to the sublime for emotional intensification of American scenery both to assert their personal freedom as romantic artists and to assert their cultural independence of Europe as Americas. The sublime wedded native creativity to native subject matter. (435)

Cooper adds elements of moral drama through sublime landscape imagery. The past haunting the present, Chingachgook is "on the hilltop" and "must go down into the valley," also foreshadowing the future when "there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores" (35). This chronology provides a panorama of cyclical history. Although the visual elements of these landscape scenes render a sentimental yearning for the past, embodied within Cooper's visual literature is a fear of the Fall that has already happened or is yet to occur. Cooper's use of epigraphs, the cyclical theory, and personified nature in *The Last of the Mohicans* inform a sublime landscape, one that is bounded by the "hilltop" and the "valley," composing poetic interludes of loss. Calling upon classic literature to interpret and historicize the wilderness setting, the epigraphs connect Cooper's American novel to British literature, articulating the wilderness experience in America through transatlantic referent. On another level, Cole and Cooper impart a globalized context through transatlantic mirroring of European art and literature into the American literary and visual landscape. Although the goal was to assert cultural

independence, Cooper and Cole recontextualized America through a mélange of both transatlantic European and American imagery, reinforcing patriarchy and colonialism, in part through the masculine sublime.

Both Cooper and Cole, concerned about the rapid loss of the natural world, expressed fear of what the future might bring. Their concomitant political concerns, Jacksonian "mobocracy," the exuberant rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, and the departure from Jeffersonian ideals of elite and native aristocracy, precipitated their desire to conserve what they felt had been lost, the ideal of Paradise. Ironically, in spite of their desire to inhibit progress, their art and literature was used instead to promote the mytho-poetic ideal of America, through landscape imagery that preserved the idea of America as Paradise.[4] We see exploration of similar themes in Cole's early poem, "Mount Washington," written in 1828: timeless nature against which history is measured, the rise and fall of empire, and nature's dominance over human existence. In turn, Cooper replicates Cole's paintings in his novel, *The Crater*, a shipwreck and colonization narrative, cycling through all phases of the cyclical course of history found in Cole's paintings.

The Crater; or Vulcan's Peak* and *The Course of Empire

Cooper believed, as did Cole, that "his own country was making a fatal point of departure from the principles of its founders, a departure that would signal the start of the downswing into corruption and eventual extinction" (*Crater*, xv) and that "only by moving backward to the firm principles, the pristine simplicity, and the stable cohesiveness of the early years of the Republic, only by reversing the wheel of change, could America avoid the fate of Rome" (xvii). The fatal departure for Cooper would have been the nation's movement away from the agrarian ideal toward crass materialism (*Waking Giant*, Reynolds 241). In the antebellum period of the

[4] Alan Wallach notes the commodification of both visual art and literature and its use as nation-building rhetoric in the antebellum period ("Thomas Cole and the Aristocracy").

nineteenth century, the cyclical theory of history accommodated an increasing secularization of society brought about through scientific advancements and industrialization. John Hales reports that

> Cooper was deeply troubled by the overwhelming evidence of his country's political and cultural shortcomings and he spent much of his career documenting the errors of America's ways. Nevertheless, he couldn't keep himself from believing that a 'timely warning' might have the necessary effect, and he worked hard in *The Crater* to find ways around the secular and theological imperatives that might prevent America from recovering from its moral and political slump. (10)

Cooper, a gentleman-farmer, was threatened by the advance of the lower-class, in power and position. Mingled with his elitist, hierarchical beliefs, was his objection to a society that he believed had lost its moral compass. The cyclical theory brought a sense of pre-ordained order and certitude to what Cooper perceived as a nation's chaotic response to the experiment of democracy.

Cooper, directly referencing Cole and *The Course of Empire* paintings in the final pages of his novel, provides a thematic visual correspondent recognizable to the readers. Through allusion to Cole's paintings, Cooper layers his written text with not only visual description, but also the cyclical theory narrative. Redekop asserts that "Since emblems tend to be visual, paintings are more easily recognizable as emblems than writing is" and that Cooper is "drawing on the knowledgeable reader's memory of Cole's paintings or of engravings based on the paintings" (12-13). Allan M. Axelrad informs, "the cyclical character of history of every society, which was so central to Cooper's social analysis, was widely accepted by the writers and painters

associated with the Hudson River School" (2). Further extending the connection between *The Crater* and *The Course of Empire*, he claims that "the framework provided by Cole's epic is largely responsible for the relative compactness of *The Crater*; it shapes and limits Cooper's novel, providing tight structural unity" (4). Parry confirms that the idea of [cyclical theory] was "an old one by the 1830s" and notes "how universal these ideas were at that moment on both sides of the Atlantic" (*Art* 141). Cole's preliminary notes for the paintings parallel the cyclical theory of history as it is also seen in Cooper's employment of the theory in *The Crater*. Cole's notes on his ideas:

> A series of pictures might be painted that should illustrate the history of a natural scene, as well as be an epitome of Man,—showing the natural changes of landscape, and those effected by an in his progress from barbarism to civilization—to luxury—the vicious state, or state of destruction—and to the state of ruin and desolation. The philosophy of my subject is drawn from the history of the past, wherein we see how nations have risen from the *Savage* state to that of power and glory and then fallen, and become extinct. (qtd. in Noble 129)

As a framing device for the paintings and novel, the cyclical theory offers a template upon which Cole and Cooper compose. By utilizing the same narrative framework, as well as similar literary and pictorial techniques, Cole and Cooper create a convergence of narrative art and visual literature. Presuming alignment of Cole's paintings with Volney's description of cyclical theory, Axelrad posits the cyclical theory as a point of connection between Cole and Cooper. He interprets Cole's paintings as a secularized application of the cyclical theory and Cooper's novel as religious, claiming "Cooper's allegory contains one substantive addition to the allegory in *The Course of Empire*. It places the cycle of genesis and decay within a religious framework—an

interpretive liberty, no doubt, of which Cole would heartily approve; for after his own conversion, he too would paint religious allegories" (33). Although it is clear that *The Crater* may be profitably read through the lens of biblical analysis, Axelrad's interpretation of the novel within an essentially religious framework may be overstated. Cooper's portrayal of organized religion as corruptible, argues instead for the novel as essentially secularized political allegory, buttressed with biblical allusion to support Cooper's scathing commentary on American politics. Hales points out, "Cooper clearly intended the cyclical theory to serve an educational function in the book" (7). The cyclical theory also functioned rhetorically as a secular argument against the contemporary social and political course of the United States, in what Cooper believed was unrestrained and unabated expansion, without moral compass.

The epigraph on the title page of *The Crater*, from Bryant's poem, "The Prairies," metatextually inscribes the cyclical theory of history: "Thus arise / races of living things, glorious in strength, / And perish, as the quickening break of God / fills them, or is withdrawn." Redekop, comparing Cooper's use of the cyclical theory with Cole's paintings, finds both "deal symbolically with historical mutability" (12). Similarly, in his introduction to *The Crater*, Thomas Philbrick considers Cooper's use of the theory to advance an argument about the United States:

> At first Cooper had conceived of the unfolding of that destiny as an automatic progress toward enlightenment, power, and abundance, but impressed by his extended European tour with the cyclical history of past civilizations and shocked upon his return to the United States by the social and political upheavals of Jacksonian democracy and the spread of a vulgar and unscrupulous spirit of commercialism he became increasingly worried by the possibility that his own

> country was making a fatal departure from the principles of its founders, a departure that would signal the start of the downswing into corruption and eventual extinction. By the 1840's his cyclical view of history was fully formulated, and its relevance to the course of America was appallingly clear. (xiv-xv)

Although some viewers read this series of paintings as a history lesson on Rome and others read *The Crater* as a Robinson Crusoe-style tale of the sea, there is compelling evidence that Cole and Cooper intended both to be read as allegories of America's future—in antithesis to the prevailing idea of progress. Both are warnings of what may occur in America. Parry notes that "it may be true that Cole wanted his audience to recognize that the setting for *The Course of Empire* was part Mediterranean and part North American. After all, with the sun coming up on the viewers' left in *The Savage* state the view must be from north to south along the eastern edge of a large continent; and the bay that opens to the sea seems to offer a safe haven for shipping and commerce as promising for future growth and expansion as New York harbor" (160). Belief that the United States was the "Shining City upon the Hill" meant Americans subconsciously, perhaps, reframed the narrative from pessimistic doom to optimistic American exceptionalism. The rejoinder to this perspective would have come from John Winthrop himself: those who did not uphold the covenant of God would be subject to harsh and swift judgment (Conn, 8-9); therefore, the idea of American exceptionalism worked to both preserve optimism, as well as predicate pessimism, as individuals were compelled to adhere to improbably high standards of moral virtue.

Peck suggests that "*The Crater* recapitulates all the major issues of Cooper's fiction. The novel is his most literally conceived island setting, and the shores of Mark Woolston's

paradise form an absolute boundary between the protected "inside" and the threatening "outside" to create an "Eden of modern times" (155). This "Eden of modern times" is a secular Eden—an ideological weapon in Cooper's arsenal against what he believed was the desecration of American Paradise. Peck contends that "Cooper uses *The Crater* to attack every contemporary abuse he can think of—the irresponsibility of newspapers, political and religious factionalism, mob rule, and social and educational experimentation." Ultimately, Peck argues that it is Cooper himself, not an angry God, who "failing to respect the world he has made, becomes the most intrusive and destructive 'outsider' in the novel" and that "Cooper himself robs this paradise of its integrity" (158). Peck implies that Cooper is using the cyclical theory for nursing grudges rather than promoting principled ethical behavior.

Through foreshadowing and visual allusion, Cooper presents visual vignettes of the cyclical theory throughout the novel. In some areas, the dramatic action and/or setting reproduce the paintings as *tableaux vivants*. In other parts of the novel, the paintings are referenced through visual allusion and/or visual motif. Ringe, in his explanation of the "analogous" technique between Cooper and Cole, contends, "To read these works in terms of their visual elements, however, is not an easy task, for it requires us to 'see' the descriptive effects in something of the same way that a contemporary audience might have viewed them; to recapture, in other words—insofar as it is possible—the aesthetic sensibility of the first half of the nineteenth century in America" (11). Descriptive text was an important feature during this time period: literature was used to re-create visual scenery for readers unable to travel. In his essay, "American and European Scenery Compared," Cooper addresses the readers' need to fulfil their "longing to see distant lands," yet "are forbidden by circumstances . . . beyond the limits of their homes." He suggests that instead they "must be content to derive their information on such subjects from the

pen, the pencil, and the graver" (8). Artists and writers were charged with re-creating what they viewed and perceived, both the literal and the abstract, in transmissible visible terms.

Lost Paradise: *The Crater* and *The Course of Empire*

The narrative of *The Crater*, similar to Cole's short story, "Emma Moreton," brings together two young lovers, Mark Woolston and Bridget Yardley. Bridget's father, believing Mark is interested only in his daughter's inheritance, forbids the union, and insists upon his daughter's obedience to his will. The father's conflict with Mark conveys class hierarchy within American society, predicated upon wealth and position, rather than titles of nobility; therefore, Mark must prove his worth as a suitable match for Bridget through his ability to acquire wealth. As a young man who has not yet established himself, they must secretly marry before Mark leaves the United States and sets sail for the Orient, where he hopes to find the means to his success. While at sea, Mark is shipwrecked along with his crew. He survives and discovers an uninhabited island which he and a shipmate, Bob Betts, explore, colonize, and territorialize.

Their colonization narrative begins when the "two mariners drew near to the visible reef . . . it might become their future home; perhaps for years, possibly for life" (57). Through the shipwreck they have been baptized into a new life—or the first stage of Cole's paintings, the *Savage* state. Although Mark and Bob themselves are not "savages," their circumstances have relegated them to a primitive, survival-mode of existence. As does the rock formation in *The Course of Empire*, a geographical symbol anchors Cooper's narrative from initial encounter with the island, until the catastrophic ending of the novel. Both Cooper and Cole use this enduring geologic feature as a narrative framing device: "In the centre of this island, however, there was a singular formation of the rock, which appeared to rise to an elevation of something like sixty or eighty feet, making a sort of a regular circular mound of that height, which occupied no small

part of the widest portion of the island" (58). A marker that anchors Cole's paintings and Cooper's novel to the cyclical theory of history, Nature stalwartly witnesses the creation, decline, and fall of a civilization. The peak of the mountain charts a civilization bound by time, whereas, Nature's time is immeasurable.

Foreshadowing occurs immediately after the introduction of the crater, named by Mark as Vulcan's Peak. The title of the novel, *The Crater; or Vulcan's Peak*, indicates the symbolic and allegorical importance Cooper ascribed to the geologic landform. Mark reports, "The utter nakedness of the rock both surprised and grieved him . . . the only interruption to its [the island's] solitude and desolation being occasioned by the birds" (59). As a sublime element in the narrative, it not only conveys the passage of time, but also witnesses the colony's rise from a shipwrecked state into a successful empire, engaged in profitable trade with other island nations. As the personification of Nature, it also grieves the loss of paradise by novel's end. The novel, about the life and death of a civilization, mirrors all of the stages in Cole's paintings: *Savage, Pastoral*, *Consummation*, *Destruction*, and *Desolation*. The stages, represented in the novel through narrative structure, characterization, and scenes of ekphrastic replication, begin with the *Savage* state and end with *Desolation*.

Although Woolston and Betts do not dwell within a *Savage* state due to their "civilized natures," visual allusion is made to the *Savage* state through their interactions with what Cooper refers to as "savages." Their ship, the *Rancocus,* was equipped with weapons that might have been used for the "necessity of fortifying . . . against savages" (77). For mariners who spent years at sea in uncharted waters, the idea of preparing for encounters or inhabiting a savage state was a pragmatic necessity. When Mark and Bob are thrust into shipwrecked isolation at the beginning of the novel, their experience approximates that of the savage state, one in which they

must provision for themselves. As they assess their situation, they plan for survival: "Fish will help us, and turtle would be a great resource, could we meet with any of that. But, man requires mixed food, meats and vegetables, to keep him healthy; and nothing is so good for the scurvy as the last" (73). Thrust into survival mode, they become hunters and gatherers, engaged in the daily acts of feeding themselves. The American frontier, relocated to a tropical island in the Pacific Ocean, is cleansed for the creation of an untainted colonization narrative. Reversing wealth and position as corruptible markers of success, the refashioned standard in *The Crater* is rugged individualism, and the ability to survive in Nature.

Their domestication of the island through agrarian practices situates them within the *Pastoral* state, as well as signals a return to the Jeffersonian Agrarian ideal. Cooper writes, "Bob now joined his friend on the crater-wall, and assisted in carrying the sea-weed to the places prepared to receive it, when both of the mariners next set about mixing it up with the other ingredients of the intended soil . . . melons, of both sorts, and of the very best quality, were now put into the ground, as were also beans, peas, and Indian-corn, or maize" (78). The parallel to "planting" the American colonies is evident: in an inversion to the experience of American colonists who planted seeds given to them from the Native-Americans, these castaways are able to plant crops because the Captain had brought with him "a considerable quantity of the common garden seeds, as a benefit conferred on the natives of the islands he intended to visit" (78). The *Pastoral* state is successful as these seeds take root in otherwise barren soil.

Mark and Bob work the soil so "vegetation had actually commenced on that hitherto barren mount, and the spot which had lain—how long, Mark knew not, but probably for a thousand years, if not for thousands of years, in its nakedness—was about to be covered with verdure, and blest with fruitfulness" (101). Mark, engaged in the construction of a new Eden, is

fortified by thoughts that he "might bring Bridget to this place, and pass the rest of his life with her, in the midst of its peace and tranquility." Juxtaposed with Mark's remembrances of Bridget are "the pictures that crowded on his mind . . . the effects of cultivation and care on that singular spot" (118). Cooper's use of the word "picture" signals a transition into the *Consummation* stage, one in which Mark will consummate his marriage to Bridget, as well as cultivate his new world from a fledgling colony to a thriving civilization, both signifying fertility within the new colony.

During the *Pastoral* stage, Cooper contrasts the mathematical abilities of Mark with the instinctual abilities of Bob, who, although "completely ignorant of mathematics and arithmetic… understood the compass perfectly . . . and his eye was as true as that of the most experienced artist" (125). Along with mathematical and geological practices, *The Pastoral* stage of Cole's painting depicts agriculture and commerce. Cooper utilizes nature to transition from one stage to the next—Bob and Mark must survive fevered illness, tempests, gales, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions before they will reach the state of *Consummation*. Securing the narrative to the cyclical theory of history, Mark muses upon "sad views . . . of some future day . . . the true character of our probationary condition here on earth, and on the unknown and awful future to which it leads us" to "grave circumstances" and "the necessity of preparing for the final change" (138-9). Although it is cloaked in Biblical allusion, Cooper foreshadows the outcome of Mark's paradise:

> [Man has] lived in vain . . . in the midst of the civilization of this our own age, and does not see around him the thousand proofs of the tendency of things to the fulfillment of the decrees, announced to us ages ago by the pens of holy men. Rome, Greece, Egypt, and all that we know of the past, which comes purely of man and his passions; emirs, dynasties, heresies and novelties, come and go like the changes of the seasons; while the only thing that can be termed stable, is the

> slow but sure progress of prophecy . . . the signs of the times are not to be mistaken. (140)

Cooper's insertion of the cyclical theory into the *Pastoral* stage of the narrative, as well as juxtaposition of advancement with decline, is in sharp contrast with the American belief in optimistic progress. Warning Americans to beware of unchecked progress, Cooper employs the cyclical theory to transition from *Consummation* to *Destruction*, leading ultimately to *Desolation*, signaled by Mark's survey of what he has accomplished. Their garden, once barren, is now "to have been brought to the highest stage of fertility" (148). Again, *Destruction* is foreshadowed, as Mark's garden "was absolutely free from weeds of every sort . . . though he had no doubt that, in the course of time, he should meet with intruders in his beds" (152). The narrative for either a biblical reading, the introduction of original sin into the Garden of Eden, or the cyclical theory, suggests the inevitability of loss.

Mark prepares to launch a ship, christened the "Bridget Yardley," to voyage back to America, when an incredible event occurs. He is witness to the creation of new landforms through volcanic eruption. This chapter, dense with description, transcends the picturesque qualities of the tamed landscape. This is a sublime landscape, born of "the power of the effort which the earth had made in its subterranean throes" (159), with a "sudden elevation of the earth's crust. Everywhere sea seemed to be converted into land, or, at least, into rock. All the white water had disappeared, and in its place arose islands of rock, or mud, or sand . . . a new world" (160-61). The description of this occurrence renders a *visual tableaux* of Cole's transition from the *Pastoral* or *Arcadian* landscape to the apex of *Consummation*:

> To Mark's astonishment he had seen some dark, dense body first looming through the rising vapour. When the last was sufficiently removed, a high, ragged

> mountain became distinctly visible. He thought it arose at least a thousand feet above the ocean, and that it could not be less than a league in extent. This exhibition of the power of nature filled the young man's soul with adoration and reverence for the mighty Being that could set such elements at work. It did not alarm him, but rather tended to quiet his longings to quit the place; for he who lives amid such scenes feels that he is so much nearer to the arm of God than those who dwell in uniform security, as to think less of ordinary advantages than is common . . . after gazing at these astonishing changes for a long time, our young man descended from the height and retraced his steps homeward. (166-67)

It is this encounter with the sublime that prepares Mark for his voyage back to America. There is a "thread of smoke" that issues from the Crater—like the thread of smoke in Cole's painting of the *Pastoral* or *Arcadian* stage, interpreted as smoke from a ceremonial sacrifice, but in the paintings, it is a foreboding sign. But in this sublime moment, "nothing but distance obstructed the view. The Peak was indeed a sublime sight, issuing, as it did, from the ocean without any relief. Mark now began to think he had miscalculated its height, and that it might be *two* thousand feet, instead of one, above the water. There it was, in all its glory, blue and misty, but ragged and noble" (174). The pictorial qualities of this scene are reinforced by Cooper placing Mark, as not only the narrator of the scene, but also as a self-aware observer above the scene, reveling in the visual splendor.

The elements of panorama and perspective are introduced as Mark "increased his distance from Vulcan's Peak, as he named the mountain, to ten leagues, at least. After sitting in the cross-trees for fully an hour, gazing at this height with as much pleasure as the connoisseur ever studied picture, or statue" (174). In a kind of call and response with Cole, Mark inhabits the

role of artist in this scene, not only using words to describe what he has seen, but also the artistic techniques that confer meaning within the creative acts of naming, or making visible through picturing or scene-making. Cooper likens Mark to "Columbus," who "knelt on the sands," and then "began to roam around the plain, to get an idea of its beauties and extent. The former were inexhaustible, offering every variety of landscape, from the bold and magnificent to the soft and bewitching" (181). Cooper invokes America with the associative reference to Columbus and then calls upon the elements of landscape to impose a mytho-poeticism upon the island, as he had done earlier through wilderness scenes in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Like Columbus, Mark claims his dominion upon the land: "standing on the highest point of his new discovery . . . the whole plain of the island . . . lay spread before him like a map," a "little paradise," the "very Elysium of Birds!" (183-84). Yet again, Cooper establishes the idyllic qualities of all that Mark surveys, only to foreshadow the loss of the idyllic Eden.

Cooper transports the reader back to the cyclical theory of history and his social concerns of what has happened in antebellum America with an authorial intrusion: "We have certainly made great progress in this country, within the last twenty years; but whether it has been in a direction towards the summit of human perfection, or one downward towards the destruction of all principles, the next generation will probably be better to say than this" (193). Mark returns to America and brings Bridget back to the Crater, where their marriage is consummated and his private Garden of Eden complete. Along with Bridget, Mark carefully chooses a composite assemblage of colonizers he believes will contribute to the societal habitation of the island. The burgeoning of civilization within the colony is dangerous, as "so smoothly did the current of life flow, on the Reef and at Vulcan's Peak, that there was probably more danger of their inhabitants falling into the common and fatal error of men in prosperity,

than of anything else; or, of their beginning to fancy that they deserved all the blessings that were conferred on them, and forgetting the hand that bestowed them" (233). In this chapter of the book, as in Cole's painting of *Consummation*, there is "the united influence of security, abundance, and a most seductive climate" (233). Cooper's target, those that Cole referred to as the "dollar-godded utilitarians" (qtd. in Noble 161), are the wealthy but morally bankrupt power-elite of Jacksonian America. Cooper again alludes to the crisis that is to come with the metaphorical venting of the volcano that contains, "dangerous forces that were in the course of a constant accumulation beneath" (236). Those forces come to rapid fruition when the "very savage chief" takes control and "threatened his colony with destruction" (262), which is the next painting in *The Course of Empire*, as well as the next inevitable stage in the cyclical theory of history.

Mark's shipwrecked companion, Bob Betts, declares: "Times is changed, sir, and we're now at war. Then it was all peace and quiet; and now it's all hubbub and disturbance" (265). The inevitability of this outcome is disclosed by Cooper as he steps outside of the narrative to consider the philosophical implications of the course of empire. He says, "It has long been a question with moralists, whether or not, good and evil bring their rewards and punishments in this state of being . . . there is much reason to believe that a portion of our transgressions is to meet with its punishment here on earth" (281). Mark and the colony negotiate, ally themselves with benign natives, fend off the savages whenever necessary, and arm themselves to protect the colony when needed. *Destruction* occurs when "Eleven hundred warriors, as was afterwards ascertained, landed on the Reef and assembled under the walls of the crater" (314), but as Axelrad has argued, the greatest risk to the colony comes from within: "the colony had reached a point where every interest was said to be prosperous—a state of things with communities, as

with individuals, when they are, perhaps, in the greatest danger of meeting with reverses, by means of their own abuses" (385). The contrast of utopian and dystopian rhetoric, mirrors the unresolved conflict between the Agrarian ideal and the aesthetic and moral cost of industrialization on the United States.

Axelrad argues, "Cooper modified Cole's account, having the community destroyed by internal barbarism. In *The Course of Empire* and *The Crater* the message is the same—so long as the moral fiber of a people is strong, civilization will withstand onslaughts of barbarism, but when the moral fiber is frail, barbarism will conquer and destroy" (25-26). Although internal barbarism is articulated in Cooper's novel through specific characters and their actions, Cole's scene of *Destruction* offers the same visual argument as Cooper's literary interpretation. Cooper does little to modify Cole's account. The external barbarism occurs in the painting is precipitated by the actions performed during the stage of *Consummation*. The barbarism, whether internal or external, is a defect embedded within the human psyche. The colony unravels, cycling from its apex to the next stage through Cooper's inclusion of *mise-en-scenes* from Cole's painting, *Destruction*. The savage antagonist of the Craterinos, Waally, visits destruction upon the Reef: "the houses and mills were visited and plundered . . . the saw-mill was set on fire in pure wantonness, and it was burned to the ground . . . a great deal of injury was inflicted on the settlement . . . a brick-kiln was actually blown up . . . the place was almost destroyed" (400). In another scene, the Craterinos are attacked by pirates who "set fire to the buildings, blew up the magazine, dismounted the guns, and did all the other damage to the place that could be accomplished in the course of a short visit" (420). After a routing between the Craterinos and the pirate, the colonists prevail, the ship "burning fully an hour" and then blowing up with "many fragments . . . thrown around her . . . among the last was a human body . . . Waally, one of the

arms having been cut away by a shot, three hours before. Thus perished a constant and most wily enemy of the colony, and who had, more than once, brought it to the verge of *destruction*, by his cupidity and artifices" (427). Cooper, anchoring his text within the narrative structure of the cyclical theory of history, pictures the stage of Cole's painting, *Destruction*. Mark contemplates the downward course of the colony as the inhabitants ward off outside invaders, but succumb to internal dissension. Cooper, through the character of the novel's protagonist, Mark, reflects upon the course of history:

> Everything human is abuse; and it would seem that the only period of tolerable condition is the transition state, when the new force is gathering to a head, and before the storm has time to break. In the mean time, the earth revolves, men are born, live their time, and die; communities are formed and dissolved; dynasties appear and disappear; good contends with evil, and evil still has its day; the whole, however, advancing slowly but unerringly towards that great consummation, which was designed from the beginning, and which is as certain to arrive in the end, as that the sun sets at night and rises in the morning. The supreme folly of the hour is to imagine that perfection will come before its stated time. (444)

A microcosm of the cyclical theory of history, as well as the driving narrative force of *The Course of Empire*, Cooper conveys his essentially pessimistic beliefs and his cynical disdain for contemporaries whose "supreme folly" is to believe in Paradise. Allusion to the last Cole painting, *Desolation,* occurs after Mark and his family leave the colony for a return visit to America. Upon Mark's return the colony has disappeared—"no land was in sight, in any part of the ocean!" After searching, Mark is able to "make visible" a memory of what has been lost:

> He beheld a solitary tree. Then a cry escaped him, and the whole of the terrible truth flashed on his mind. He beheld the summit of the Peak, and the solitary tree was that which he had himself preserved as a signal. The remainder of his paradise had sunk beneath the ocean . . . no part of Vulcan's Peak remained above water but its rocky summit . . . all the rest was submerged. (455)

The five acts of the tragedy complete, Mark's epiphany about the nature of humanity occurs through a complete reversal of fortune. The cycle of history complete, the inevitable denouement brings us back to Cooper's pronouncement decreed in the preface of his novel, "If those who now live in this republic can see any grounds for a timely warning in the events here recorded, it may happen that the mercy of a divine Creator may still preserve that which he has hitherto cherished and protected" (6). Cooper's and Cole's narratives ensure moral failure as the catalyst for the desolate course of history; the mercy of a divine Creator must be earned through humanity's commitment to active reformation. To reinforce the connection to Cole's paintings, Cooper tells his readers directly, "It might be said to resemble, in this respect, that sublime rock, which is recognized as a part of the 'everlasting hills', in Cole's series of noble landscapes that is called 'the March of Empire'; ever the same amid the changes of time, and civilization, and decay, there it was the apex of the Peak; naked, storm-beaten, and familiar to the eye, though surrounded no longer by the many delightful objects which had once been seen in its neighbourhood" (456). Cooper, directly referencing Cole and the paintings, provides a thematic visual correspondent recognizable to his readers. Through allusion to Cole's paintings, he reinforces the allegory of his written text with not only visual description, but also the narrative framing of the cyclical theory of history.

The cyclical theory of history has come full circle; *Desolation* is the inevitable end state of Cooper's refashioned Paradise. In this case, however, Mark Woolston is left to witness the complete cycle in contrast to Cole's thematic interpretation of the cycle; civilization falls, Nature prevails, and the course of history cycles from the *Savage* state to its inexorable conclusion, catastrophic *Destruction* and then *Desolation*. Because Mark has escaped the apocalypse, and lives to witness it, Cooper allows for the hopeful possibility of man's return from *Destruction*. As commentary on the future of America, the prophetic warning is clear. Paradise will be lost.

The novelistic tendencies of the series of paintings confer a narrative structure conducive to replication in the novel. Cooper's novel exhibits not only characteristics of visual literature, but also transformative hybridity conferred through the transmission of Cole's paintings. The amalgam of Cole's landscape sublime with the cyclical theory of history, produced not only an "analogous" technique between Cole and Cooper, as Ringe suggests, but a transformative visual discourse circulating in both art and literature of the time period. Reading literature and art through blended-genre recovers a panorama of antithetical discourses circulating in the first half of nineteenth-century antebellum America. These discourses, as conveyed through the cyclical theory in both art and literature, transmit marked fear about the future course of the United States. The blending of artistic and literary techniques, as well as the influence of Cole's *Course of Empire* paintings are also discoverable in Hawthorne's fiction, especially his work that prophesizes the future course of humanity.

CHAPTER 4

OF GRAVES AND MONUMENTS: HAWTHORNE AND COLE

In his literary review, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," Melville wrote,

> The author himself has somewhere furnished you with his own picture.—For poets (whether in prose or verse), being painters of Nature, are like their brethren of the pencil, the true portrait-painters, who, in the multitude of likenesses to be sketched, do not invariably omit their own; and in all high instances, they paint them without any vanity, though, at times, with a lurking something, that would take several pages to properly define. (1166)

Melville, a blended-genre practitioner noted for the use of visual art in his novels, links Hawthorne to portrait-painters, further suggesting that the author's portrait may always be recognized within his own art. Therefore, the portrait is like a reflecting mirror, one in which Hawthorne will find "his own picture" and that of his "brethren of the pencil." Hawthorne said, "It is my present opinion that the pictorial art is capable of something more like magic—more wonderful and inscrutable in its methods than poetry, or any other mode of developing the beautiful" (qtd. in Bell 51). Hawthorne does not explain how the pictorial art is wonderful or what magic means to him, but we can presume that he believes "the land of picture" has transformative creative possibilities for his own art.

Hawthorne's immersion into the visual arts is well-documented. He utilizes the pictorial as a motif in many of his short stories and novels, so even those narratives that are not primarily centered on artists employ the language and methods of art to illustrate his narrative. The artistic commonalities among Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne are multifold: the belief and use of visuals to activate associations, the influence of European Romanticism, utilization of the cyclical theory

of history, the Fall as a dramatic "framing" element, and a willingness to challenge the notion of perpetual optimistic progress in America. Engaged in cultural-nationalism, all three contribute to the construction of an idea of what it means to be an "American." Their blended-genre approaches, using both literary narrative and visual iconography, circulate Romantic ideas that both yearn for the past and prophesize the future, ironically, creating a conflicted ambivalence about the future course of the United States. David Reynolds finds:

> When we survey mainstream American art of the 1815-48 period, we find that the division between light and dark themes of literature was paralleled in paintings of the day . . . the optimistic themes reflected the expansive, hopeful impulse of Jacksonian democracy. The negative ones were aggravated by disruptive factors such as urbanization, mob violence, and racial tensions. (*Waking* 278-79)

At odds with other cultural-nationalists, who ignored the past and optimistically promoted the gospel of progress, Cole, Hawthorne, and Cooper tempered hegemonic American exceptionalism, through transmitting a hybridized definition of "New World American." Intermediaries between the past and the future, Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne negotiated a middle path during a time of turbulent civil and social unrest. Through their efforts to use their art to question the spirit of optimism and unbridled growth during the antebellum period, these prophetic practitioners asked Americans to reflect upon the classical foundations upon which the country had been built, and to consider its prognosis for success in the experiment of democracy.

Larry Reynolds suggests that Hawthorne "developed a complex historical consciousness through assiduous study of such documents as local and regional histories, biographies, memoirs, tracts, sermons, annals, encyclopedias, old newspapers, and current periodicals" (280). Noting that "historical tragedy was the single most important event shaping Hawthorne's art" (283),

Reynolds explains Hawthorne "conceptualized history not in horizontal terms as an ongoing stream of time but in vertical terms as a circular spiral of sorts" (289). Millicent Bell concludes that Hawthorne's "posthumous novels bear witness to a paralyzing indecision, symbolized in the inability of his heroes to determine their allegiance to the present or to the past, to Europe or to America" (204). All three mined the past as a material foundation to explore the present in their literature and art. Reynolds argues that Hawthorne was "a political animal, always aware of the dominant issues of his age and willing to address them through his art" (292). Cooper and Cole, along with Hawthorne, critiqued antebellum society through their narrative art, and prophetically warned the nation that moral compromise would lead to a catastrophic outcome.

Hawthorne and the Visual Arts

Jean Normand explains that Hawthorne "delighted so much in deploying all the resources of the genre painter" that "one might well draw a parallel between those ambitious canvases entitled *The Course of Empire* and the great descriptive passages in *The Marble Faun*" (292). Judith Kaufman Budz postulates that "the popular series of allegorical paintings by Thomas Cole may have subtly influenced Hawthorne and served as a model for his plot construction" (58). Although both Normand and Budz identified a plausible connection between Hawthorne and Cole, neither pursued a comparative analysis nor provided thorough evidence of their observations. In this chapter, I will present evidence for Cole's influence upon Hawthorne through a comparative analysis of Cole's narrative art in *The Course of Empire* paintings and Hawthorne's use of visual literature in his short stories that make thematic use of the cyclical theory of history. Although Hawthorne records responses to art and artists in his French and Italian notebooks, there is scant mention of American artists. Nevertheless, Hawthorne's use of the visual arts aligned his literary compositions with other practitioners of the blended-genre,

most notably Cole. When viewed together, their work comprises a blended-genre "school" of cultural-nationalism, with characteristics that suggest they were not only remarkably similar in their use of visual and narrative composing, but also in their mediating, yet forceful influence upon the construction of the nation's identity.

Cole and Hawthorne, born only three years apart—Cole in 1801 and Hawthorne in 1804—were contemporaries, although Cole lived in New York and Hawthorne in Massachusetts. Each toured Europe and had similar, almost disorienting responses to Rome, and each found the antiquity of the ruins a genesis for their ideas about the future of the United States. They were profoundly influenced by the "lack of associations" in America—and the proliferation of them in Europe. Like many others, they were trying to negotiate the rapidly changing culture of the antebellum United States, and their responses to the zeitgeist of the time found expression in their art and literature. Although they may not have met, there were multiple intersections among their friendships and acquaintances with other artists, writers, and patrons of the arts.

Typical of the time period, artists and writers knew each other through publishers and benefactors. Dependent upon others to promote, publish, or exhibit their work, both Cole and Hawthorne struggled to earn a living and to provide for their families. Cole, in particular, felt he compromised his art to please those who preferred pleasant landscape compositions over allegorical, thought-provoking art. Frances K. Pohl writes that "Cole's East Coast patrons … came from two general economic groups: wealthy landowners and businessmen who formed the core of the Federalist Party and whose roots in the United States went back to before the Revolution" (139). The "old elite" were not interested in Cole's serialized compositions, but his "bourgeois patrons," those who were interested in elevating their social status, were more willing to support him. Luman Reed was "a self-made man, having risen from a store clerk to a

successful merchant in the wholesale grocery business . . . art patronage was, for him, a way to gain entrance into a world of culture and attain a greater degree of respectability" (139). Reed commissioned *The Course of Empire* in 1833 and "became more and more deeply involved with Cole and the other artists he employed—Durand, George W. Flagg, and William Sidney Mount. He enjoyed their company on a regular basis, visiting Cole at his Catskill home and traveling to Boston with Durand in March 1835 to meet Washington Allston and to help Durand gain access to the Boston Athenaeum" (Wallach, *Landscape* 39). Durand was a friend of Cole, Hawthorne and Bryant, with whom he socialized when he and Bryant were both living in Rome.

Cole's connections to Bostonians included Henry Pickering and Samuel Griswold Goodrich, the editor who published both Cole and Hawthorne in *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*. In fact, Cole and Hawthorne were represented together in the 1837 edition of the gift annual, *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*, with Hawthorne's short story, "The Prophetic Pictures" and an engraving of Cole's painting, *The Whirlwind* (Parry, *Art* 163-64). Ellwood Parry details Cole's introduction to influential art patrons in Boston, noting, "The publisher Samuel Griswold Goodrich had seen to it that the two works he owned by Cole were placed in the first loan exhibition of paintings to be held at the Athenaeum Gallery, Boston" (*Art* 54). Certainly, Cole had a distinctive position within the artistic and cultural community of New England, as well as within the community of artists and writers in New York.

Gollin and Idol note that [Hawthorne's] "circle of friends drew him within the orbit of one of the nation's acknowledged masters, Allston, and enabled him to see the minds and techniques of artists from the inside" (34). Hawthorne's wife, Sophia, studied under Allston and was most likely a conduit for providing her husband with information regarding the paintings and artists of the Hudson River School. Allston, an important Romantic influence for Cole and

others of the Hudson River School, used literary and biblical themes in his landscape painting. His influence upon Cole was profound; upon Allston's death in 1843, Cole wrote a poem in his memory, "A Sunset," later revised to "On a Sunset Sky." In this poem, Cole praises the ability of Allston to conceive through art that which "mortal language cannot give them names" (141). In addition to the compelling connections between Sophia Hawthorne and Allston, as well as Hawthorne's own acknowledged fascination for the pictorial, an exhibition record of Cole's paintings in Boston provides support for Hawthorne's exposure to Cole's works. Cole's popularity outside of New York may best be understood through the growing eagerness to exhibit his works in Boston, where "in 1843 . . . Cole's works were the dominant attraction" (Parry, *Art* 283-84). Hawthorne would have known Cole's work, regardless of these connections, because by his death in 1848, Cole was considered the "leader of American landscape painting" (Pohl 141). His cultural influence was so far-reaching that "Cole's own historical work was coming under attack by the mid-1850's," particularly for the negative influence of his allegories. At least one critic complained that Cole's allegories were "injurious to the ideal of Art" and that art should not be "the servant either of ethics or theology" (Pohl 142).

Aside from the exhibition of paintings, Cole delivered his "Essay on American Scenery," to the American Lyceum Society in New York. The essay, published in *American Monthly* magazine in January, 1836, "has frequently been cited as the major formulations of American attitudes towards nature of the romantic era" (Parry, *Art* 164). In the unlikely event that Hawthorne had not read the essay, he most certainly would have heard it discussed among his artistic contemporaries or at the dinner table with his wife, Sophia. Cole and Hawthorne, during their European travels, both wrote about their reactions to the highly romanticized paintings of Claude and Rosa. Hawthorne would have recognized the influence of these painters upon the

imaginative and romanticized works of the Hudson River School. Additional archival work would more firmly establish Hawthorne's knowledge of Cole's essays, poetry, and paintings; however, the proximity of their working relationships and the circulation of their texts, as shown above, provide the almost inevitable likelihood of not only knowing each other's work, but also being influenced by each other's work.

Gollin and Idol provide a thorough analysis of the influence of the visual arts in Hawthorne's fiction and a solid foundation for establishing a connection with Cole. They note, "Like many Americans of his time who were directly concerned with issues of aesthetics, taste, and creativity, Hawthorne deliberately took steps to learn more about the visual arts" and that "his involvement with the visual arts directly fed his own work, both his notebooks and his fiction." They note that "all of the visual arts singled out in Hawthorne's settings function within his plots" and that he uses a "kindred strategy for making an art object a tool of characterization" (43, 51). They further suggest, "The increasing density of such associations requires his readers to consider more and more carefully how his knowledge of artists and their works helped to share his own creative efforts" (53). Additionally, although "Hawthorne's recorded comments on specific art pieces are so few," Gollin and Idol suggest that "his taste was partly formed by sympathy with Sophia's more informed preferences and by his milieu's emphasis on the ideal, the picturesque, and the transcendental" (35). Hawthorne "liked works with a pronounced narrative element" and "enjoyed the pleasures of studying an artist's hieroglyphic use of biblical, mythological, or literary subjects" leading Walter Blair to call Hawthorne's "tales and romances 'paint-pot narratives'" (qtd. in Gollin 37). Cole's paintings, noted for their narrative scope, also incorporated biblical, mythological, and literary subjects. In addition, for both Hawthorne and Cole, history provided thematic sources, as well as a narrative framework for moral allegory. In a

review of *Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England* by Michael Davitt Bell, Lewis Leary comments, "The past provided counters which Hawthorne arranged to patterns designed for the present" (664). The materials from which he drew his creative inspiration, combined with the cultural milieu of the antebellum period, brought Hawthorne within a kinship network of blended-genre artists that included Cole.

Hawthorne was well-read and eager to educate himself regarding aesthetic theory. Gollin and Idol report that Hawthorne "continued to glean theories about art and facts about artists from the many magazines, travel accounts, and encyclopedias he checked out from the Salem Athenaeum" and that these "gleanings are relatively easy to trace" (17). William Dunlap's *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* contained "the germ of 'The Prophetic Pictures' and supplied him with facts about Benjamin West and hundreds of other American artists" (Gollin 17). Gollin presumes that Hawthorne read Dunlap's *History*, and concludes that around the same time "allusions to art began to enter into his writings" (17). If Hawthorne read Dunlap's *History* (published in 1834), then he would have encountered an extensive chapter devoted to Cole who provided Dunlap with a description of the paintings he was working on at the time. The sketch of these paintings, when completed, would be *The Course of Empire* paintings. Cole wrote:

> I have, since I came into the country, been engaged on a series, the subject of which I will trouble you with: it is to be the History of a Scene, as well as an Epitome of Man.—There will be five pictures: the same location will be preserved in each. The first will be the Savage state; the second, the Simple, when cultivation has commenced; the third, the state of Refinement and highest civilization; the fourth, the Vicious, or state of destruction; the fifth, the state of

> Desolation, when the works of art are again resolving into elemental nature. (157)

A regular source of information for Hawthorne regarding the art world was through the *North American Review* (Gollin and Idol 17). Gollin and Idol confirm that "Information on art and artists appeared regularly in the giftbooks and magazines to which he contributed in the 1830s and 1840s" and that in "*The Token and Atlantic Souvenir* where his tales appeared, Hawthorne could see . . . engravings of paintings by English and American artists, including . . . Thomas Cole." Gollin mentions Hawthorne's "access to the visual arts" through the "Athenaeum's annual exhibitions [which] might include a Copley portrait and a Cole landscape alongside copies of imitations of Old Masters" (*Arts* 113). That Hawthorne so thoroughly identified with artists may be observed in his remarks that the methods used by the painter were "akin to what I have experienced myself in the glow of composition" (qtd. in Gollin 116). Although Gollin and Idol thoroughly and meticulously analyze Hawthorne's knowledge and use of the visual arts, they also conclude,

> It is impossible to determine whether he was more indebted to such literary masters as Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, or Scott or to the theorists of the visual arts in his handling of light and shade, although he probably took hints from writers and painters as well as aesthetic philosophers like Alison. That he did make distinguished use of these techniques has long been recognized. (53)

On Hawthorne's European experience, Gollin and Idol remark upon his "precise descriptions of scenes Claude Lorrain or Thomas Cole might have painted: spacious sunlit landscapes filled with steeply rising mountains and precipitous gorges, ruined towers, whirling rivers, and views of distant valleys dotted with vineyards and villages" (86). Cole's narrative art provided a near

mirror image of Hawthorne's visual literature: both prophetic portrait-painters, and American Romantics, harnessing their art in service to a higher symbolic truth.

Like Hawthorne's fiction, Cole's narrative paintings offered moral and symbolic truths through storytelling. Hawthorne "looked for beauty in surfaces and for thought in underlying designs" and "reserved his highest praise for works of art whose color, design, and detail were tributary to some statement about life's broad and highest truths" (Gollin 107). Cole's allegorical series of paintings, *The Course of Empire*, would have been intriguing to Hawthorne, especially for the "something more like magic" he believed resided in the pictorial art. Cole passionately wished for an American audience that would understand the prophetic urgency of his message. Hawthorne and Cole, among others of the time period, used their art to manage the cultural and political conflicts circulating in society, and also to negotiate the picturesque ideal with the challenges of the real, as other artists had done before them. Their response to fears about the course of the nation's future found expression through highly Romanticized art that attempted to harness or at least subliminally acknowledge the tension between the real and the ideal. United by not only their contribution to American Romanticism, but also their shared experiences abroad, Cole, Cooper and Hawthorne "were drawn to visit, learn from, and come to artistic terms with the Old World." American artists, Kasson argues, were "especially sensitive to questions about the meaning of an artistic vocation and their relationship as Americans to European models and mentors," noting their attraction to "themes of empire and national destiny," during a period when the United States was "struggling toward self-definition" (*Artistic Voyagers* 3-4). It seems almost inevitable, given the many associative parallels among them, that the work of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne would have formulated a de facto movement against breaking away

from European tradition entirely. Although situating America as exceptional, their work also insisted upon a transatlantic cultural heritage, inseparable from American identity formation.

The prophetic narratives of Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne found their apotheosis in cataclysmic events; therefore, some scholars have considered them part of the American "School of Catastrophe," as Curtis Dahl names it, a movement in American art and literature from around 1810 to 1845.[5] Although now relegated to a footnote of the American Romantic movement, Dahl considered them an influential group of "American poets, novelists and painters" with "an almost morbidly avid appetite for the sublime terror of huge devastation." Often their narratives "demanded the horrible ruin, preferably by cataclysmic supernatural forces, of whole cities, nations, races or indeed of the world itself" (380). Among many others, Dahl includes as practitioners of the American "School of Catastrophe," [6] Thomas Cole, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, referencing Cole's painting *Destruction*, as well as Hawthorne's short story, "The Ambitious Guest," as examples of works within this "School of Catastrophe" (384, 390). Although he dismisses much of what was produced within this school as, at best, "minor literature," Dahl accedes that through "a radical reworking of catastrophe into psychological terror (as in Poe) or tragic irony (as in Hawthorne) or thematic allegory (as in Melville's destruction of the *Pequod*)," some of the work was both literary and influential within the American Romantic movement (390). The sublime *in extremis*, as an effective mode for conveying fear covertly, circulated beneath these fantastical visions. Certainly the works of Lord

[5] This term, as used by Dahl, is slightly derisive. He notes, "Few of its authors are read, and its painters, despite some encouraging recent interest, are currently out of fashion." Although true in 1959, the work of Thomas Cole is considered for its "enduring power today" (Stansell and Wilentz) and Hawthorne is canonical. Also mentioned by Dahl is Bryant, and his poem "The Prairies."

[6] Other members of the American "School of Catastrophe," in Dahl's analysis, were the canonical painters Durand and Allston.

Byron and William Blake, well-practiced in catastrophic scenarios, were a likely fertile source of inspiration for the American "School of Catastrophe." [7]

As Cole's paintings prophesized loss and devastation, Hawthorne's preoccupation with these themes inscribe his short stories, "The Ambitious Guest," "Earth's Holocaust," "The New Adam and Eve," and "The Prophetic Pictures," [8] ideas for these stories noted in Hawthorne's journals. At the same time that Cole was exhibiting *The Course of Empire* paintings in 1836, Hawthorne sketched an outline parallel to the themes in *The Course of Empire* and the cyclical theory of history:

> An article might be made respecting various kinds of ruin—ruin as respects property—ruin of health—ruin of habits, as drunkenness and all kinds of debauchery—ruin of character, while prosperous in other respects—ruin of the soul. Ruin perhaps might be personified as a demon, seizing its victims by various holds.
>
> The race of mankind to be swept away, leaving all their cities &c. and works. Then another human pair to be placed in the world, with mature intelligence, like Adam and Eve, but knowing nothing of their predecessors, or of their own nature and destiny. They perhaps to be described as working out this knowledge, by their sympathy with what they saw, and by their own feelings.
>
> A sketch, illustrating the imperfect compensations which time makes for its devastations on our persons—giving a wreath of laurels while it makes us bald—honors for infirmities—wealth for a broken constitution—and at last, when we

[7] For a discussion by Dahl of the English "catastrophists," see "Bulwer-Lytton and the School of Catastrophe," Philological Quarterly, XXII (October, 1953), 428-42.

[8] Dahl suggests a connection between "The Ambitious Guest" and Grenville Mellen's "Buried Valley," published in 1833. He also concludes that Hawthorne "probably borrowed" from William Ware's novel, *Zenobia; or the Fall of Palmyra* (1837), the name Zenobia for the proud and tragic heroine of *The Blithedale Romance*.

> have everything that seems desirable, death seizes us. To contrast the man who has thus reached the summit of ambition, with the ambitious man. (31-32)

An inverse order of the cyclical theory of history, Hawthorne begins his sketch with ruins and catastrophic devastation, "the race of mankind to be swept away," juxtaposed with contrasting fragments of "prosperous in other respects," "a wreath of laurels," and "summit of ambition." A compilation of the various ruinations a man might beget, ultimately time prevails and "death seizes us." In "The New Adam and Eve," Hawthorne grafts the prophetic cycles of a civilization onto a Biblical story, providing an alternative ending to the narrative arc of the cyclical theory. No longer a creation story, it is, instead, a colonization narrative. Adam and Eve, like the explorers before them, occupy a site where history has already transpired. In these notes, Hawthorne specifies empathic understanding, "working out this knowledge," that may deliver them from a pre-ordained destiny. Although impossible to directly connect Cole as an influence, certainly Cole's paintings were conceived and exhibited as Byronic, while Hawthorne is thinking of ruins, devastations, the end of the world, and writing "The New Adam and Eve." Cole's detailed and descriptive exhibition notes for the paintings were published in *American Monthly Magazine* and *The Knickerbocker* in November 1836. Hawthorne's short stories, "Earth's Holocaust," and "The New Adam and Eve," allegorical tales visually and thematically similar to these notes and also the narratives of Cole's paintings *Destruction* and *Desolation*, expatiate on the subject of catastrophe. Startling similarities in topic matter, thematic and moral development, and visual and textual artistic techniques, argue for Cole's influence upon Hawthorne, particularly in those short stories that use the catastrophic as a basis for their narratives, including "Earth's Holocaust," "The New Adam and Eve," and "The Ambitious Guest."

In Hawthorne's story, "The Ambitious Guest," one may see a shared interest in the same tragic tale, as well as Hawthorne's possible influence upon Cole. Rebecca Bedell speculates that "The Ambitious Guest," was based upon the true story of the Willey family who lived and died in Crawford Notch, New Hampshire. Published in 1837, the story may have served as an influence for Cole's 1839 painting, *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*. Bedell notes that "Cole avidly sought out literary associations with the sites he painted" and that "it seems likely that he would have known Hawthorne's tale" (44). Cole visited the site and was haunted by the true story of the tragedy of the Willey family, who, awakened by an avalanche, attempted to escape, leaving their home for the sanctuary of a nearby shelter. Tragically, had they stayed in their home, they would have survived; instead, the rock avalanche changed course and the entire family was buried alive—Willey, his wife and five children, and two hired men.

Bedell postulates that "By alluding to Hawthorne's story . . . Cole could embed a strong moral in the canvas, a moral much like that propounded in his *Course of Empire* series. Hawthorne's story points to the same lesson, the idea that pride and ambition precede a fall" (45). Both Hawthorne and Cole found creative inspiration in the Willey family's tragic encounter with the inexorable forces of nature. From the beginning of the story, Hawthorne foreshadows the fate of the family. Hawthorne notes that as the ambitious guest arrives, all members of the family "rose up, grandmother, children and all, as if about to welcome someone who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs" (228). The ambitious guest, a stranger to the family, declares, "Were I to vanish from the earth tomorrow, none would know so much of me as you; that a nameless youth came up at nightfall from the valley of the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch by sunrise, and was seen no more" (230).

Through elements of the sublime, ("a mountain towered above their heads,") to the indomitable power of nature, ("the old Mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him,") the reader is reminded that humans have no control over fate, and that it is foolhardy to tempt it (227, 229). The ambitious guest, a young man of intellect and social refinement, does just that by declaring, "Not a soul would ask, 'Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?' But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! I shall have built my monument!" (230).

The inscrutable mystery of life and death entombs the narrative as well as the Willey family. Devastation is foreshadowed from the beginning with the "splintered ruins of great trees," "a sound of wailing and lamentation," and the Grandam's recollection of her grave clothes she had put aside "some years before—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day" (233). She asks her children to "hold a looking glass over my face" when she is in the coffin, so she may make sure that nothing is amiss with her corpse. The ambitious guest, ironically, ruminates on how "old and young, we dream of graves and monuments" (233). Cole transformed this tale into a sublime landscape scene (see fig. 3). Like Hawthorne's retelling, Cole's portrayal of the tragic story is considered "emblematic of man's frailty in the vast and unpredictable forces of nature" (*National Gallery*). The insignificance of the family is highlighted visually through their diminutive scale in comparison to the mountain. As in Hawthorne's story, Cole foreshadows the event through "the twisted trees of the foreground, the skeletal, gesturing dead trees of the middle distance, the V-shape of the notch (seemingly riven by some supernatural process), and the dark, sweeping storm clouds at the upper left" (*National Gallery*). Hawthorne relates the moments before the tragedy struck the family down: "Alas! They had quitted their security, and fled right into the

pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain in a cataract of ruin" (234). Both Cole and Hawthorne, inspired by the tragic elements of the event, translate the historical legend into contemplation about fate, ambition, and the tragic uncertainty of life and death.

Fig. 3. *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch*), 1839. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Hawthorne also explores these catastrophic ideas in his short story, "Earth's Holocaust," originally published in 1844. In this story, the "wide world had become so overburthened with an accumulation of worn-out trumpery, that the inhabitants determined to rid themselves of it by a general bonfire" (381). As in the paintings, time itself is combustible: "yesterday's newspapers, last month's

magazines . . . antiquated trash." Hawthorne compiles item after item, creating a bonfire of civilization:

> All the rubbish of the Herald's Office; the blazonry of coat-armor; the crests and devices of illustrious families; pedigrees . . . together with stars, garters, and embroidered collars; each of which, as paltry a bauble it might appear to the uninstructed eye, had once possessed vast significance, and was still, in truth, reckoned among the most precious of moral or material facts, by the worshippers of the gorgeous past. (382)

In an indictment of superficial materialism, the narrator of the story rejects the luxuries of civilization. As conveyed through Cole's paintings, *Consummation* and *Destruction*, "luxuries," and consuming greed, lead to an individual's morally compromised character, as well as the downfall of an empire. Wallach tells us that "Cole drew upon longstanding traditions of republican political philosophy . . . commerce could lead to excessive accumulations of wealth and that posed the danger of 'luxury' and its attendant vices" (*Landscape* 92). Both Hawthorne and Cole offer a homily on the dire consequences of unchecked avarice, warning that success without morality would lead to waste and despair.

In an abridged version of the cyclical theory of history, a gray-haired man cries, "People, what have you done! This fire is consuming all that marked your advance from barbarism, or that could have prevented your relapse thither" (383). Hawthorne continues a bonfire of human history with the acceleration of earthly possessions:

> There came another multitude from beyond the sea, bearing the purple robes of royalty, and the crowns, globes, and scepters of emperors and kings. All these had been condemned as useless baubles; playthings, at best, fit only for the infancy of

> the world, or rods to govern and chastise it in its nonage; but with which universal manhood, at its full-grown stature, could no longer brook to be insulted. (384)

As in Cole's paintings, History cycles from the "infancy of the world," the *Savage* state, to the apex of civilization, *Consummation*. As the bonfire burns, "the multitude gave a shout, as if the broad earth were exulting in its deliverance from the curse of the ages" (386). Ultimately, the heretical occurs when the Bible—in all its forms—"the Book, the ponderous church-Bible, the family-Bible, the bosom-Bible" is heaped upon the fire (401). The narrator intones that within the ashes "you will find . . . everything really valuable . . . the world of tomorrow will again enrich itself . . . not a truth is destroyed—or buried so deep among the ashes, but it will be raked up at last" (402). What will be destroyed is only that which harbors earthly meaning—the heart is purified by the flames. However, as typifies much of Hawthorne's fiction, ambiguity is introduced when a "dark-visaged stranger," proclaims, "What but the human heart itself! And unless they hit upon some method of purifying that foul cavern, forth from it will re-issue all the shapes of wrong and misery—the same old shapes, or worse ones—which they have taken such a vast deal of trouble to consume to ashes . . . take my word for it, it will be the old world yet!" (403). The gilded world will burn away and leave the heart in its pure state, but the idyllic is vulnerable to human error, the inherent defect at the heart of Cole's allegorical paintings. The narrative of "Earth's Holocaust" cycles through all of the stages in the paintings *The Course of Empire.* Both Hawthorne and Cole use prophetic allegory and cyclical history to reflect upon the world, but more importantly, it is the "human heart itself" that is responsible for catastrophic destruction. The cyclical theory cannot be arrested unless this "foul cavern" can be purified. As a political allegory of the United States, Hawthorne critiques the idea of American exceptionalism, challenging the nation's belief that it was exempt from the "curse of the ages." Puncturing the

ideological belief that the New World can avoid the holocaust, we are told by a demon-like stranger, "It will be the old world yet!" Satan's desire to ruin Paradise and man's inevitable capitulation to temptation circulates throughout the story. Through political allegory and religious allusion, Hawthorne reveals a fearful future for the United States, one predicated upon the inherent defect of man's nature, the human heart of error.

Catastrophe is again used as an allegorical trope in Hawthorne's short story, "The New Adam and Eve." Published in 1844, the year of Hawthorne's marriage to Sophia Peabody, have led some scholars to suggest Hawthorne's honeymoon as inspiration for the story (Newman 232). Hawthorne's original idea, as noted above, came from an earlier journal entry made between 1836 and 1837, the years when Cole's *Course of Empire* paintings were exhibited. "The New Adam and Eve," provides "the purified heart" that is missing in "Earth's Holocaust" (234). Both stories, thematically similar as they explore the beginning and end of the world, work in much the same way as Cole's paintings and Cooper's novel, *The Crater*. Hawthorne, in the beginning of the story, asks his readers to "conceive good Father Miller's interpretation of the prophecies to have proved true" [9](247). The narrator of the story asks us to imagine:

> The prophecies . . . have proved true. The Day of Doom has burst upon the globe and swept away the whole race of men. From cities and fields, sea-shore and midland mountain region, vast continents, and even the remotest islands of the ocean, each living thing is gone. No breath of a created being disturbs this earthly atmosphere. But the abodes of man, and all that he has accomplished, the footprints of his wanderings and the results of his toil, the visible symbols of his intellectual cultivation and moral progress, --in short, everything physical that can

[9] William Miller, a Baptist minister, predicted the world would end sometime between March 1, 1843 and March 4, 1844. According to David Reynolds, "When 1843 came, millennial fever reached epidemic proportions" and people gathered in graveyards to await the Second Coming of Christ" (156).

> give evidence of his present position,--shall remain untouched by the hand of destiny. (247)

Hawthorne uses Father Miller's "Day of Doom," not as a framework for the Second Coming of Christ, but instead for the appearance of the New Adam and Eve. Setting them down upon the ruins of the city of Boston, Hawthorne imports a *visual tableau*,[10] strikingly similar to Cole's last painting, *Desolation* (see fig. 4). The end of the world, duplicated through both Miller's prophecy as well as Cole's painting, is also a final act in both *The Book of Daniel*, as well as the cyclical course of history. From this multiplicity of endings, Hawthorne writes a new beginning.

In Cole's painting, the sun has set and the scene is bathed in moonlight. Metaphorically, the course of empire has cycled through all of the stages. The final frame is devoid of civilization, save trace remnants that add a poignant remembrance of what has been lost. In an exhibition description of the painting from the New-York Historical Society, the literary effect of Cole's painting is noted:

> Perhaps the most original and certainly the most poetic of the five canvases, *Desolation* captures the exquisite stillness of a world without mankind; Cole wrote to his friend Asher B. Durand that he intended for the picture to 'express silence and solitude.' The sun is setting and nature is again reclaiming the landscape: a lizard crawls up a grand column at left that once supported a palace or temple, and herons nest atop it. A buck and doe are poised to drink near the water by the remains of a temple.

[10] The importation of the New Adam and Eve, is almost as if they are "*tableaux vivants* (aka living statues or model artists): actual men and women . . . depicting scenes from classical literature and art," a popular mode of exhibition art from 1838 – 1848 (Reynolds, *Waking Giant* 278).

Fig. 4. *The Course of Empire*: *Desolation* (1836). Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

It is as if Hawthorne is using Cole's painting as a set upon which a revisionist creation scene may be re-enacted. The different ending provides a devastated world with a new Adam and Eve, who will "inherit and repeople this waste and deserted earth," with "no knowledge of their predecessors nor of the diseased circumstances that had become incrusted around them" and will "at once distinguish between art and nature" (247-48). In contrast, Cole's painting offers no respite: "No longer ago than yesterday the flame of human life was extinguished; there has been a breathless night; and now another morn approaches, expecting to find the earth no less desolate than at eventide" (248).[11] Earth's holocaust has destroyed the heart of original sin, and this new Adam and Eve may begin again in a purified Paradise.

In this new Paradise, Adam and Eve are puzzled by "an irrevocable past . . . which distinguish [es] the works of man from the growth of nature!" (249) In a *visual tableau* that is nearly identical to Cole's painting, the narrator imagines the "utter loneliness and silence, in a scene that originally grew out of noise and bustle," leading to "a feeling of desolation even upon Adam and Eve, unsuspicious as they are of the recent extinction of human existence" (249-50).

[11] In Cole's series of paintings, the *Savage* state is morning, *Arcadian* is mid-morning, *Consummation* is noon, *Destruction* is late afternoon, and *Desolation* is evening.

In a surprising correspondence, Hawthorne names the feeling in this setting "desolation," the name of Cole's painting which depicts an identical scene. The New Adam and Eve wander the ruins of the world they have inhabited and wonder at what may have come before them. The narrator speaks of "a woeful lesson, which may finally go far towards reducing them to the level of the departed race" and later, "Perchance they breathe a prophecy of a better world to their successors, who have become obnoxious to all their own cares and calamities in the present one" (252). Unlike many of his short stories set in the colonial past, the setting for "The New Adam and Eve" is a futuristic dystopia that rejects the past, the leveling of society lending the story an air of scientific modernism. Although still connected to religion, it is no longer entirely anchored to the Biblical story of original sin. The ruined landscape, prescient of the impending Civil War, is a nightmare vision. In political terms, Hawthorne destroys the world as he knew it, removing the impediment of social hierarchy; therefore, the fable also may be read as contemplation upon the promise of democracy. In biblical terms, R.W.B. Lewis suggests a radical break in thinking about original sin, rather than "a total corruption transmitted at the instant of their conception from a diseased ancestry originally and fatally infected by Adam." The "new optimism," of the story was that Adam, as an agent of free will, could choose to sin or NOT to sin (28-29). This perspective allows Adam to avert the Fall and also, in a historicized context, to escape the cyclical theory. Hawthorne also breaks from the traditional depiction of Adam and Eve in Paradise *before* the Fall, choosing instead to place them in the setting of Boston *after* the Fall, their innocence intact. By doing this, Hawthorne comes to terms with the possibilities of starting anew, but only within the rubble of the old, suggesting that a new beginning must be erected only upon the foundation of the past. Knowledge, in this version, safeguards the New Adam and Eve from the errors of the past, rather than corrupting them. Free will, instead of precipitating

their downfall, can be used to avert it. They are a secularized Adam and Eve, who may use rational judgment in order to maintain their state of innocence. Rather than being born into sin, they are born into inescapable knowledge, but may choose to surrender their curiosity about the mystery of the past to a power beyond their comprehension.

As Cole does in his third painting, *Destruction*, Hawthorne probes the reasons why "a perverse destiny seems to perplex them with one after another of the riddles which mankind put forth to the wandering universe, and left unsolved in their own destruction" (253). The New Adam and Eve enter as sinless partners rather than the original fallen Adam and Eve. The reader is left to imagine whether the "due course of earthly law" had been handed down by a higher authority. Informed by the cyclical theory, although the world has ended, history has cycled back to innocence, and Hawthorne offers some hope for a new beginning that will avert corruption. The narrator urges them to "Hasten forth with your native innocence, lest the damps of these still conscious walls infect you likewise, and thus another fallen race be propagated!" (255). Hawthorne uses art to contrast the artifice of human existence with the truth of Nature. The New Adam and Eve enter a mansion, "one of the stateliest in Beacon Street," where "the pictures upon the walls scarcely excite a deeper interest; for there is something radically artificial and deceptive in painting with which minds in the primal simplicity cannot sympathize" (256). In this passage, Hawthorne progresses from the Old World to the New World—from ancient history to a new beginning. They have achieved a type of communion with Nature, one which art cannot conceive. Yet, they fear the unknown,—and, like the Old Adam and Eve, seek knowledge of who they are. Adam says, "There are mysteries all around us. An idea flits continually before me, --would that I could seize it! Eve, Eve, are we treading in the footsteps of beings that bore a likeness to ourselves? If so, whither are they gone?—and why is their world so unfit for our

dwelling-place?" In this revisionist story, Eve although born into knowledge, also resists it, replying, "Our great Father only knows" (257).

In Cole's painting, *Consummation*, the sun is directly overhead on a beautiful summer day, the scene the height of activity. However, according to cyclical theory, the state of *Consummation* is one of decadent indulgence that will cycle into destruction. In Hawthorne's story, "The clock on the old State House points to high noon, when the Exchange should be in its glory and present the liveliest emblem of what was the sole business of life, as regarded a multitude of the foregone worldlings," but instead the world has transitioned from *Consummation* to *Destruction* and *Desolation*: "It is over now. The Sabbath of eternity has shed its stillness along the street. Not even a newsboy assails the two solitary passers-by with an extra penny-paper from the office of the Times or Mail, containing a full account of yesterday's terrible catastrophe" (260). Father Miller's "Day of Doom" and Cole's painting, *Desolation*, are materialized by Hawthorne in the form of the short story, with the characters of Adam and Eve, who psychologically breathe life into the theoretical end of the world.

In similar fashion, Cole's mountain, Cooper's crater, and Hawthorne's monument attest to the melancholic fate of humanity. The New Adam and Eve

> Stand on a grassy brow of a hill at the foot of a granite obelisk which points its great finger upwards, as if the human family had agreed, by a visible symbol of age-long endurance, to offer some high sacrifice of thanksgiving or supplication. The solemn height of the monument, its deep simplicity . . . all strengthen its effect upon Adam and Eve, and leave them to interpret it by a purer sentiment than the builders thought of expressing.

Adam observes, “Eve, it is a visible prayer” (263). The monument, the crater, the mountain—all serve as enduring symbols of time immemorial. Hawthorne rewrites the story of Eden, placing the New Adam and Eve in Harvard Library with a book. This time it is Adam who hungers for knowledge and it is Eve who admonishes him to “fling down that stupid thing; for even if it should speak it would not be worth attending to. Let us talk with one another, and with the sky, and the green earth, and its trees and flowers. They will teach us better knowledge than we can find here” (264-65). The present is saved from the future, as the New Adam and Eve wonder over the branches of the Tree of Knowledge:

> All the perversions and sophistries, and false wisdom so aptly mimicking the true; all the narrow truth, so partial that it becomes more deceptive than falsehood; all the wrong principles and worse practice, the pernicious examples and mistaken rules of life; all the specious theories, which turn earth into cloud-land, and men into shadows; all the sad experience, which it took mankind so many ages to accumulate, and from which they never drew a moral for their future guidance—the whole heap of this disastrous lore would have tumbled at once upon Adam’s head. (265)

Unlike the catastrophic denouement of *The Course of Empire* and the cyclical theory, the New Adam, “blessed in his ignorance,” “may still enjoy a new world in our worn-out one” (265). In an inversion of the biblical temptation scene, it is Eve who “rescues him [Adam] from the mysterious perils of the library,” and, if not for Eve, the world “would soon have recorded the downfall of a second Adam. The fatal apple of another Tree of Knowledge would have been eaten” (265). The Old World is resurrected to provide the New Adam and Eve with warning and a second chance to right the wrongs of the world. Yet, the possibility for human error still exists

in the New World, one where Adam "has at least the freedom—no worthless one—to make errors for himself." Although hopeful, the narrator nevertheless imagines when "in due season, the roof of the edifice [will] crumble down upon the whole" and it is then when "it will be time enough to dig into our ruins, and compare the literary advancement of two independent races." For now, however, the new Adam and Eve, unburdened by the past, "are content to live and be happy in the present" (266). At the dawn of a new age, Adam and Eve, situated within the cyclical theory of history, arise from the ruins to begin again.

Hawthorne ends the story with a *visual tableau* of Cole's painting, *Desolation*. In the last painting of the series, civilization has cycled through its course. It is now evening, and through the reflected moonlight, we see the remnants and ruins of a once great city. In this scene of desolation, nature has prevailed over the broken architecture of humanity. A wilderness landscape has overtaken the remains of the city that had once thrived in the high noon of its existence. There is a shattered bridge and broken stumps. A marble column is now a nest for birds. In the story, Hawthorne places the New Adam and Eve in the cemetery of Mount Auburn. The pilgrims "tread along the winding paths, among marble pillars, mimic temples, urns, obelisks, and sarcophagi, sometimes pausing to contemplate these fantasies of human growth, and sometimes to admire the flowers where nature converts decay to loveliness." Here, where they discover "a Child, in whitest marble . . . among the monuments of Mount Auburn," is a reminder of the biblical trope of Christ's redemption. The New Adam and Eve surrender the future to the belief that "Our Father only knows whether what outward things we have possessed to-day are to be snatched from us forever" and that "another morn will find us somewhere beneath the smile of God" (267). In a blending of the secular and religious, Hawthorne, reconciling the cyclical theory of history with *Paradise Lost*, restores the New Adam and Eve to

a hopeful state of innocence. Paradise may be maintained through their free will to exercise moral judgment. Knowledge of the past guides them to choose wisely. Therefore, knowledge does not destroy Paradise, but, instead, may preserve it. Hawthorne repurposes the idea of a New Adam and Eve in "The Prophetic Pictures," also providing the possibility of salvation through knowledge. The newlyweds, Walter and Elinor, however, willfully ignore prophetic knowledge, and suffer the consequences of their choice.

Many scholars have attributed "The Prophetic Pictures" as Hawthorne's "attitude toward the artist and his role in society" (Newman 253). As an exploration of the same themes of fallen paradise, this story complements the other two. In this story, Walter and Elinor begin their lives together as an idyllic Adam and Eve; however, unlike the New Adam and Eve, they are tainted and, like Cole in his prophetic paintings, it is the artist who is the prophet of their doom. Some scholars believe Hawthorne's most apparent literary influence in this story is the Gothic novel, "a work of art with extraordinary powers, an authoritative and attractive villain mysteriously allied with evil forces, a terror-evoking prophecy that is fulfilled, a populace prone to attribute what it cannot understand to supernatural causes" (Newman 252). Although there are characteristics common to the Gothic novel, if this story is viewed through the lens of prophetic and historical art, the heightened gothic conventions recede.

Hawthorne found his source for "The Prophetic Pictures" in Dunlap's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, published in 1834, which also provided him with information about hundreds of artists (Gollin 17). Hawthorne's story, about a young couple about to be married, probes the physiognomy of character in a portrait. The couple, Elinor and Walter, sit for an artist, who is known for his ability to portray not only the looks of a person, but also the heart and mind, revealing through art what others may not see, the true self.

In this story, the portraits are mutable, portraying who they will become rather than who they are at the time of the sitting. The pictures are a prophetic warning about the future course of events that neither Elinor nor Walter heeds. Dunlap's history reads:

> Lord Mulgrave employed Stuart to paint the portrait of his brother, General Phipps, previous to his going abroad. On seeing the picture, which he did not until it was finished, Mulgrave exclaimed, "What is this? –this is very strange!" and stood gazing at the portrait. "I see insanity in that face," was the brother's remark. The General went to India, and the first account his brother had of him was that of suicide from insanity. He had gone mad and cut his throat. It is thus that the real portrait-painter dives into the recesses of his sitter's mind, and displays strength or weakness upon the surface of his canvass. (187)

The idea of the "real" portrait-painter, for Hawthorne, would be someone who has artistic ability beyond "copying," capable of probing the inner being and translating what is found onto the canvas. His portrait-painter, a well-known and accomplished artist, paints a portrait of Walter and Elinor showing the future, indicating that character is fate. The contrast between what Walter and Elinor have found in each other and what they are about to lose is conveyed through the juxtaposition of light and dark: "The sunshine flashed after them into the apartment, but left it somewhat gloomy as they closed the door" (111). Walter proclaims, "There we stand, fixed in sunshine forever! No dark passions can gather on our faces" (112). However, Elinor sees the prophecy in the portraits and asks the painter for an explanation. The painter says, "Madam, in both these pictures, I have painted what I saw. The artist—the true artist—must look beneath the exterior. It is his gift—his proudest, but often a melancholy one—to see the inmost soul, and, by a power indefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the canvass, in glances that

express the thought and sentiment of years" (113). The artist, although prophetic, is hardly a villain—but instead a Cassandra figure who can predict the future, but cannot change it. That the artist implicates himself is not the measure of cruelty—he is merely the vehicle through which truth is told, the ineradicable truth that evil resides within the hearts of humans, even those we choose to love.

The artist "interposed himself between the wretched beings, with the same sense of power to regulate their destiny as to alter a scene upon the canvass. He stood like a magician, controlling the phantoms which he had evoked" (118). Hawthorne, as the narrator, asks, "Is there not a deep moral in the tale?" And then answers—that even if we knew our future "none [would] be turned aside by the PROPHETIC PICTURES" (119). The moral of the tale, perhaps, is that artists are doomed Cassandras, who suffer with knowledge of the human heart, yet, remain helpless in their ability to avert tragedy. Hawthorne's characterization of the portrait-painter as prophet, not only empowers the work of artists, but also proposes the relevance and greater purpose of art to show both who we are and who we should be. Art as a reflection of the individual or the world has the power to change how we see ourselves as a nation. It can change the future course of empire, if the nation will listen to its prophets. Hawthorne's painter exclaims, "Did I not warn you?" Both the painter in this story and Cole offer warnings about the future, and their prophecies are ignored. There is certainly evidence within the story that Hawthorne is thinking of someone like Thomas Cole, the prophetic history painter, instead of Gilbert Stuart; or at least a hybrid of the two. Indeed, although Hawthorne himself points to Dunlap's description of Stuart as his inspiration, Newman suggests other influences, including

the first chapter of Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1830).[12] A closer look at this parallel illuminates further correspondences of sources used by both Cole and Hawthorne.

In Scott's novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the narrator introduces an artistic "sketch" about the power of the word versus image, parallel thematic concerns in "The Prophetic Pictures." Scott's narrator begins with a discourse on how written text has not yet rendered imagery obsolete, declaring, "The age had not yet adopted, amongst other unworthy retrenchments, that illiberal measure of economy which supplying by written characters the lack of symbolical representation, closes one open and easily accessible avenue of instruction and emolument against the students of the fine arts" (9). He further explicates text as an inferior substitute for the visual image—"substituting that cold description for the lively effigies of the plumed chatterer" (9). The narrator, a writer, and the artist of this sketch, Dick Tinto, engage in a lively conversation about the "serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets," and that of poetry. The narrator argues that painting is for the eye, and poetry for the ear. Dick Tinto passionately disagrees, saying that writers must compose like artists, for, "description was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter: words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene which he wished to conjure up as effectually before the mind's eye as the tablet or canvas presents it to the bodily organ.The same rules, he contended, applied to both" (14). Dick Tinto tells the narrator that through "the happy and expressive combinations of a single scene" one finds "the position, attitude, and countenance of the moment, not only the history of the past lives of the personages represented, and the nature of the business on which that are immediately engaged, but lifts even the veil of futurity and affords a shrewd guess at their future fortunes" (16). Again

[12] Romance writing of this time period, including Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, are thought to have been influenced by Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* novels (Carso, Dekker, and Parry).

we see the idea of the artist as prophet, this time mirrored back to the narrator who can reflect and reverberate the artist's power back through written composition.

The replication of art through words, a generative process, empowers the writer to see into the future. The artist, Dick Tinto, suggests that if the narrator had "the pleasure of understanding my picture," he would be "gaining, at the same time, a subject for your own pen" (16). Hawthorne, Cole, and Scott, within a few years of each other, composed narratives, not only defining the artist as prophet, but also empowering their characters with knowledge that might save them from pre-ordained fate. Hawthorne's story, "The Prophetic Pictures," Cole's *The Course of Empire*, and the influence of Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor,* augur for the voice of Romanticism as an active agent in predicting the future of the United States. If Hawthorne were influenced by Scott, it is through Scott's invitation that he may gain "a subject for [his] own pen" through the painted composition.

Kerry Dean Carso asserts, "It would be difficult to overstate the importance of Sir Walter Scott to the nineteenth-century American reading public" and that "like the general public, artists were also attracted to Scott's novels" (1). Carso reports Cole's presence at a meeting of the New York Sketch Club in 1829 when the compositional theme of the evening was Scott's literature. Carso notes that "Cole's sketch is quite distinct from those by the other artists that evening.In a move that was 'prophetic for the future of the [Hudson River] school' . . .this drawing is an early example of how the Hudson River School of painters grappled with Scott's literary work" (2). Cole's interpretation of Scott in his sketch came to be a sublime emblem of the Romantic Hudson River School paintings: blasted trees and a ruined landscape. These prolific visual images found their way into the literary compositions of both Cooper and Hawthorne, among other Romantic writers and artists of the time period.

George Dekker also considers Scott's wide-ranging influence, maintaining, "From 1815 until about 1840 Sir Walter Scott was America's favorite novelist and much the most important model for her [America's] own budding fictionalists—Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Simms, Kennedy, Hawthorne, and others" ("Sir Walter Scott," 211). Scott's transatlantic influence is a corollary for not only the thematic concerns found in visual literature and narrative art, but also similar stylistic and artistic approaches, characterized by the influence of European Romanticism. Hawthorne, Cooper, and Cole's art is not an exact copy of Scott or Rosa or Claude; they instead created a hybridized synthesis of old and new, European and American. Forging a unique identity during the nation-building period, Cole and Hawthorne used the ruins of the Old World to construct a New World, as the "New Adam and Eve" do in Hawthorne's short story. Through this process, they projected their idealized dreams and fears about the future upon the American landscape.

The triptych of "Earth's Holocaust," "The New Adam and Eve," and "The Prophetic Pictures," chart Hawthorne's preoccupation with paradise found and lost, and when read together, reveal a thematic nearly identical to that of Cole's *The Course of Empire.* As influential cultural-nationalists, Cole and Hawthorne ignite a conflagration antithetical to the ideology of American Paradise and damper the "high-flying" optimism of progress during the antebellum period. The combined literary and visual effects of their work insist upon a drawing back into the past in order to rehabilitate the future. Juxtaposing Hawthorne, Cooper, and Cole gives rise to a new way of thinking about how aspects of their art contributed to a regressive narrative antithetical to nation-building rhetoric.

CHAPTER 5

A LAND OF PICTURE: AMERICA IN ROME

Hawthorne's novel, published in 1860 in America with the title *The Marble Faun: The Count of Monte Beni*, was published in England the same year under the title *Transformation*. The American title offers us the name of a character, whereas the English title may provide some critical insight into Hawthorne's method and purpose of the novel, which engages in the transformation of art into text and text into art. Hugh Witemeyer argues, "A new mode of portraiture came to hand in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860), a seminal work in the history of literary pictorialism by virtue of its influence upon both the later Eliot and Henry James," suggesting the transformative nature of Hawthorne's own work and its ability to influence and transform the work of others who followed him in the use of literary pictorialism. In addition, Witemeyer informs us that "Hawthorne taught George Eliot how to use ecphrasis, or the verbal imitation of works of visual art, as a technique for psychological revelation and prophecy" (147). Ekphrasis, the written embodiment of a visual text, is used by Hawthorne extensively throughout *The Marble Faun.*

W.J.T. Mitchell explains that "paintings can tell stories, make arguments, and signify abstract ideas; words can describe or embody static, spatial stages of affairs, and achieve all of the effects of ekphrasis . . . there is no essential difference between texts and images . . . language can stand in for depiction and depiction can stand in for language" ("Ekphrasis," 160). The experience of ekphrasis is to perform "seeing" simultaneously through both visual and written texts. When the work of another author or artist is used ekphrastically, blended meanings will converge, rendering something perhaps entirely different in meaning. Hawthorne boldly experimented with the practice, embedding both corporal and fragmented works of art into the

texture of The *Marble Faun*. Therefore, although the title *Transformation* was not used for the American publication of the novel, it is an apt title.

The idea of transformation works on a variety of levels in the novel: as the titled English publication of the novel; as a chapter heading, "The Faun's Transformation," (XIX); through the ongoing spiritual and cultural transformation of each of the four main characters in the novel; and as an ekphrastic device, transforming art into literature and literature into art. Although Hawthorne employs ekphrastic practices in many of his short stories, I suggest that it is in *The Marble Faun*, the last of his major Romance novels, that he advanced and perfected the practice of its use. Ekphrasis in the novel offers a narrative mode that should be recognized as a primary rather than a secondary discourse. As a primary mode of discourse, it is necessary to identify and analyze how his use of ekphrasis is used to confer meaning in the novel. Most importantly, in addition to the many works of art referenced by Hawthorne in *The Marble Faun*, there is reason to believe that other visual discourses circulate throughout the novel. Hawthorne's writing, although influenced by living abroad, nevertheless imparts fragmentary visual remembrances of antebellum American culture.

The action of the novel takes place primarily in the Roman countryside as well as amidst the Roman ruins, adding gravity and weight to the setting. This story about three young artists and their Italian friend was one of Hawthorne's most successful novels during his lifetime. Although a tragedy, and the last of his Romance novels, the novel became a staple for American tourists in the nineteenth century who used it as a guide to Rome. The friends live a bohemian life of young artists and intellectuals who discuss art and the meaning of life amidst the Roman ruins. One of the young artists, Miriam, is haunted by a man from her past, known in the novel as "The Model." Donatello murders The Model out of love for Miriam and because he believed she

had asked him "with a glance" to rescue her from her tormenter. Because of the glane, Miriam believes she is complicit and responsible for Donatello's fall from innocence. Had he not loved her, he would not have committed the act of murder. The murder, witnessed by both Miriam and Hilda, a "copyist" from New England, is a catalyst for change in all of the characters. Hilda, losing her innocent faith in her friends and humanity in general, retires to her tower among the doves. Donatello escapes Rome, retreating back to his ancestral home in the Italian countryside. Kenyon, an American sculptor, does not know about the murder, but, nevertheless, acts as an intermediary to reunite them. He rescues Donatello from his self-imposed confinement, and they journey together throughout the Italian countryside. By novel's end, the four friends reunite in Rome where Hilda and Kenyon make plans to return to America to begin their lives together as husband and wife. As a meditation on fallen innocence, guilt, and sin and its attendant consequences, Hawthorne explores the expiation of sin through acts of contrition, also probing the essential nature of transgression and redemption. These thematic concerns are relayed through the plot of the novel, as well as associative meaning transmitted through Hawthorne's inclusion of landscape scenery, ruins, paintings, and sculptures pictured in the narrative.

Identifying and tracing American cultural texts in the novel offers a supplementary means of recovering covert meaning that may be embedded through visual allusion. Indeed, an indicator of Hawthorne's desire to circulate hidden discourse is evident through the symbolic representation that occurs late in the novel. Kenyon, an American sculptor living in Rome, discovers a half-submerged statue of Venus buried in excavated earth, providing the opportunity for reflection upon how "a beautiful Idea" may convert "that heap of forlorn fragments into a whole" (424). Gollin and Idol inform us that Hawthorne, trained in the Scottish Common Sense School, subscribed to the idea of associationalism, noting that Hawthorne understood that "we

may enjoy looking at a beautiful painting of a ruined castle . . . because it reminds us of similar paintings and similar scenes" (92). I propose that American associations are written into the novel as "undiscovered" works of art and must be recovered for a more comprehensive understanding of how Hawthorne uses fragmentary visual associations to tell a story about the past, present, and future of America.

Evert Jan van Leeuwen suggests that Hawthorne's technique of piecing together *visual tableaux* as written text did not allow for fully rendered and framed pictures, arguing that "It is more useful, therefore, to think of a complete picture in *The Marble Faun* as constructed over a series of interrelated chapters that are connected and defined by their "contrast in lighting and imagery" (43). In similar fashion, Wendy Steiner argues that "fragmentation and copying are part of an essential dialectic in Hawthorne," proffering that the novel offers "worlds within worlds of duplication" (99). She also points out Hawthorne's technique of rearranging works of art by "breaking up," "reversing," and "[scattering] pieces" throughout the text, arguing that Hawthorne used finished works of art as sources of inspiration—not only the ones he names in the novel, but also others. A reading that pieces together the fragments of copies may "tease out" threads of the tapestry, and calls for imaginative restoration of an entire *tableaux*. Fragments from Cole's *The Course of Empire* paintings, may be readily discovered within the novel and reassembled. Furthermore, the recovered whole of the allegorical paintings will illuminate Hawthorne's thematic and allegorical use of the cyclical theory of history. Though the novel is often noted for its ambiguity, ekphrastic discourse offers a different way of reading *The Marble Faun*, providing clarifying insight into Hawthorne's meaning and purpose.

Wallach points out that in *The Course of Empire* series, "each painting is a self-sufficient composition and each is filled with myriad details drawn from a vast repertory of printed and

painted images. Consequently, the viewer tends to oscillate between experiencing the series as an epic spectacle and becoming absorbed in the individual paintings" (*Landscape* 91). In order to comprehend the allegorical meaning intended by Cole's series, it is necessary for a viewer to consider them in their entirety, rather than to decontextualize the paintings. Like Cole's paintings, a macroscopic view is needed to comprehend Hawthorne's convergent lines of narrative— the cyclical theory of history, the Fortunate Fall, and the plot itself must be considered together rather than decontextualized. Although they appear to be whole, self-contained narratives, they are fragmentary when considered within the context and purpose of the entire novel and must be pieced together with the other narratives for the allegorical outline of the novel to emerge. Therefore, while Hawthorne quite evidently structures his plot and characterizations around the fall, other embedded discourses associated with the artwork, even fragments of works of art, inevitably alter a reader's perception. Like the "mud-incrusted Venus excavated near the end of the novel," there are buried images waiting to be recovered (175). Importantly, although there are some recovered images that are almost whole, we must also consider how the fragmented pieces of visual art might fit together and what their recovered meaning may bring to a more nuanced understanding of the novel.

American Artists in Rome

Hawthorne's visit to Italy was particularly productive, as the country provided all the literary and artistic materials needed for Romantic compositions, as it had earlier for Cole. Rome offered antiquity, ruins, the sublime and the picturesque, the biblical, and a dramatic contrast to America: an altered perspective of the New World came into view when juxtaposed against the Old World. Hawthorne looked at America through the eyes of Europe—although he was a stranger in a strange land— in some ways it must have been recognizable to him. Other

Americans had made the same journey and used the same compositional materials for their art. Some of them brought the Old World back with them, and Cole was among them.

Kasson maintains, "As surely as Cooper and Cole, Hawthorne found in the material remains of Italy concrete symbols of empire, of the mystery of the rise and fall of nations," noting, "The romance brims with vignettes of the Roman Empire that are often truncated or allusive, as if referring the reader to a well-known heritage" (*Artistic Voyagers* 175). Cole's paintings would have been a reference point for Hawthorne—an Americanized translation of what he was seeing in Rome. When Hawthorne was viewing Rome, it was through the eyes of an American, with the visual images of Rome that had already been Americanized by Cole in his paintings. Surely there must have been a shock of recognition when he viewed the Roman ruins; the same ruins that Cole had brought back to America with him after his own visit to Europe.

Hawthorne and Cole both experienced an unsettled feeling of dislocation while in Europe. Henry James noted the great discomfort Hawthorne felt while living abroad and attributed this to Hawthorne's cloistered and provincial life in New England. Because of his provincialism, perhaps, Hawthorne "took more pleasure" in the American artwork he found in Rome (*Hawthorne* 156). The process of understanding another culture required a translation of sorts. Difference, often measured through what is *known* to the *unknown*, is a process through which the strange is made familiar through comparison. We look for convergent patterns to transform the unknown into the known. Paul Giles, in *Virtual Americas*, points out a pattern in *The Marble Faun*: "American intellectuals are transplanted to the global epicenter of a world religion—Rome, in Hawthorne's case—so that their Puritan consciousness can be examined within a larger comparative perspective. In this sense . . . Hawthorne tends to be interested in dialogues of one kind or another, with ways in which foreign categories impact on the domestic

and familiar" (79-80). Cole's paintings would have been a bridge for Hawthorne into understanding the Old World; the paintings translating the "foreign" into the "known" and familiar.

Dennis Berthold discusses this topic in his analysis of the effect of Rome upon Melville. He explains:

> Transnational comparison fuses past and present, artificial and natural, local and foreign, and once having noticed it, he [Melville] could never look out his study window at Arrowhead again without remembering the Colosseum. This habit of associating the natural phenomena of America with the architecture of Europe is similar to naming cliffs along the Owyhee River in eastern Oregon the 'Pillars of Rome', where nomenclature bridges nature and civilization, New World and Old, in a geography of transnational identity and mutual exceptionalism. (77)

As American landscapes are seen through the inference of Rome, the landscapes of Rome could not be seen without the inference of America—for Melville, Hawthorne, Cole, and all other visitors to a foreign land.

Conrad Shumaker contends that although the use of historical sources in Hawthorne's novels has been long recognized, little has been said about how it has been used in *The Marble Faun*. He believes that Rome inspired Hawthorne to explore "moral history from prelapsarian and pastoral times to the American present," and to situate the plot and character development "within the model of human history that lies behind the romance" (73). In his essay, "*Marble Faun*: Hawthorne's Landscape of the Fall," Leo Levy argues that Hawthorne's experience of the Roman landscape scenery and ruins created "a new kind of visual experience for Hawthorne, one that demands the invention of a new aesthetic category in which belong the 'ruined ruins' that

now confront him everywhere." He also notes, "the author and his characters are overcome by the magnitude of the successive stages of Roman history and by accumulation of broken and fragmented pieces" (140). Levy finds that Hawthorne's novel affords "a glimpse far backward into Arcadian life, or, farther still, into the Golden Age, before mankind was burthened with sin and sorrow" (141). The ruins of Rome as a setting provide a narrative separate from the story Hawthorne writes in *The Marble Faun* and Cole paints in *The Course of Empire*. Many readers in 1860 would have had *portmanteau* knowledge of the fall of the Roman Empire. Whatever narrative Hawthorne created would have been synthesized by the reader with the encapsulated story of the ruins of Rome. When using this setting, Hawthorne shares the story with one that has been told many times in literature, paintings, and history books. His characters act against or with these stories as a backdrop to their own lives, and readers inevitably apply the lessons of these stories to their own present-day lives. Like a mirror through which we see ourselves, the ruins become a translatable metaphor for understanding one's own position in the world.

Levine urges the reader to 'see through' Hawthorne's allegories, which "deflect attention from the ways in which his portrayal of the tense political and cultural scene in Rome speaks to the similarly tense scene in pre-Civil War America" (20). As argued previously, Hawthorne's point of reference may not be Rome at all, but as Levine suggests, America. The use of Rome as setting is a type of 'red herring' that re-directs our attention away from his target: the impending civil crisis in antebellum America. In diplomatic deflection, Hawthorne is afforded the opportunity to comment, albeit obliquely, upon the political situation in America. Susan Manning and David S. Reynolds also suggest that Hawthorne used Rome as a displaced setting to explore anxieties about America. Manning believes *The Marble Faun* should be known as "an antebellum novel, bearing in its structure and imagery marks of anxiety about the impending

fragmentation of America's unified story" and that "Rome's past may be America's fate" (xxviii). I suggest further that Hawthorne, through visual and textual allusion to Cole's *The Course of Empire*, used Rome and its ruins to address the cultural tensions in America during the antebellum period.

It is important to note the ways in which Hawthorne employs the contrast of Rome and America through recurrent motif, suggesting that although he has been expatriated from his native country for many years, it is nevertheless a thematic concern. Admiring the "untameable water" of the Fountain of Trevi, an unnamed American artist, asks, What would be done with this water-power if we had it in one of our American cities? Would they employ it to turn the machinery of a cotton-mill, I wonder!" An American sculptor in the novel imagines how "they would give me a commission to carve the one-and-thirty sister-States, each pouring a silver stream from a separate can into one vast basin, which should represent the grand reservoir of national prosperity." In rejoinder, an English artist remarks, "you could set those same one-and thirty States to cleansing the national flag of any stains that it may have incurred" (146). Concern about the Gospel of Progress within the thirty-one states, as well as the belief that the flag needs to be cleansed, reveals the readily apparent American subtext within this novel about Rome. Decadent Rome is juxtaposed with a flag that may have "stains" but is not yet in a state of ruin. Prosperity built upon a "silver stream" contaminates the vessel, or "grand reservoir" that is the United States.

In the chapter, "An Aesthetic Company," Hawthorne assembles "American artists, with a sprinkling of their English brethren . . . in the palatial, but somewhat faded and gloomy apartment of an eminent member of the aesthetic body" (131). He informs the reader that "the company, this evening, included several men and women whom the world has heard of, and

many others, beyond all question, whom it ought to know." He resists the temptation to name the many artists who might come forward into these pages, claiming "ink, moreover, is apt to have a corrosive quality." However, most significantly, he focuses on one unnamed artist who sounds very much like Cole, or a practitioner from the Hudson River School. He first argues that "we must therefore forego the delight of illuminating this chapter with personal allusion to men whose renown grows richly on canvas," but, nevertheless, continues on with singling out unnamed artists by their work, saying, "we might point to an artist who has studied Nature with such tender love that she takes him to her intimacy, enabling him to reproduce her in landscapes that seem the reality of a better earth, and yet are but the truth of the very scenes around us, observed by the painter's insight and interpreted for us by his skill," confessing the ease with which he might embroider the text with "epigrammatical allusions" to American artists (133-34). Hawthorne, cleverly composing himself among the aesthetic company of English and American artists, gathers them within the writer's frame, the chapter, blending genre through a roundtable of poet-painters.

The Marble Faun and Cyclical Theory of History

Although often briefly noted in art and literary criticism, greater attention should be given to the influence of the cyclical theory upon narratives outside of historiography. Although I argue for the influence of Cole's narrative upon Hawthorne, there is a replication of narrative within narrative. Cole bases his narrative upon the cyclical theory, thereby transmitting his allegorical narrative through the historical narrative. Employing both visual allusion as well as historical allusion, Hawthorne also composes his narrative with both *visual tableaux* of the paintings in *The Course of Empire*, as well as the historical cyclical theory as the idea exists outside of the paintings. Although he used it as a narrative framework, Cole did not author the

cyclical theory; therefore, when it is found in the novel it may come through the paintings indirectly or through the historical theory directly. A more nuanced understanding of Romanticism within the American "School of Catastrophe" may be acquired when read through the lens of the cyclical theory of history or "historical romanticism." Certainly, within both the American and European art world of the early nineteenth century, what had been the discrete genres of history painting and landscape art were becoming blended genres. Painters in the Hudson River School found the genre of history painting limiting. In order to adequately express their perception of the New World, they turned to landscape painting to convey the associative and emotional elements of American Romanticism. Although a more traditional conception of history painting was evolving toward Romanticism, many artists continued to utilize scenes from history as topics of their compositions, along with the poetic elements of Romantic landscape painting (Kasson, *Artistic Voyagers*). Therefore, although read through the lens of Romanticism, these paintings must also be recognized for their reliance upon history painting as the foundation of their experimentation with a new genre. The blending of these genres, historic and romantic, occurred not only in painting but also in poetry and fiction, particularly in the Romance novel. Historical allusion, an important compositional feature of antebellum art and literature, must be considered not only as a circulating discourse during this time period, but also as a commonly practiced narrative technique utilized by both artists and writers.

Stow Persons posits three "distinct" theories of history in circulation during the late eighteenth century: millennialism, the gospel of progress, and the cyclical theory, informing that "suggestions of the cyclical theme were to be found both in the writers of classical antiquity, especially the historians and moralists, and more recently in the popular English literature of the early eighteenth-century. It was subsequently to become a familiar theme in romantic thought,"

also noting that it was to become for "a brief period one of the distinctive historical conceptions of the dominant social group in America" (152). It is important to recognize the influence as well as the varying strains of this idea during the antebellum period.

The most conservative view, millennialism, believed that the cycle was inexorable and destruction inevitable. A more moderate belief, that the cycle might be delayed, could be achieved through resistance to the diseased sins of affluence. Because the democratic government of the United States was seen as morally superior to the decadent government of Rome, the moderate belief afforded the possibility that America might be saved from the course of Roman history. Persons argues that "the new synthesis which began to emerge after the revolution . . . drew from . . . the assumption that the role of the individual in history is a purposive and creative one" (163). Both Jefferson and Adams ascribed to the cyclical theory, believing that the only defense against a nation's corruptibility would be to recognize the markers of dissolution and to erect "safeguards for the protection of liberty" (155). The new nation, destined to cycle through the stages of empire, might be deterred through an individual's awareness of vice and adherence to strict moral standards. This proviso could arrest the cycle, allowing the new nation to grow from the *Savage* state (colonization) into the *Pastoral* (new years of the Republic) onto *Consummation*. If morality faltered, then the cycle would continue into *Destruction*, but those predisposed to be hopeful believed the democratic experiment might prevent that outcome. The final stage of *Desolation*, as pictured by Cole, is the bleakest of all. All human life is absent from the picture, and only nature remains. Cole, however, uses catastrophe as a warning, contingent upon human behavior, not as a certitude outcome.

Persons points out that "most enlightened thinkers had a keen sense of the precariousness of the felicity which they enjoyed, of the moral and social conditions which would make its

continuation possible, and of the ultimate likelihood of its dissipation. The cyclical conception of history was the crystallization of their hopes and fears" (156). In contrast to the Gospel of Progress, Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne have often been characterized as having conservative beliefs regarding the proposed future of America. However, their beliefs regarding the course of American history, when viewed within the paradigm of "three conceptions of history," provide a more moderate stance than that of the millennialists. Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne were not necessarily opposed to progress itself, but instead argued for progress within a moral framework. The argument implicitly embedded in their narratives is that "progress" in antebellum America lacked moral compass. The prophetic fear expressed in their narratives is meant to instruct, through allegory, individual human behavior as well as governing bodies.

A larger philosophical question, particularly in *The Marble Faun,* is whether or not humans are capable of sustained goodness. The progression or regression of civilization, contingent upon human action, is perched upon the precipice of moral failure, defining the central conflict of the cyclical theory and the Fall. The re-enactment of the Fall as a recurrent motif intensifies the tragic elements in the novel. Defective morality activates a human's fall from grace and eventual cycle into destruction. Hawthorne blends the Fortunate Fall with variations of all three conceptions of the cyclical theory of history. The novel, an attempt to not only mediate but also to negotiate these theories, portends the future of America, with proviso. Like Cole's paintings, the theory of history's cycles is used to warn. I suggest that too much emphasis has been placed upon the religious allegory, while scant attention has been paid to the subtle, yet complex historical theories that circulate within the novel.

The narrative found within Cole's *The Course of Empire* paintings, in conjunction with the cyclical theory of history, is a helpful lens through which circulating discourses in *The*

Marble Faun may be illuminated. In addition, attention to the rhetorical richness of the philosophical arguments outlined in the novel provides an alternative means to understanding the text outside of the commonly utilized lens of religious allegory. Both narratives, the Fall of the Roman Empire and the Fall of Adam and Eve, configure the context within which the narrative of *The Marble Faun* is situated. However, one also may discover a richly synthesized blueprint of the cultural and philosophical discourse of the time period, particularly as it pertains to human nature, a common theme found in Hawthorne's fiction. In this most ambitious novel, Hawthorne uses reflections upon art to channel exploration of the inherent nature of humanity—and humanity's effect upon the course of civilization.

In 1858, as Hawthorne wrote *The Marble Faun*, America was dangerously close to falling into a political and cultural abyss over the issue of slavery. Abraham Lincoln, in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, used biblical allusion to remind the country that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Foreshadowing the future of the United States, Lincoln pictures the house of the United States falling if both North and South cannot stand united. The cyclical theory of history as a trope universalizes the cultural conflicts in America and at the same time examines them from a safe distance. The Fall of Adam and Eve, synthesized with the cyclical theory, provides both religious and secular interpretative possibilities. The scientific revolution had moved the reading public away from a strictly religious understanding of the modern world of 1860. The new "religion" was industrialization, mechanization, and the scientific revolution. Whether or not it was done intentionally, through the Fall of the Roman Empire and/or the Fall of Adam and Eve, the allegory in the novel may be read and understood by either a secular or religious audience.

Literary analysis of the novel has often been made through the biblical lens of the Fortunate Fall to the exclusion of these other circulating discourses. Hawthorne uses visual aesthetics to structure the thematic narrative lines of both the Miltonic fall as well as the cyclical theory of history. The conflicting discourse of the secularized cyclical theory of history offers a complementary narrative to the religious trope of the fall. The juxtaposed biblical and secular narratives create tension and conflicted ambivalence often noted within *The Marble Faun*. A reading of the novel primarily as an Edenic trope over-simplifies the complexity of Hawthorne's exploration of the effect of the past upon the present day. A supplemental historical discourse, transmitted through visual allusion, juxtaposes the concurrent strains of both religious and secular ideology, also found within the cultural climate of nineteenth-century antebellum America.

Hawthorne argues for the rescue of American art (and nation) from prophetic ruin and declares we are "all parts of a complicated scheme of progress, which can only result in our arrival at a colder and drearier region that we were born in" and that "we go all wrong, by too strenuous a resolution to go all right" (qtd. in Levy 149). Levy, recognizing that Hawthorne is recreating the cycle of history in his novel, says, "America may follow the Roman cycle from simplicity and integrity to empire and corruption" (149), contending that the "ambivalence of Hawthorne's responses to the idea of progress suggests that his faith in the future of the American experience had been profoundly shaken" (156). It also may be Hawthorne's oblique commentary on antebellum America, including concerns about the rapid secularization of the culture and the submersion of religion as a primary discourse.

The contours of the conflict between religious and secular are mediated through three narrative threads in the novel: the religious Fall, the classical cyclical theory of history that ends

in destruction and desolation, and the "Gospel of Progress" cyclical theory that believes the experiment of democracy in America may arrest the cycle. Although all three narratives may be found in *The Marble Faun*, especially notable is the use of the fall of the Roman Empire as a prototype for the fate of America. Is it possible that corruption can be contained in America? Or is corruptibility, like the heart of Hawthorne's character, Ethan Brand, an indestructible defect of human nature? The classic Republican belief was that if corruption could be averted, the Empire would stand. Of course, the question then for Hawthorne is whether humans are capable of resisting temptation and corruption. If so, there is hope for the American experiment and through it the cycle may be averted.

Alan Wallach argues that Cole believed "the tragic historical cycle, like the cycles of nature, was predetermined. But unlike natural cycles, it could be retarded or postponed. A republic might manage to preserve itself uncorrupted for a long period of time and even perhaps indefinitely—as many American political thinkers hoped" (93). Indeed, the cyclical theory embedded within Cole's *The Course of Empire* was countered by critics with the "Gospel of Progress," a belief that "democracy was the antidote to the cyclical process, thus entirely undermining Cole's intentions" (*Landscape,* Wallach 95). What James considers a weakness of the novel, the narrative eclipsed by the picturesque, (Byer 171) might actually be recovered through a narrative discovered in the reconstructed *visual tableaux* of *The Course of Empire* paintings. The "found" ekphrasis of Cole's paintings provides the novel with narrative structure James felt was lacking, that of the cyclical theory of history.

Leon Chai, also noting multiple levels of narration in *The Marble Faun*, concludes that it "seems clear that for Hawthorne the essence of history consists not so much of events but rather of stages of consciousness through which humanity passes. From this standpoint, it becomes

possible to imagine an analogy between the history of the race in general and that of an individual" (57). *Visual tableaux*, when examined as a narrative mode in the novel, provide ekphrastic evidence that Hawthorne blends religious allegory with the secular narrative of cyclical history. These convergent narratives add to the moral ambiguity of the novel, perhaps by design. What Hawthorne has done in the novel, which is quite unusual, is woven antithetical narrative lines, that of progress and regress, into the structure—adding to the tension, ambiguity, and mystery of the Romance. The promise has been compromised, and the melancholy strain of what has been lost may be heard through cadences of *visual tableaux*. That which cannot be articulated through words may be sounded through metaphoric imagery. America's ruins, not yet fully articulated through literature, found expression in the narrative art of Cole's *The Course of Empire*. Through the importation of *visual tableaux* reminiscent of these paintings, New World ruin is subtext for the narrative of *The Marble Faun*.

Interpretation through the lens of visual allusion provides an alternative approach that recovers a submerged and revelatory narrative of America's inexorable, regressive "march" toward destruction rather than Paradise. Residing in humanity's hopes and dreams, the ideal may be recognized, but it is elusive—just out of the grasp of human reach. The tragedy is having knowledge of what could be and falling short of the ideal. The desire for paradise, in perpetual counterpoint with inescapable realism, informs both *The Course of Empire* and *The Marble Faun*. The juxtaposed interplay, repetition, and succession of literary and visual scenes reproduce the tension found within the culture of the time period. I will show when and where visual correspondences to *The Course of Empire* occur and consider how this allusion adds depth and meaning to the narrative, as well as posits *The Marble Faun* as a novel as much about America as it is about Rome.

Romanticism in *The Marble Faun*

One of Hawthorne's often-quoted remarks, found in the preface of *The Marble Faun,* is:

> 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 a common-place prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes either in the annals of our stalwart Republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, like ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need Ruin to make them grow. (3)

Many scholars take Hawthorne to be sincere in these words—but, I believe, as do others, that Hawthorne is being intentionally and subtly ironic. Larry Reynolds denounces those who take Hawthorne literally, claiming, "Hawthorne was being disingenuous in this preface, as he was in previous ones. He was keenly aware of the 'gloomy wrongs' in his 'dear native land' that tyrannized over the present" (*American* 292). His corpus of novels and short stories set in colonial America were standard-bearers of Dark Romanticism. Hawthorne had already grown Romance through the substratum of American "Paradise," showing the mythological counterpoint of a fallen state.

It is useful to remember Hawthorne's distinction between a novel and a Romance found in his Preface to *The House of Seven Gables* (1851). Here he informs his readers that the romance is a "work of art," one in which the writer may "manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture." This, of course, is the *chiaroscuro* notably used by Romantic artists in their paintings to heighten drama. Characteristic of the Romance, according to Hawthorne, is "the attempt to connect a by-gone

time, with the very present that is flitting away from us," a contrast that suggests temporality and loss, also a narrative technique used by Cole in his allegorical paintings. In addition, Hawthorne reflects upon how the Romance may provide a moral prerogative:

> The wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantages, becomes a pre and uncontrollable mischief; and he would feel it a singular gratification, if this romance might effectually convince mankind—or, indeed, any one man—of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate, on the heels of an unfortunate posterity thereby to maim and crush them, until the accumulated mass shall go scattered abroad in its original atoms. (2)

Hawthorne's definition of the Romance, prescient of the cultural work he will perform in *The Marble Faun*, belies a preoccupation as early as 1851 with the ideas found in Cole's *The Course of Empire* and the cyclical theory of history. The folly of human arrogance and ignorance must be contained in order to avoid annihilation down to the "atom." Hawthorne's stated purpose in the preface is to instruct his readers so they may learn from his tale of transgressive morality. The moral pedagogy found in his preface to *The House of Seven Gables* continues its instruction in *The Marble Faun*.

In his introduction to *The Marble Faun*, Richard Brodhead points out that Hawthorne was writing the book after an eight-year hiatus away from writing novels and "from within a radically changed horizon" (ix), not only because he had been living abroad since 1852 but also because of the political situation in the United States. Brodhead reminds us that Hawthorne felt slavery to be "a sheer historical nightmare, something to shut out as much as one could" (x). It cannot be argued that he may have been referencing a "Golden Age" in America's past—much of his

writing illuminated the darkness of human nature found in early colonialism in America. Unless distance and absence had made him fonder and more optimistic, we must take these words to mean something other than his literal sentiments. It is true that the United States did not have the historical antiquity of Rome, but Hawthorne has shown us the universality of ruins—those found in the interior of the human heart. These are not Hawthorne's beliefs regarding his "dear native land" but instead the ironic expression of the spirit of the times in the United States, a place where the "Gospel of Progress" had insisted that democracy had brought about "common-place prosperity" to all. Hawthorne knew that was not true and had often demonstrated the hypocrisy of that belief.

Leo Marx claims that both Hawthorne and Cole found artistic inspiration in John Martin's illustrations in an 1827 edition of *Paradise Lost*, noting the "opposition between industrial fire and pastoral sun . . . in Cole's influential series, *The Course of Empire*," as well as Hawthorne's short story, "Ethan Brand" (271). Elements of the pastoral, juxtaposed with the sublime, effectively conveyed the prophetic trajectory of the cyclical theory of history found in both Cole's *The Course of Empire* paintings and many of Hawthorne's short stories and his major Romance novels. As noted, these techniques were often used as a motif in Hawthorne's short stories and in his earlier Romance novels. However, Hawthorne accelerates the use of these elements in *The Marble Faun* to convey "higher truth" through the "moral."

In his essay, "Hawthorne and the Sublime," Levy argues that Hawthorne "draws upon the traditions of the picturesque and the sublime" in his fiction and considers these "the poles of Hawthorne's art" (391). Providing numerous examples from Hawthorne's short stories, Levy believes that Hawthorne was mesmerized by the sublime but also feared it—and often retreated into the picturesque, using it to add balance to the extreme emotion of the sublime. As noted

previously, Hawthorne's technique of juxtaposing the picturesque and sublime heightens the dramatic intensity of the scene, a characteristic feature in the sublime and the art and literature of Romanticism.

Levy also presumes a strong connection between Hawthorne and Allston and argues that "it seems probable . . . Hawthorne is drawing upon Allston, or Allston's sources, for an important distinction between the 'moral' and 'false' sublime" (396). Art historians recognize the close parallel between Allston's work and that of Cole, both utilizing classical themes, history, and literature in the service of allegorical purpose (Kasson, *Artistic Voyagers* 92-94). Allston believed that the sublime should be used for a higher, spiritual purpose, and, therefore, the sublime in American Romanticism, unlike European Romanticism, is the "moral sublime," used not only for effect, but primarily to convey meaning through the allegorical, spiritual, or cathartic. Hawthorne and Cole used the sublime and picturesque elements of Romanticism to explore and probe their own ambivalence towards the unbridled optimism of the "Gospel of Progress." In the search for a unique American identity, they and others attempted to reconcile the idealism of the Revolution with the reality of the antebellum time period, characterized by violent dissent, poverty, classism, racism, sexism, slavery, and other "corruptions" of civilization. Idealism may be found within the pastoral and progressive conventions of their literature and art, and the corruption or inherent defect of humanity, in the fall from that pastoral state.

As has been already noted in my analysis of selected short stories, Hawthorne employs the biblical, historical and allegorical to provide context, structure, and narrative framing. In addition, juxtaposed tropes of past and present, innocence and corruption, and the real and the ideal are materials used to construct meaning in his text, as well as the recurrent exploration of

the role of the artist within society. As previously mentioned, Cole drew from the same sources as Hawthorne in the use of these conventions. Hawthorne would have recognized them, not only through the originals found in Europe, but also through American art, particularly that of the Hudson River School. He certainly would have recognized that American artists were practiced in the use of these European conventions, and Hawthorne himself employed these same conventions in his novel.

Hawthorne confesses to his use of art in the novel as "felonious," "secretly conveyed," "spoils," "further robbery," "appropriating," and "stealing" (4). Although he does name some specific artists, these terms provide some insight into the interpolative work he does with art and literature in the novel, that which he names, and other work that is fragmented or hidden. Those works "secretly conveyed" and "appropriated" may be found through close study of what he later refers to as threads in the "the tapestry" he has woven. It is unsurprising that one of his main characters, Hilda, is a "copyist" of artworks; through development of her character, Hawthorne explores his own work of copying done through the transfer of visual to text. Hawthorne employed similar methodologies and techniques to recreate works of art that remained faithful to the artist's purpose and meaning.

Although the setting is Rome, Hilda and Kenyon perceive Rome through the filter of American vision; this becomes a type of double vision when combined with the lens of a tourist in Europe. The wish to view something as if for the first time is expressed by Hawthorne in his journal, where he noted his desire to perceive the painting of *Beatrice Cenci* without knowing her story so he might recognize the power of the narrative unfiltered (Gollin 193). The portrait of *Beatrice Cenci* by Guido, Hilda's best and most challenging work as a copyist, informs the essential mystery of human behavior. Can suffering be abated, or does suffering beget more

suffering? Her story, copied from Hawthorne into the novel through both descriptions of the portrait as well as accompanying narrative, considers the ways in which innocence is corrupted. This conversation takes place through multiple modalities, including the portrait itself of a young woman in exquisite pain, the story of how she has suffered, and the characters in the novel who "copy" her portrait in order to better understand the paradox of corrupted innocence.

Hilda, characterized as "picturesque," offers a dramatic contrast with the sublime Miriam. However, it is Guido's portrait of *Beatrice Cenci*, "the saddest picture ever painted or conceived; it involved an unfathomable depth of sorrow" (64), that circulates throughout the narrative. Hilda explains, "I had no resource but to sit down before the picture, day after day, and let it sink into my heart. I do believe it is now photographed there. It is a sad face to keep so close to one's heart; only what is so very beautiful can never be quite a pain." Miriam asks Hilda if she can "interpret what the feeling is, that gives this picture such a mysterious force." Hilda replies that she cannot "in words" but "while I was painting her, I felt all the time as if she were trying to escape from my gaze . . . her sorrow is so strange, and so immense," noting "the hopelessness of her case" (66). The paradox of Beatrice, that she is "a fallen angel, fallen, and yet sinless," is a recurrent motif in the novel (66). The story and portrait of *Beatrice Cenci* represents the essential paradox—she has been raped by her father and then murders him. How can one be sinless yet fallen? Is corruption of the innocent inevitable and if so, is the utopian idea of Paradise a cruel ideology, only offering what might have been rather than what can be?

Copying requires subordination of one's own talent for a higher calling, that of self-sacrifice in service to all of humanity. She gives of herself so others may benefit through her ability to replicate truthful representations. Hilda "chose the better, and loftier, and more unselfish part, laying her individual hopes, her fame, her prospects of enduring remembrance, at

the feet of those great departed ones." Sacrifice of one's own creative calling elevates and privileges the work of a copyist as a saintly and spiritual endeavor, that of a copyist's ability to replicate and multiply not for herself, but instead "for mankind" (60). The copyist, considered "the handmaid of those old magicians," illuminates and transports the image "from the prince's carefully guarded cabinet, where not one eye in thousands was permitted to behold it—she brought the wondrous picture into daylight, and gave all its magic splendour for the enjoyment of the world" (60). The reproduction of art is revolutionary, a democratized liberation through multiple reproductions of a work of art. Replication and reproduction are at the center of the novel. Rome, or Italy, referred to as the "pictorial land," is one where Hilda "entirely lost the impulse of original design" (56). During her residence in the "land of picture," the work she does is that of a "copyist . . . something far higher and nobler" than any other original work she might have executed (59). Hawthorne elevates the work of a copyist to that of spiritual communion with the masters. Duplicate copies of art abound in the novel—Hilda's copies of the paintings of the Old Masters, and Hawthorne's copies of art within the novel.

Like Hilda, Hawthorne sometimes selects only part of a painting "in which the spirit and essence of the picture culminated" (58). The use of *visual tableaux* in *The Marble Faun* activates associative meaning for the reader. Indeed, the narrator alludes to "romantic mysteries" knit into the "rich tapestry" of the novel that may be called either "history or romance" and requests that the "kindly readers" refrain from "tearing the web apart" (455). Hawthorne asks his readers not to look, and by bringing attention to that which otherwise *may* have been overlooked in the novel, provides a clue that answers may be found within his woven tapestry. This type of direct address to the reader is a tantalizing invitation to trespass the boundary he imposes.

The Course of Empire* in *The Marble Faun

The first chapter of the novel introduces the four characters, Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, and Donatello. They are all friends at the beginning of the novel; however, events will transpire that strain their friendship to the breaking point. Donatello, a young Italian nobleman, represents pastoral innocence that may be found in a faun. He is said to look like the *Faun of Praxiteles*, a famous statue that Hawthorne observed while in Rome. Donatello, the key figure in the novel, experiences a fall from innocence to corruption. Miriam, also of European origin, is an artist who has suffered a violation of some kind. Like Hester Prynne, she is beautiful, independent, and empathic. She is haunted by "the Model," a menacing presence in her life. Although their connection remains a mystery, it is understood that he has intimate knowledge of her sin and is determined to haunt her with this knowledge. Counterpoised to Donatello and Miriam are Kenyon and Hilda, both American artists. Kenyon, a sculptor, is in love with Hilda, a copyist, who represents purity and innocence, but paradoxically an almost sinful purity in her dogmatic inability to understand personal human failure and her inability to forgive. She calls herself "a daughter of the Puritans," and lives accordingly. Kenyon, an intellectual, mediates between the sinners, Donatello and Miriam, and the Puritanical Hilda. Through ongoing philosophical reflection upon the crime that has been committed by Donatello, Kenyon provides the rhetorical argument also found in the cyclical theory of history and *The Course of Empire.*

Hilda and Kenyon, American artists, have acquired knowledge from their sojourn in the Old World, their exposure a type of prophylactic or inoculation against contamination. Indeed, Hilda, the American copyist, remains pure despite her eyewitness encounter with evil. She is perceived to be "like a dove . . . a fair, pure creature" who lives in the "airy region" where "only

the domes of churches ascend." Of Hilda's retreat, Miriam exclaims, "You breathe sweet air, above all the evil scents of Rome . . . you dwell above our vanities and passions, our moral dust and mud, with the doves and the angels for your nearest neighbors" (53). Hawthorne describes Hilda as a young, American girl who "dwelt in her tower, as free to descend into the corrupted atmosphere of the city beneath" (54). Hilda's evolution as an artist suggests that had she "remained in her own country, it is not improbable that she might have produced original works, worthy to hang in that gallery of native art, which, we hope, is destined to extend its rich length through many future centuries" (55). In Rome, Hilda's talent is for copying works of art, not producing original works of art. This, of course, is also the fear of many Americans during the nineteenth century—that the identity of the new nation is too closely entwined with that of Europe. Hilda's work as a copyist, metaphorically the antithesis of the work American artists are expected to do, is ironic. Rather than creating a unique national and cultural identity through her art, she instead engages in copying the great masters of Europe. That Hilda and Kenyon return to America at the end of the novel, foreshadows the creation of a native American art—for it is in America where they may parlay their artistic gifts into something original.

An additional consideration, which has been explored in great depth by Dennis Berthold, is the reunification and movements of resistance taking place in Italy while American writers are residing in Rome. The European cultural milieu, combined with the precarious "birthing" of America, provided a staging upon which writers like Hawthorne could imaginatively re-create the drama of the American Revolution. Reflections of the idealism of revolutionary rhetoric, juxtaposed with the Roman ruins, provided a parallel daguerreotype of America. Through transatlantic transposition of Roman Empire with American Paradise, Hawthorne transacts cross-

cultural American and European ideology. This transfusion takes place through copying American works of art into *The Marble Faun*.

In an inverse order of *The Course of Empire* paintings, the novel begins with ruins and ends with "sunlight on the mountain-tops," offering a mirror image reading of the allegory in *The Course of Empire*. The opening paragraphs offer a panoramic view of *Destruction* and *Desolation*: the "most pathetic figure of the Dying Gladiator, just sinking into his death-swoon," "the marble . . . is yellow with time . . . corroded by the damp earth in which they lay buried for centuries," "the battered triumphal arch," "desolate Forum," "old pavements of heathen temples . . . supported by the very pillars that once upheld them" (5). As in the five panels of *The Course of Empire*, the "mountains, looking just the same, amid all this decay and change," may be seen in the distance. In a direct address to the reader, Hawthorne writes,

> We glance hastily at these things—at this bright sky, and those blue, distant mountains, and at the ruins, Etruscan, Roman, Christian, venerable, with a threefold antiquity . . . in the hope of putting the reader into that state of feeling which is experienced oftenest at Rome. It is a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a by-gone life, of which this spot was the centre. (6)

The present narrative is meant to be "viewed through this medium," that of antiquity, and the narrator juxtaposes "Side by side with the massiveness of the Roman Past, all matters that we handle or dream of, now-a-days" (6). Hawthorne trumpets his intent to use the Roman past to instruct the present. The past is brought fully into the present as a backdrop upon which the tragedy unfolds. The cycle of history resurrected, the ruins render a melancholic setting upon which the characters' dreams and actions are projected.

Three of the four characters "were artists, or connected with Art" (7). Miriam is a painter, Hilda a copyist, Kenyon, a sculptor, and the one who is not an artist, Donatello, has a remarkable resemblance to a well-known work of art, *The Faun of Praxiteles*. As Hawthorne introduces us to each character, we learn that Donatello, the Faun of Praxiteles, is a relic from the idyllic Golden Age. In his description of the statue of the Faun, Hawthorne considers how "only a sculptor of the finest imagination, the most delicate taste, the sweetest feeling, and the rarest artistic skill—in a word, a sculptor and a poet too—could have first dreamed of a Faun in this guise," establishing a connection between art and poetry, as well as a time when "man's affinity with Nature was more strict, and his fellowship with every living thing more intimate and dear" (11). Hawthorne begins his narrative with the visual elements found in the *Savage* and *Arcadian* stages of *The Course of Empire*. At the same time, he foreshadows the desolation and destruction that will take place in the novel, beginning a cycle of transformation like that found in the cyclical theory of history. Like Cole, Hawthorne characterizes an earlier, more idyllic moment in history and asks us to visualize:

> The warm, sensuous, earthy side of Nature . . . the merriment of woods and streams; living as our four-footed kindred do—as mankind did in its innocent childhood, before sin, sorrow, or morality itself, had ever been thought of . . . no conscience, no remorse, no burthen on the heart, no troublesome recollections of any sort; no dark future neither" (13-14).

Dark brooding about the past is relieved by the bright sunshine of the present. Miriam proclaims, "Nature and art are just at one, sometimes. But what happy ignorance is this of our friend Donatello! Not to know his own age! It is equivalent to being immortal on earth. If I could only

forget mine!" (15). The temporal juxtaposition of past and present through both visual and verbal referents is woven within the narrative fabric (or tapestry) of the text.

Weaving the tapestry of the two art forms together, Donatello "looked as if he might just have stept out of a picture, and, in truth, was likely enough to find his way into a dozen pictures" (19). The development of Donatello's character most fully expresses the sequencing of Cole's historical scenes. Animal-like, he is initially represented as a savage, but when we see him in his ancestral home, it is an Arcadian and pastoral staging. Through his relationship with Miriam, his innocence is corrupted but he also gains knowledge through his downfall (a Fortunate Fall). He is the only character exiled; therefore, desolate, at the end of the novel. Donatello is the embodiment of the cyclical theory as it pertains to an individual, rather than an entire empire. However, as a sacrificial figure, others will gain redemptive knowledge that may save them from a similar fate. Like Cole, Hawthorne provides readers with providential warning of how Paradise may be lost.

Hawthorne's chapter "The Spectre of the Catacomb," develops this theme. The model who haunts Miriam in the catacombs "left his features, some shadow or reminiscence of them, in many of her sketches and pictures," and when he left the underground tomb he was "perhaps bringing some old pestilence or other forgotten and long-buried evil on society—or possibly, teaching the modern world some decayed and dusty kind of crime, which the antique Romans knew—and then would hasten back to the catacomb" (32-33). As in Cole's paintings, the inexorable march toward destruction is not named, just acknowledged as inevitable. The Model transmits a seemingly ineradicable infection upon the world, his "shadow . . . always flung into the light which Miriam diffused around her" (36). The Model, an archetype of evil in the world,

provides an opportunity for us to recognize its pervasive existence and also to consider how we might avoid its corrupting influence.

In the chapter "Miriam's Studio," Hawthorne describes the "courtyard and staircase of a palace, built three hundred years ago" as a "peculiar feature of modern Rome." His description closely parallels features found in both of Cole's paintings, *Destruction* and *Desolation*. The following may be considered a *tableaux vivant* for the painting *Destruction*:

> A range of dusky pillars . . . and in the intervals, from pillar to pillar, are strewn fragments of antique statues, headless and legless torsos, and busts that have invariably lost . . . the nose. Bas-reliefs, the spoil of some far elder palace, are set in the surrounding walls, every stone of which has been ravished from the Coliseum, or any other imperial ruin which earlier barbarism had not already levelled with the earth. Between two of the pillars, moreover, stands an old sarcophagus without its lid, and with all of its more prominently projecting sculptures broken off; perhaps it once held famous dust, and the bony frame-work of some historic man, although now only a receptacle for the rubbish of the courtyard and half-worn broom. (37)

If one were to paint the following image from Hawthorne's description, it would be very nearly identical to Cole's painting, *Desolation*. Hawthorne writes:

> In the centre of the court . . . appears a fountain . . . now the patches of moss, the tufts of grass, the trailing maiden-hair, and all sorts of verdant weed that thrive in the cracks and crevices of moist marble, tell us that Nature takes the fountain back into her great heart, and cherishes it as kindly as if it were a woodland spring (37-38).

Nature as a restorative is typical of the sublime, providing both exhilaration as well as relief from intensified emotion. Metaphorically, the "cracks and crevices" of "moist marble," "dusky pillars," and "strewn fragments," signal the apex and then downfall of civilization, when humanity had acquired refinement and grace, as symbolized through the arts. The destruction of art represents the cycles of history; the only way to understand the meaning of the scene is through imagining what came before and what would have come after the event. It is an image designed to activate a series of thoughts that will translate the image into a comprehensible narrative. The remnants of a high state of culture, that had once existed but is no longer, imbue the scene with a sense of loss and melancholy. It is also instructive—the natural progression of thought will be toward reflection, considering not only 'Why did this happen?' but also, 'How could it have been prevented'? The idea of the United States as an empire developed through its imperialist acquisition of territory. Therefore, although the setting is Rome, an association with the United States would have been probable for an American reader. The next stage, and the future of the United States, would have been *Destruction* and then *Desolation*. The imagery in Hawthorne's description, as well as Cole's painting, is a typical trope of catastrophe. In this trope, fearful emotions are heightened and then there is a correspondent mechanism for relief, provided through the personification of Nature and her "great heart."

Hawthorne's scene, identical to that of Cole's fifth painting, *Desolation*, is a poetic meditation on ruin and loss. Nature also has taken over Cole's painting; there are no signs of human life. Cole has used the peak of the mountain in each of the five scenes to signal the passage of time in the same setting. In his notes for this painting, Cole writes of a "desolate ruin—columns standing isolated amid the encroaching waters—ruined temples, broken bridges, fountains, sarcophagi, &c. . . . this picture must be as the funeral knell of departed greatness"

(Noble 130). Hawthorne also sounds the funeral knell of departed greatness in his narrative of the ruins, noting, "all these illustrious personages have gone down their hereditary staircase for the last time," the staircase of the ruins, " a thoroughfare for "ambassadours, English noblemen, American millionaires, artists, tradesmen, washerwomen, and people of every degree" (38). A similar image of humanity appears in Hawthorne's short story, "Earth's Holocaust," written in 1844. In Hawthorne's text, the splendor of the past is lost, but the retinue of commerce continues unabated, an inexorable march through time, like the course of empire. Not only do the scenes set the stage for the dramatic reunion of Nature with humanity, they also parallel the progression of emotional development in the characters.

Miriam regrets the lost past and tells Donatello, "the world is sadly changed, now-a-days; grievously changed, poor Donatello, since those happy times when your race used to dwell in the Arcadian woods, playing hide-and-seek with the nymphs in grottoes and nooks of shrubbery. You have re-appeared on earth some centuries too late" (42). The last stage, *Desolation,* is the apotheosis of the cyclical theory—as well as Cole's thematic denouement. In his paintings, as in the theory, humans cycle into an inevitable catastrophic outcome. Cooper and Hawthorne resist a resolute conclusion of total desolation; although destruction prevails, human life exists amidst the ruins. In Cole's narrative paintings, only nature remains. Although Cooper, Cole, and Hawthorne share in their catastrophic view of humanity's future, the novelists offer the possibility of hope—a return to the *Savage State*, perhaps, but not total annihilation.

Savage and Arcadian or Pastoral Stages in *The Marble Faun*

The *Arcadian* or the *Pastoral State* is the second painting in Cole's narrative—the sequencing therefore locates this stage in the past. Donatello belongs to the Arcadian landscape; in contemporary Rome, he is an anachronism, a creature out of time. Miriam lives in the present,

mourning the past that cannot be recaptured. Her creative imagination is haunted and limited by the Model who infects her with doubt and fear. Because Donatello loves her, he will try to rescue her from the demon that distorts the image she has of herself and pervades her self-portrayal, "the same figure, and always depicted with an expression of deep sadness" (46). Hawthorne describes each character's living arrangements in detail; Miriam's studio is set amidst destruction and desolation, Donatello resides in a rural Arcadian pastoral outside of Rome. Both of these characters are situated within the narrative parameters of three of Cole's paintings.

The character of Donatello most visibly embodies the trope of melancholic loss. The pastoral portrait of Donatello is "linked . . . with what we call the inferiour tribes of being, whose simplicity, mingled with his human intelligence, might partly restore what man has lost of the divine!" (71). Indeed, Hawthorne's description of the "scenery, amid which the youth strayed" parallels a typical Romantic picturesque, as well as that of Cole's *Pastoral State*: "a brighter sky, a softer turf, a more picturesque arrangement of venerable trees, than we find in the rude and untrained landscapes of the Western world . . . seemed to have lived for ages undisturbed, and to feel no dread of profanation by the axe" (71). The comparison between the landscapes of sylvan Rome and rude America reveals the submerged narrative of lost American paradise. Unlike the ages undisturbed that have come before, "dread" posits a future world that is connected to the West, a world "profaned by the axe." Although Cole and Hawthorne may have quite naturally transcribed the images they encountered in Rome in similar fashion, one finds marked parallels between Hawthorne's descriptive imagery of Roman ruins in *The Marble Faun* with Cole's painting, *Desolation*. A striking feature of the painting is the uninhabited profound silence. Hawthorne also notes, "In the openings of the wood, there are fountains plashing into marble basins, the depths of which are shaggy with waterweeds; or they tumble like natural cascades

from rock to rock, sending their murmur afar, to make the quiet and silence more appreciable" (72). Both Hawthorne and Cole use written and visual text to recreate the auditory component of the scene. The palpable silence conveys a melancholic desolation, knelling the past, present, and future within the Romantic landscape. Hawthorne refers to this as "an ideal landscape, a woodland scene, that seems to have been projected out of a poet's mind." Like Cole, he paints this image, but through his words:

> Scattered here and there, with careless artifice, stand old altars, bearing Roman inscriptions. Statues, gray with the long corrosion of even that soft atmosphere, half hide and half reveal themselves, high on pedestals, or perhaps fallen and broken on the turf. Terminal figures, columns of marble or granite, porticoes, arches, are seen in the vistas of the wood-paths, either veritable relics of antiquity, or with so exquisite a touch of artful ruin on them, that they are better than if really antique. At all events, grass grows on the top of the shattered pillars, and weeds and flowers root themselves in the chinks of the massive arches and fronts of temples and clamber at large over their pediments, as if this were the thousandth summer since their winged seeds alighted there. What a strange idea—what a needless labour—to construct artificial ruins in Rome, the native soil of Ruin! (72-73)

Hawthorne's use of painterly techniques is overt. He sketches in concrete objects within the framework of his composition, the "old altars," "columns of marble or granite," "wood-paths," "shattered pillars," and then colors in these objects with specific detail. The altars bear "Roman inscriptions," and grass grows on top of the "shattered pillars." He also personifies nature as "weeds and flowers root themselves . . . and clamber at large." Describing ruin as "artful,"

Hawthorne self-consciously paints with the words he is using. He is writer and artist, engaged in blending genre. Like "breaking the fourth wall" in a staged play, Hawthorne steps outside the narrative, directing the reader's attention to his composition work as an artist: "the result of all is a scene, pensive, lovely, dreamlike, enjoyable, and sad . . . a scene that must have required generations and ages, during which growth, decay, and man's intelligence, wrought kindly together, to render it so gently wild as we behold it now" (73). Hawthorne provides a panoramic view of humanity as he moves from the pastoral and savage state to ruins. The character of Donatello is used to convey these cyclic episodes of time as he undergoes transformation from a "savage-like" animal to a fallen human.

Like Cole's painting *Desolation*, and characteristic of high Romanticism, Hawthorne rhapsodizes upon "a piercing, thrilling, delicious kind of regret in the idea of so much beauty thrown away . . . and never to be dwelt amongst, as the home-scenery of any human being." The cyclical temporality of the scene informs Hawthorne's narrative: "For if you come hither in summer, and stray through these glades in the golden sunset, Fever walks arm in arm with you, and Death awaits you at the end of the dim vista" (73). This is the succinct encapsulation of the cyclical theory of history—summer, the glades, the golden age, disease, and then death—a moving and panoramic "vista" found within both *The Course of Empire* as well as *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne's portrayal transitions from the panoramic sweep of history into a framed close-up of the Arcadian scene. He juxtaposes the "old gloom of Rome" with the "bright, soft sky . . . in those Arcadian woods" (77).

Like Cooper, Hawthorne employs chiaroscuro to heighten the dramatic contrast—Miriam (a tragic heroine like Hester Prynne) "approached along the shadowy and sun-flickered path" (77). Donatello dwells in an "Arcadian environment of vineyards, fig-trees, and . . .

olive-orchards . . . happy in the woods . . . with hounds and horses, and very happy in watching all sorts of creatures and birds that haunt the leafy solitudes" (81). In sharp contrast, Miriam asks Donatello the question at the heart of the text—both Cole's paintings and the novel—"How long will this happiness last?" The conversation between Donatello and Miriam inscribes the thesis of both novel and paintings—Miriam's realistic understanding that such happiness cannot be sustained juxtaposed with Donatello's idyllic belief in the present: "'How long!' he exclaimed; for it perplexed him even more to think of the future than to remember the past. 'Why should it have any end? How long! Forever!—forever!—forever!'" (81). The tension between the belief in paradise and the knowledge that it will be lost is the catastrophic discourse of both paintings and novel. Miriam asks, "Is the past so indestructible?—the future so immitigable? Is the dark dream, in which I walk, of such solid, stony substance, that there can be no escape out of its dungeon?" (82). Donatello and Miriam represent the binary possibilities for the future, not only of hope or despair for personal happiness, but also for the greater compass of the United States, and all humanity. In generative replication, Cole translated the cyclical theory into *The Course of Empire*, making the theory visible; Hawthorne placed his characters within the scenes, vivifying the painted image; the characters, through their actions and dialogue, re-inscribe the cyclical theory, the foundational narrative of these texts.

Hawthorne, pairing Miriam and Donatello, provides a pastoral scene that recreates "the Golden Age come back again" (88), but almost as suddenly the Arcadian scene disappears, "The spell being broken, it was now only that old tract of pleasure-ground, close by the people's gate of Rome; a tract where the crimes and calamities of ages, the many battles, blood recklessly poured out, and deaths of myriads, have corrupted all the soil, creating an influence that makes the air deadly to human lungs" (90). The contrast of the ideal and the real, the innocent and the

fallen, are realized through the characters of Donatello, still innocent at this point in the narrative, and Miriam, whose sorrowful apprehension clouds their merriment. Miriam exclaims, "Oh, have pity on me, Donatello, if for nothing else, yet because, in the midst of my wretchedness, I let myself be your playmate for this one wild hour. Follow me no farther! Henceforth, leave me to my doom," to which Donatello replies, "Not follow you! What other path have I?" (91). Because Miriam has already "fallen" in some mysterious way, she knows that the Arcadian scenescape is an illusion that is contained within "one wild hour." Like Elinor in "The Prophetic Pictures," who marries Walter despite the artist's warning, Donatello is propelled to follow, regardless of his fate.

Hilda thinks of "the brook that used to be one of my playmates, in my New England village." Kenyon warns Hilda that "Rome is not like one of our New England villages . . . the Papal despotism allows us freer breath than our native air . . . and if we like to take generous views of our associates, we can do so, to a reasonable extent, without ruining ourselves" (109). Hawthorne contrasts the Old World and the New World in important ways, particularly as it relates to the possibility of being ruined by the Roman air. Positing ruination in a future tense preserves America's present state of innocence. Hawthorne goes on to describe Rome as "nothing but a heap of broken rubbish, thrown into the great chasm between our own days and the Empire . . . for the better part of two thousand years . . . seem also but broken rubbish, as compared with its classic history" (110). Contrasting the former glory of Rome with its ruins, Hawthorne reminds the reader of other powerful nations and the course they may take. At the foot of the ruins Miriam meets her "dark adversary," connecting the ruin of an entire civilization to the temptation and regret of an individual heart.

The framing of Rome in this novel is that of a city that has cycled through *Destruction*, and is now desolate, the ruins a set piece for the past. Hawthorne continues to describe and parallel the visual elements of Cole's final painting, *Desolation*, saying, "If we consider the present city as at all connected with the famous one of old, it is only because we find it built over its grave . . . it lies like the dead corpse of a giant, decaying for centuries, with no survivor mighty enough even to bury it, until the dust of all those years has gathered slowly over its recumbent form and made a casual sepulchre . . . everywhere, some fragment of ruin, suggesting the magnificence of a former epoch" (110-11). To Miriam, Rome is "melancholy and sickly"; Trajan's Forum another scene that:

> Seems to be the effort of Time to bury up the ancient city, as if it were a corpse . . . in eighteen centuries, the soil over its grave has grown very deep, by the slow scattering of dust, and the accumulation of more modern decay upon elder ruin . . . a grove of stone, consisting of the broken and unequal shafts of a vanished temple . . . the modern edifices of the piazza . . . look down into the hollow space whence these pillars rise. (149-50)

Again, the setting of the ruins as a thematic, lends the weight of history to the narrative. Burdened with inescapable history, a heavy burden is borne by all of the characters who live in Rome.

Hilda reflects upon the meaning that may be discovered in the ruins, portending, "There are sermons in stones . . . and especially in the stones of Rome" (151). The narrative has taken us from the pastoral directly into desolation—alluding to scenes of active destruction, reflecting upon the human deeds that have wrought the ruin of the once great city. The reader is reminded that stones, like pictures, import moral lessons and tell stories that must be heard. Ubiquitous in

his description of the ruins of Rome, the gothic and sublime elements of the novel project a state of decay. Reference is made to "Byron's celebrated description" of the Coliseum as "he beheld the scene in his mind's eye, through the witchery of many intervening years, and faintly illuminated it" (153). It is "picturesque decay," a "profound abyss of ruin," a "bloody amphitheatre," and "Gothic horrour" (154-56). The following chapter, "The Edge of a Precipice," continues with Miriam's dismal reflection upon the past:

> For all Rome, you see, has been swallowed up in that gulf, in spite of him. The Palace of the Caesars has gone down thither, with a hollow, rumbling sound of its fragments! All the temples have tumbled into it; and thousands of statues have been thrown after! All the armies and the triumphs have marched into the great chasm, with their martial music playing, as they stept over the brink. All the heroes, the statesmen, and the poets! All piled upon poor Curtius, who thought to have saved them all! (162)

Hilda is taken aback by Miriam's dark vision of life and is "shocked by her friend's gloomy view of human destinies." Miriam's perception of history is static; the ruins of the past infect the future. In contrast, Hilda believes evil comes from within, and "If there be such a chasm, let us bridge it over with good thoughts and deeds, and we shall tread safely to the other side" (162). She argues that "It was the guilt of Rome, no doubt, that caused this gulf to open . . . every wrong thing makes the gulf deeper; every right one helps to fill it up. As the evil of Rome was far more than its good, the whole commonwealth finally sank into it, indeed, but of no original necessity" (162). A repudiation of the millennialist interpretation of the cyclical theory of history, Hilda's argument is arithmetical—good deeds may prevent falling over the precipice.

Rome fell because bad deeds outnumbered the good. Hilda does not believe ruin is inevitable—there is "no original necessity" that would compel destruction.

Miriam, unconvinced by Hilda's logic, answers, "Well, Hilda, it came to the same thing at least" (162). The belief that good will prevail is shadowed over by the act that takes place in the Coliseum. It is there that Miriam and Donatello are confronted by the Model, and Donatello, acting upon a glance from Miriam, and his belief that he must protect Miriam from the tyranny of the Model, pushes him over the precipice to his death. Hilda has witnessed the act and Miriam has been implicated. Donatello, an innocent "faun-like" young man, commits murder, challenging Hilda's belief that good will prevail, and transforming Donatello from innocent to fallen. Is it inevitable that innocence will be corrupted? And if so, what message is there for all of human existence? If corruption is inevitable, is it impossible for the cycle of history to be arrested? Hilda, Miriam, and Donatello experience a fall from innocence; Donatello through committing an act of murder; Miriam through a complicit glance; and Hilda through knowledge of both actions. Of Hilda's fall into knowledge, the narrator explains, "In due time, some mortal, whom they reverence too highly, is commissioned by Providence to teach them this direful lesson; he perpetrates a sin; and Adam falls anew, and Paradise, heretofore in unfaded bloom, is lost again, and closed forever, with the fiery swords gleaming at its gates" (204). Hilda is inconsolable, proclaiming, "Ah, now I understand how the sins of generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow! While there is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt. Your deed, [the glance] Miriam, has darkened the whole sky" (212). Hilda's moral trajectory is to know sin and remain hopeful of a human's desire to be good. In contrast, Miriam's life has taught her to accept the essential hopelessness of a world plagued by evil.

Hilda has lived in the tower (the dove cote) upon the hill—and Donatello's ancestral retreat is a tower among the Apennines. Their venture into civilization transforms their understanding of the world—they have both been delivered from innocence into knowledge. In an attempt to recover the past, Hilda retreats to her tower among the doves, high above the city of Rome, and Donatello to the ancestral home that "seemed evidently a stronghold of times long-past" (215). Like Cole's ever present mountain in *The Course of Empire*, Donatello's tower is "lofty enough to be a very prominent object in the landscape . . . the general hue of the tower soft and venerable" (214-15). Kenyon searches for Donatello after he has fled the city and remarks upon "Arcadian life, tasting rich figs, and squeezing the juice out of the sunniest grapes, and sleeping soundly, all night, after a day of simple pleasures" (218). Donatello responds, that may have been his former life but it is not his life now. They drink "Sunshine" wine together from the "Golden Age," but for Donatello it "became almost imperceptibly clouded" (225). Hawthorne develops this motif of the *Pastoral* or *Arcadian* life, through a vivid description of frescoes in the ancestral tower, remarkably similar to Cole's painting of *Arcadia*:

> The designs were of a festive and joyous character, representing Arcadian scenes, where Nymphs, Fauns, and Satyrs, disported themselves among mortal youths and maidens; and Pan, and the god of wine, and he of sunshine and music, disdained not to brighten some sylvan merry-making with the scarcely veiled glory of their presence. A wreath of dancing figures, an admirable variety of shape and motion, was festooned quite round the cornice of the room. (225)

Kenyon imagines the frescoes as they had been, in contrast to what they are in the present, merely "ghosts of dead and buried joys—the closer their resemblance to the happy past, the

gloomier now" (226). The cyclical theory of history, as well as Cole's paintings, may be discerned through Hawthorne's next lines which summarize each stage of the cycle:

> For it is thus, that, with only an inconsiderable change, the gladdest objects and existences become the saddest; Hope fading into Disappointment; Joy darkening into Grief, and festal splendor into funereal duskiness; and all evolving, as their moral, a grim identity between gay things and sorrowful ones. Only give them a little time, and they turn out to be just alike! (226).

In philosophical reflection, Hawthorne's narrator dresses the cyclical theory in yet another version, this time in dyadic juxtaposition; "gladdest" and "saddest"; "hope and disappointment"; "joy" and "grief"; "festal" and "funereal"; "gay" and "sorrowful." Hawthorne, begins the meditation with "for it is thus," invoking the next clause of the Lord's Prayer, "and ever shall be, world without end," locating the sad disposition of human existence with an authoritative and commanding presence.

Both Cole and Hawthorne use an artistic narrative sequencing to allegorize civilization's advance from joyful innocence to sorrowful decline. As he does with characterization of Donatello, Hawthorne also situates the pastoral stage of history through description of Donatello's ancestral lineage, the Counts of Monte Beni, who reside in a place where "a romancer might have strayed into a region of old poetry, where the rich soil, so long uncultivated and untrodden, had lapsed into nearly its primeval state of wilderness" (231). Hawthorne traces their lineage all the way back to "the sylvan life . . . while Italy was yet guiltless of Rome," rendering the entire series of paintings through juxtaposed historic linearity as well as geographic compass: the past and the present, the country and the city, the old and the new, the innocent and the fallen.

Donatello, kin of those who "dwelt in Arcadia . . . enriched the world with dreams . . . of a Golden Age." This tribe of men "capable of savage fierceness" was, nevertheless, in "harmony with Nature" (233-34). The tribe, however, "lost many of its original qualities" through "constant wars with which Italy was plagued, by the dissensions of her petty states" (234). Rome, a "wicked and miserable city," reflects a world that has "grown too evil, or else too wise and sad" (238). In a microcosm of the narrative, Kenyon reflects upon how humans "getting so far beyond the childhood of their race, that they scorn to be happy any longer." History is a regressive continuum, one that "makes us all parts of a complicated scheme of progress, which can only result in our arrival at a colder and drearier region that we were born in" (239). Like Cole's paintings, Hawthorne's narrative continually cycles back to this idea of progression and regression within a continuum. As in most rhetorical arguments, an author propounds an idea and then uses many different means of persuasion to prove the argument. In this regard, *The Marble Faun* is less a Romance and more a rhetorical argument framed within a Romance, as is Cole's series of pictures.

Hawthorne's preoccupation with the regressive course of mankind parallels the cycles found in Cole's paintings. Like Cole, Hawthorne finds that "a cloud seemed to hang over these once Arcadian precincts" (241). In an almost time-lapse sequencing of Cole's pictures, Hawthorne creates a *visual tableau* through the eyes of Kenyon, the American sculptor, as he views the Italian countryside from the summit of Donatello's tower. In a picturesque rendering, the Umbrian valley is "set in its grand frame-work of nearer and more distant hills. It seemed as if all Italy lay under his eyes, in that one picture." Reproducing Cole's sequenced paintings, the narrator depicts the scene as a "spacious map," with "three varieties of weather that were visible

on its surface, all at the same instant of time" (257). Like the paintings, a narrative dimension is introduced as juxtaposed scenes are connected, as if chapters in a longer story.

The metaphorically rich triptych moves from "the quiet sunshine" to "great black patches of ominous shadow from the clouds" and then the personification of "a giant of league-long strides, came hurrying the thunder-storm, which had already swept midway across the plain" (257). Narrative and visual are conjoined in an aerial view that is "a page of heaven and a page of earth wide open before us." Hawthorne, extending the metaphor, invites the reader to "read it and you will find it interpreting itself without the aid of words. It is a great mistake to try to put our best thoughts into human language. When we ascend into the higher regions of emotion and spiritual enjoyment, they are only expressible by such grand hieroglyphics as these around us" (258). Hawthorne, defining the experience of the sublime through both his written and visual description, is also telling us that the deepest meaning may only be derived through the *visual tableaux*—indeed, he has substituted the visual to articulate what words cannot say. To derive a proximate meaning within *The Marble Faun*, the *visual tableaux* must be identified and analyzed for their narrative capacity. For example, the following *visual tableau* is found in Hawthorne's chapter, "On the Battlements." In this chapter, Kenyon is tempted to throw himself over the cliff. Perhaps as an allusion to Casper David Friedrich's painting, *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog*, an icon of German Romanticism, Hawthorne also includes a melancholy tune, sung in German. Steeped in Romantic elements of the sublime, the character's actions, their philosophical discussion, as well as the visual description parallel form and content of Romantic Hudson River paintings:

> Above the whole valley, indeed, the sky was heavy with tumbling vapours, interspersed with which were tracts of blue, vividly brightened by the sun; but in

> the east, where the tempest was yet trailing its ragged skirts, lay a dusky region of cloud and sullen mist, in which some of the hills appeared of a dark purple hue. Others became so indistinct, that the spectator could not tell rocky height from impalpable cloud. Far into this misty cloud-region, however—within the domain of Chaos, as it were—hill-tops were seen brightening in the sunshine; they looked like fragments of the world, broken adrift and based on nothingness, or like portions of a sphere destined to exist, but not yet finally compacted. (264-65)

Although it is characteristic of fiction writers to use descriptive imagery in their writing, Hawthorne's description not only evokes a visual image, but recreates one through synthesizing a familiar visual text into the written text. The appearance of the visual text will activate associative meaning in the reader, perhaps subconsciously. It is important to recognize how the visual text may confer meaning, particularly as it "blends" with the written text. Sometimes these visual texts circulate as submerged narratives, transmitting meaning that may belie the more obvious meaning.

A reading that foregrounds Cole's paintings and the cyclical theory of history, allows for an alternative, secularized reading of the novel rather than the more commonly employed analytical lens of the biblical. Both elements are present, but a secular reading has often been subsumed by the biblical reading, obscuring, I believe, the ways in which Hawthorne was working through his ideas about the future of the United States. Perhaps there is no fixed meaning for Hawthorne, but rather the acknowledgment of at least possible trajectories—the catastrophic and inevitable desolation found in the cyclical theory, the trope of the inevitable Fall, and the possibility of arresting the cycle. Woven into what Hawthorne calls his "tapestry" in the novel, are glimpses of America, like this scene he produces as Kenyon and Donatello gaze at

"the fair spectacle of an Italian sunset." Hawthorne compares what Kenyon sees to the sunset in America, saying, "The sky was soft and bright, but not so gorgeous as Kenyon had seen it, a thousand times, in America, for there the western sky is wont to be set a-flame with breadths and depths of colour, with which poets seek in vain to dye their verses, and which painters never dare to copy" (266). Kenyon later contrasts the fruit of Italy, "peaches, of goodly size and tempting aspect, though cold and watery to the palate, compared with the sculptor's rich reminiscences of that fruit in America" (274). The patina of Italy cannot rival the vivid richness bred in the abundant fruits of America.

He continues with the comparison as Kenyon watches the process of wine-making, a scene that:

> Reminded the sculptor of our New England vintages, where the big piles of golden and rosy apples lie under the orchard-trees, in the mild, autumnal sunshine; and the creaking cider-mill, set in motion by a circumgyratory horse, is all a-gush with the luscious juice. To speak frankly, the cider-making is the more picturesque sight of the two, and the new, sweet cider an infinitely better drink than the ordinary, unripe Tuscan wine. (275)

For Kenyon, the scenes found in Italy are an allusive contrast with America. As an American in Italy, Kenyon's visual memory of America impairs his reception of Italian scenery, like Hawthorne's regretful desire to have an unadulterated view of the *Beatrice Cenci* so he might create the meaning of the painting for himself. They remind him of America and America remains a Paradise with a future, whereas, Italy's glory has passed.

Within the cyclical theory of history, the rich ripeness of America places the nation at the stage of *Consummation*, which will need to be held back or it will become, like Italian wine,

which "still growing thinner and sharper, loses the little life it had" (275). Ultimately, Kenyon perceives Monte Beni as "ancient Eden," a site where one may "behold its loveliness through the transparency of that gloom which has been brooding over those haunts of innocence, ever since the fall" (276). Kenyon believes he must remove Donatello from the stasis of the Italian countryside, attempting a vivifying rescue through a change of scenery. Kenyon's plan is to "re-create the world by the new eyes with which he will regard it. He will escape, I hope, out of a morbid life, and find his way into a healthy one" (284). Fate, however, has an inexorable pull. Kenyon contemplates the "idea of fatality . . . whatever appears most vagrant, and utterly purposeless, turns out in the end, to have been impelled the most surely on a pre-ordained and unswerving track" (289). If fate is inevitable, then the course of humanity, and the future of America, is hopelessly headed for *Destruction*.

A parallel between the cyclical stages of *The Course of Empire* also may be traced through the transformation of Donatello after he has committed the murder. Progression and regression parallel the cyclical stages of history, for both nations as well as for individuals, a nation the congregate of many individual histories. Counteracting the picturesque "remote, dreamlike, Arcadian charm," Hawthorne uses an extended metaphor of a twisted vine, one whose "knotted, serpentine growth imprisoned within its strong embrace the friend, that had supported its tender infancy" to convey a moral with "one grave purpose" (291). Symbolically rich, this may allude to the symbiotic relationship between American and European culture. If the United States is to survive, it must root itself in a cultural independence from the snake-like, twisted embrace of Europe. The grave purpose of the twisted vine, converting "the sturdier tree entirely to its own selfish ends, extending its innumerable arms on every bough, and permitting hardly a leaf to sprout except its own," reminds Kenyon of "the enemies of the vine, in his native land"

(292). Survival depends upon the vine's ability to exist independently of its source. He fears the "remorseless grip, which the habit of vinous enjoyment lays upon its victim, possessing him wholly, and letting him live no life but such as it bestows" (292). This fatalistic perception segues into the picture of *Desolation* as "grape-vines and running flower-shrubs are encouraged to clamber and sport over the roughnesses of its decay" (293). Failure to establish independence will lead to inevitable decay.

As Kenyon and Donatello meander through the scenes of Italian countryside, the view of a small, ancient town encapsulates the cyclical theory. The "golden sunshine of the afternoon" becomes a "warlike precinct" in its old days and then "overgrown with rural peace" (293). Hawthorne again reveals a primary discourse in the novel, that of the real and the ideal, when he considers how the "touch of ideal beauty to the scene . . . like the substance of a dream" contrasts with "abundant tokens that the country was not really the paradise it looked to be" (295). Comparing the picturesque, "time-stained" qualities of the old houses of the Italian countryside to the "newly painted pine-boxes" found in America, he recognizes the inherent danger located in scenes of antiquity. This recognition is revealed through the eyes of artists, for when a people's life "becomes fascinating either in the poet's imagination or the painter's eye" then "there is reason to suspect that a people are waning to decay and ruin" (296). Juxtaposed scenes of Italy and America frame allegorical pairings of Arcadian paradise and desolate ruin.

Contemplating Italian scenery, the narrator reflects upon the inexorable pull of history, saying, "We may build almost immortal habitations, it is true; but we cannot keep them from growing old, musty, unwholesome, dreary, full of death-scents, ghosts, and murder-stains." Kenyon provides Donatello with an alternative view, telling him, "You should go with me to my native country. In that fortunate land, each generation has only its own sins and sorrows to bear"

(302). Through this contrast, we see the possibility of more than one page of history—perhaps there may be two. Hawthorne presents both pictures—but one does not mitigate the other—instead they stand juxtaposed, as if a choice must be made between them. As they consider the pictured windows of a cathedral, they engage in a lively debate about a saint that Donatello perceives as glowing with "divine wrath." Kenyon exclaims, "My dear friend, how strangely your eyes have transmuted the expression of the figure! It is divine Love, not wrath!" to which Donatello replies, "To my eyes . . . each must interpret for himself" (306). These juxtaposed pictures compose a rhetorical argument, offering two different sides, without taking a side. Both arguments offer evidence for either the catastrophic or perhaps for a more hopeful outcome.

During Hawthorne's stay in Italy, a variety of compositional elements were suggestive of his home country. Paradoxically, Italian scenery, historical ruins, and gallery artwork provided elements of composition from which Hawthorne could explore and consider the future of America. Cole, inspired by his stay in Italy in 1831-32, also used his visual and intellectual experience of Rome to compose *The Course of Empire*. Problematic for both Cole and Hawthorne, the denouement and trajectory of a new-found Eden is loss. A new paradigm would need to be discovered, created, and named. Cole's *Course of Empire* and the cyclical theory reinforce the inevitable fall; therefore, the Biblical trope is used in tandem with the secular cyclical theory of history, increasing the persuasive effect and influence of the argument upon both a religious and a secular audience. *The Marble Faun* and *The Course of Empire* mediate between sublime, catastrophic Dark Romanticism and picturesque, optimistic American Romanticism by introducing the rationalism of the cyclical theory of history. Therefore, the malleable ambiguity of these works, a result of the competing strains of emotional and rational, sublime and picturesque, allowed either a secular or religious audience to appropriate the

ideology for its own purposes. Hawthorne contrasts "divine love" with "wrath," and "good wishes" with "anathemas" that are "bitter," (306, 308). Creating a subtle foreboding undercurrent in the novel through contrasting diction, Hawthorne transmits tension of the paradoxical and sublime state. Within joy there is despair, heaven has its hell, and what is found will be lost.

Consummation and Destruction in *The Marble Faun*

As fragmentary, *mise-en-scene*, or entire *visual tableaux* of Cole's paintings, *Destruction* and *Desolation*, are woven throughout the novel. The first two scenes of Cole's cyclical theory, the *Savage State* and the *Pastoral State*, are readily located in the rural Italian countryside and through the character of Donatello. The third cycle of Cole's narrative, *Consummation,* is depicted in Perugia, a "lofty hill-top" and "scene of verdure and fertility amid which this ancient civilization stands" (309). In their wanderings throughout the countryside, Donatello and Kenyon traverse from one scene, the *Pastoral*, into the next, *Consummation*. The transition is marked by the temporal: "It lacks still two hours of noon," that is, the late morning of the scene and about to embark upon high noon. Cole's paintings also signify long passages of time through the lighting in each painting, the color of the sky, and the rising and setting of the sun; the *Savage* state is early morning; *Pastoral*, mid-morning; *Consummation*, midday; *Destruction*, late afternoon; and *Desolation*, evening. The day in a life of a human or a civilization begins in morning and ends with the setting of the sun. Typically, America was considered in the morning of its youth and Europe in the evening of old age. In late morning, it is a "sunny wilderness" that is "as green as England, and bright as Italy alone." Hawthorne crafts picturesque *visual tableaux* for late morning: "There was the wide valley, sweeping down and spreading away, on all sides, from the weed-grown ramparts, and bounded afar by mountains, which lay asleep in the sun, with thin mists and silvery clouds floating about their heads by way of morning-dreams" (309). The scene

of market-day in Perugia is a picture of a landscape, a momentary idyll outside of time, as if time itself had stopped.

Donatello and Kenyon move from this pastoral scene, as if entering a portal: "They stood under the arch of the gateway, waiting for their passports to be examined." One can imagine them stepping outside of the frame of the Pastoral scene into the frame of the next painting, *Consummation*. In Cole's narrative series, *Consummation* is the "high noon" and apex of mankind's achievements. Human actors are in the consummate state of life and history. The passage from one state to the next is marked through a hall of entry. Kenyon asks Donatello, "Will you come with me to see some admirable frescoes by Perugino? There is a hall in the Exchange, of no great magnitude, but covered with what must have been (at the time it was painted) such magnificence and beauty as the world had not elsewhere to show" (309). In the market-place of Perugino there are "baskets of grapes, figs, and pears," and "multitudinous voices of the people, bargaining, quarrelling, laughing, and babbling copiously" (311). Kenyon and Donatello find it "delightful to catch glimpses of the grand old architecture that stood around the square," which they perceive as "the life of the flitting moment, existing in the antique shell of an age gone by" (312). It is a type of mythical "Brigadoon," a town that comes to life for one day and then is gone. As in Hawthorne's short story, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," the setting of a festive community event provides a dramatic contrast wherein "jollity and gloom were contending for an empire" (35). In this event, yet again the doomed betrothed provide the figures of Adam and Eve. The chapter ends with the tolling of the bell "as if warning one and all to take advantage of the bronze Pontiff's benediction (or of Heaven's blessing, however proffered), before the opportunity were lost." Kenyon exclaims, "High noon! It is Miriam's hour" (315). Both narrative tropes, cyclical theory and the Fortunate Fall, characterize the scene

of the marketplace. The scene of benediction is reminiscent of Cole's illustration for *The Last of the Mohicans,* "Cora kneeling at the feet of Tamenund."

The setting, what readily conveys a *visual tableau* of *Consummation*, provides a frame (and framework) for the reunion and reconciliation of Miriam and Donatello. Miriam "seemed tremulous, and hardly able to go through with a scene which, at a distance, she had found courage to undertake" (317). Meeting beneath the Pontiff's statue, the narrative power of setting is duly noted, "It is not improbable that Miriam had planned this momentous interview, on so public a spot and at high noon, with an eye to the sort of protection that would be thrown over it by a multitude of witnesses" (318). Married in sin through the model's murder, Miriam and Donatello had wandered in the moral wilderness. They are reunited within the framework of *Consummation*, beneath the benediction of a bronze pontiff. Within the cyclical theory, *Consummation* is the apex of rising civilization.

Framed within that canvas is a smaller drama—that of Miriam and Donatello, two sinners, like Adam and Eve, who have fallen from Eden. Miriam and Donatello may recover what they have lost and re-enter the communal joy of the marketplace through forgiveness and atonement. Consummated spiritually with Donatello beneath the Pontiff's benediction, Miriam understands that although "the sense of their mutual crime had stunned, but not destroyed the vitality of his [Donatello] affection; it was therefore indestructible." Like Adam and Eve, they are joined together in the communion of a crime, "jointly stained," and "groping for each other in the darkness of guilt and sorrow" (320-21). Kenyon explains to Miriam and Donatello that a "terrible misfortune has begun to educate" and the Faun's transformation was "begun for you by her." In this regard, Donatello has not only been resurrected from his sin, but also initiated into a

mature knowledge of the world. His sin, paradoxically, has elevated him. Such a perspective provides hope of redemption, for individuals or for empires that may have sinned as well.

Kenyon, the artist, acts as priest in a ceremonial consummation, uniting Miriam and Donatello with a secularized version of the matrimonial vows: "the bond betwixt you, therefore, is a true one, and never—except by Heaven's own act—should be rent asunder" (321), also revealing the duality of both secular and religious narrative tropes circulating within the discourse. Kenyon cautions them to:

> Take heed; for you love one another, and yet your bond is twined with such black threads, that you must never look upon it as identical with the ties that unite other loving souls. It is for mutual support; it is for one another's final good; it is for effort, for sacrifice, but not for early happiness! If such be your motive, believe me, friends, it were better to relinquish each other's hands, at this sad moment. There would be no holy sanction on your wedded life. (322)

The artist's visual and linguistic narrative power transfigures Miriam and Donatello from a religious Adam and Eve to a secularized, paradigmatic Adam and Eve. The artist, as secular high priest, initiates consummation between the new "Adam and Eve." Yet, "all three imagined that they beheld the bronze Pontiff, endowed with spiritual life. A blessing descended upon them from his outstretched hand; he approved, by look and gesture, the pledge of a deep union that had passed under his auspices" (324).

Transcending biblical allusion, this secular wedding, similar in theme to Hester Prynne's spiritual communion with Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*, occurs outside of organized religion. However, the catalytic effect of nature and civilization inverts in *The Marble Faun*. Whereas, the forest sanctifies Hester and Arthur's union and the market-place is the setting for

pilloried judgment, for Miriam and Donatello, the town square, where the community comes together, is the setting for reconciliation, redemption, and reunion. A benevolent "Father," the bronze Pontiff offers them a benediction amidst the bustle of the market-place. But this Father is a statue—a work of art—wrought through the hands of a sculptor. Miriam and Donatello are brought together by an American sculptor, Kenyon, beneath a European statue, that of the bronze Pontiff in the market-place of Perugia, Italy. Ordained through both art and religion, the spiritual marriage of Miriam and Donatello reconciles competing secular and religious discourses, and reveals Hawthorne's attempt to negotiate a middle path between them.

Through Hawthorne's paradoxical hybrid of secularized religion in *The Marble Faun*, lost paradise may be regained, and the course of history held at bay. In sharp contrast, Hilda's knowledge of the murder alienates and isolates her. Plagued with despair, she is "bruised and bewildered," a "shadow in the sunshine" (329). Like the portrait of *Beatrice Cenci*, there is a "stain which eats into her life" (331). The corruption of idyllic Rome has infected her. She is urged to "go back to her own country," for in Rome, "The air has been breathed too often, in so many thousand years, and is not wholesome for a little foreign flower like you, my child, a delicate wood-anemone from the western forest-land! (333-34). An old German artist, a representation of German Romanticism, perhaps, warns Hilda that the Old Masters are perilous, portending he will find "my little American artist that sees into the very heart of the grand pictures" as a "heap of white ashes on the marble floor" (334). In this sense, consummation inevitably leads to destruction or desolation.

Hilda suspects that "some, at least, of her venerated painters, had left an inevitable hollowness in their works, because, in the most renowned of them, they essayed to express to the world what they had not in their own souls," discovering "a deficiency of earnestness and

absolute truth . . . after the art had become consummate" (338). Hilda's sympathy "went deeply into a picture . . . her perceptive faculty penetrated the canvas like a steel probe, and found but a crust of paint over an emptiness," questioning the ability of art "to consecrate" (341). Her only relief is found in contemplation of American landscape: "Her pictorial imagination brought up vivid scenes of her native village, with its great, old elm-trees, and the neat, comfortable houses, scattered along the wide grassy margin of its street, and the white meeting-house, and her mother's very door, and the stream of gold-brown water, which her taste for colour had kept flowing, all this while, through her remembrance." Hilda's visual remembrance composes an idyllic America, in contrast to "dreary streets, palaces, churches, and imperial sepulchers of hot and dusty Rome, with the muddy Tiber eddying through the midst, instead of the gold-brown rivulet." Hilda yearns for "that native homeliness, those familiar sights, those faces which she had known always" (342). America, if not quite an Arcadian pastoral, is nevertheless situated far from the Rome of desolate destruction. Hilda's "inheritance" is that of "New England Puritanism," precluding her ability to compose a redemptive, mediated moral stance toward Miriam and Donatello. Her sympathy is reserved for pictures, not people.

Drawn inexorably to the cathedral, Hilda finds "a mosaic copy of Guido's beautiful Archangel treading on the prostrate fiend," and discovers the moral of the picture "appealed as much to Puritans as Catholics" (352). A type of religious consummation occurs as Hilda, a Protestant Puritan, surprisingly finds succor in Catholic confession. As Miriam and Donatello receive their benediction from the Pontiff's statue, Hilda is blessed through her confessor, proclaiming, "I am a daughter of the Puritans" (362). Through confession, Hilda experiences rebirth, "as if she were just now created" (370). Hilda's faith, restored to the hopeful and idyllic picture of humanity through confession and absolution, mitigates her horror of the Fall.

It is notable how both priests and artists function in *The Marble Faun* as pictorial practitioners in the creation of scenes that parallel human emotion. Characteristically, Romantic art and literature are the representation of human emotion and the surfeit of imagination. The stages of *The Course of Empire*, as well as the perceptions of the characters in the novel, may be charted through their emotions. Hilda's emotional and spiritual rebirth, from despair to hope, occurs through not only confession but also reclamation of her Puritan heritage through remembrance of American scenery. Emotional representation is transmitted through layered visual metaphor and *tableaux*. The re-created scenes trigger subtle and complex emotional responses that may not be apparent through a literal reading of the written narrative.

The benediction, a blessing that brings hope and happiness, is a visual representation conferred through symbolic act. Both priests, the Pontiff and the confessor, enact linguistic and emotional transference through the symbol of benediction upon Miriam and Hilda. Through visual symbolism, Hawthorne weaves threads of both hope and despair throughout the narrative tapestry of *The Marble Faun*. The scene of original sin and reconciliation of good and evil pervade the narrative, often framed through rhetorical argument. An inherent defect of human nature is the secularization of original sin. The visual origin of either construction is found within the temptation scene of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In an attempt to mitigate Hilda's rejection of Miriam and Donatello, Kenyon explains, "What a mixture of good there may be in things evil; and how the greatest criminal, if you look at his conduct from his own point of view, or from any side-point, may seem not so unquestionably guilty, after all. So with Miriam; so with Donatello" (383-84). Hilda, representative of Puritan America, is without mercy. She recovers her belief in the uncorrupted ideal but still finds their behavior reprehensible. She proclaims that "two mortal foes—as Right and Wrong surely are" cannot possibly "work together in the same

deed . . . then the good is turned to poison, not the evil to wholesomeness" (384). As a representation of the ideal, Hilda lives in isolated peace in a tower among the doves; Kenyon, a realist, although yet uncorrupted, nevertheless understands and lives among the fallen.

The creative tension between them frames the rhetorical argument at the heart of the novel and the cyclical theory of history as interpreted by Cole in *The Course of Empire*. Is there redemption in human error? Or are the consequences of human error irredeemable? To answer this question, Hawthorne provides the reader with two Adam and Eve partners—Miriam and Donatello, representatives of Old World Europeans, and Hilda and Kenyon, representative of New World Americans. The two couples provide a narrative contour of divergent pathways: Miriam and Donatello, *Paradise Lost*; Hilda and Kenyon; *Paradise Found*. Hilda's willful ignorance preserves her illusions and "Innocence continues to make a Paradise around itself, and keep it still unfallen" (387). The interplay of biblical and secular, recurrent images of Adam and Eve, both fallen and unfallen, and the possibility of uncorrupted innocence, reinforce Hawthorne's essential belief in an alternative course of empire, one in which a barricade of innocence may preserve Paradise. A fully nuanced argument, considering all aspects of this question, may be found in *The Marble Faun* through an interwoven tapestry of written narrative, historical and biblical allusion, and *visual tableaux*. The novel, a compendium of the multi-faceted rhetorical arguments circulating during the late antebellum period regarding the future of America, offers not an answer but a thorough sounding of the many voices articulating American identity, an identity situated within a temporal context of past, present, and future as well as a transatlantic geography of place.

We have seen how Hawthorne has represented the ideas also found in many visual and narrative elements of *The Course of Empire*, which itself is representative of the cyclical theory

of history. I have traced narrative and visual correspondences found in the novel with three of the five paintings in the series; each painting representing a stage in the cyclical theory of history or *Course of Empire*. In some cases, Hawthorne has used characters to convey the stages; for example, Donatello represents the *Savage* or *Arcadian* stage of civilization. Setting is also used as a referent—the Etruscan countryside represents the first two early stages and Rome, the last two stages of *Destruction* and *Desolation*. The narrative of both the series of paintings and the novel are structured around a traditional five-part dramatic arc of exposition (*Savage)*, rising action (*Arcadian*), climax (*Consummation*), falling action (*Destruction*), and denouement (*Desolation*). In the novel, the setting of Rome provides the scenes of desolation. In Rome, "a terrible weight is there imposed on human life, when any gloom within the heart corresponds to the spell of ruin, that has been thrown over the site of ancient empire." Kenyon "stumbled over the fallen columns, and among the tombs, and groped his way into the sepulchral darkness of the catacombs, and found no path emerging from them" (409). Hawthorne entwines the ruin of the city with the "ruin in your heart, or with a vacant site there, where once stood the airy fabric of happiness, now vanished—all the ponderous gloom of the Roman Past will pile itself upon that spot, and crush you down as with the heaped-up marble and granite, the earth-mounds, and multitudinous bricks, of its material decay" (409-10). The omniscient narrator's vivid description of the scene closely hews to Cole's scene of *Desolation* and also to the cyclical theory of history:

> But it is in vain that you seek this shrub of bitter-sweetness among the plants that root themselves on the roughnesses of massive walls, or trail downward from the capitals of pillars, or spring out of the green turf in the Palace of the Caesars. It does not grow in Rome; not even among the five hundred various weeks which deck the grassy arches of the Coliseum. You look through a vista of century

> beyond century—through much shadow, and a little sunshine—through barbarism and civilization, alternating with one another, like actors that have pre-arranged their parts—through a broad pathway of progressive generations, bordered by palaces and temples, and bestridden by old, triumphal arches, until, in the distance, you behold the obelisks with the unintelligible inscriptions, hinting at a Past infinitely more remote than history can define. (410)

Through surveying the past, Hawthorne conveys the futility of the future. The narrator intones, "But it is in vain," using the present tense to situate the lessons of the past within a contemporary setting. The detritus of the Roman Empire, the "Palace of the Caesars" and the "Coliseum," have been returned to Nature, they "spring out of the green turf." Yet, even hope, the "shrub of bitter-sweetness," in this passage is reductive, a half-measure of what it might have been. Time is panoramic, "a vista of century beyond century." In a progression of stages, Hawthorne courses through the cycles of history, concluding that even history cannot begin to fathom the past. So although Hawthorne composes with the cyclical theory, he also qualifies history's ability to foretell the future, resulting in rhetorical ambiguity.

A point/counterpoint follows as Kenyon considers, "but still you demand, none the less earnestly, a gleam of sunshine, instead of a speck of shadow, on the step or two that you bring you to your quiet rest" (410). Insisting upon the human need to believe in hope, Kenyon requires a brighter outcome than that found in the course of empire. Yet, he admits that reason argues otherwise, through "myriads of dead hopes that lie crushed into the soil of Rome." He thinks of the "guilty sites," "the dark tide of human evil" and the "contagious element, rising foglike from the ancient depravity of Rome" (412). Kenyon considers "the many hopes that had vanished" and wonders if "the one that still lingered, and looked so wretched—was it a Hope, or already a

Despair?" (414). A dialectic on the cyclical theory of history, Hawthorne attempts to reconcile the despair of the past with hope for the future, resulting in ambiguity rather than resolution.

Yet from the ruins, the ideal is resurrected as Kenyon discovers and then excavates a marble statue. Recovered art transports Kenyon's despair into hope—"the effect was magical." The statue "immediately lighted up and vivified the whole figure, endowing it with personality, soul, and intelligence. The beautiful Idea at once asserted its immortality, and converted that heap of forlorn fragments into a whole, as perfect to the mind, if not to the eye, as when the new marble gleamed with snowy lustre" and "forgotten beauty had come back" (423-4). It is the work of art to create hope and redeem despair. Even within the ruins of Rome, hope may be recovered.

The falling action in *The Marble Faun* takes place during Carnival in the chapters, "A Scene in the Corso" and "A Frolic of the Carnival," where the dramatic re-enactment of destruction takes place. Carnival-time "represented the mirth of ancient times, surviving, through all manner of calamity, ever since the days of the Roman Empire" (436). Although a relic of antiquity, the festival is "still new to the youthful and light-hearted, who make the worn-out world itself as fresh as Adam found it, on his first forenoon in Paradise" (437). What begins as the "sport of mankind" becomes a "battle," sugarplums and flowers are "ammunition" used by the revelers who are "combatants," the confetti a "hail-storm," and the air is like "smoke over a battle-field" (439). It is a nightmare scene of "Fantastic figures, with bulbous heads . . . a little, long-tailed, horned fiend . . . and "a biped, with an ass's snout" (445). It is amidst this grotesque revelry that Miriam and Donatello appear, dressed as Peasant and the Contadina.

This chapter provides apt description of the narrative progression that is not shown, but implied, in the paintings—the transitional movement from *Consummation* into *Destruction*. Hawthorne narrates a scene of grotesquerie and wanton behavior through "a play within a play."

It is also in these two Carnival chapters that Hawthorne is most overt in his use of *ut picture poesis*. Rather than have his characters experience violence, they witness the enactment of it. Kenyon, Donatello, and Miriam "were a linked circle of three, with many reminiscences and forebodings flashing through their hearts." Over them, the "uproar of the Carnival swept like a tempestuous sea" (448), the characters not actors in the picture but instead audience to the scene. The masked revelers are "harlequin, ape, bulbous-headed monster, or anything that was absurdist" (449). The circle is complete when Hilda appears after "a mysterious interval," but the tenor of the action changes. Rather than cycling into complete *Destruction* or *Desolation*, the appearance of Hilda elevates the scene. The narrator explains that Hilda had been "snatched away to a Land of Picture; that she had been straying with Claude in the golden light which he used to shed over his landscapes" (452). It is well-documented that Cole was considered by many to be the "American Claude"; in fact, when Cole was in Rome in 1832, he worked in a studio that was reportedly once occupied by Claude (Noble 104). According to Gollin and Idol, Hawthorne "recorded precise descriptions of scenes Claude Lorrain or Thomas Cole might have painted" (86). Although Hilda is with Claude in a Land of Picture, the images of Cole's American landscapes are carried within her. Cole, the American Claude, or perhaps the blended composite of the two, had the power to transport her.

Hawthorne, in a postscript published in the second edition of the novel, responds to requests from readers to clarify ambiguities in the first edition. The postscript begins with Hawthorne's declaration that he is reluctant to do so, arguing that "this Romance" requires "the kind of atmosphere essential to the effect at which he aimed" (463). Regarding Hilda's temporary disappearance, Hawthorne imagines a conversation between Kenyon and Hilda. Hilda confesses, "I was a prisoner in the Convent of the Sacre Coeur, in the Trinita de Monti,"

saying that she could have dwelt there forever had she not been "a daughter of the Puritans" (466). Although Hilda may have seen pictures while in the convent, the "Land of Picture" as a Romantic element of the novel allows the metaphorical interpretation of the place in which Hilda, "a daughter of the Puritans," would find refuge. It is only there, in the American landscape of her home, where the ideal would be preserved. Cloistered in the convent, Hilda would be hidden away from sin and sorrow while in Rome, but it is in America where innocence may be protected and Paradise preserved. A Land of Picture is home, not Rome.

Hilda, continues the narrator, "had been permitted, for a season, to converse with the great, departed Masters of the pencil, and behold the diviner works which they have painted in heavenly colours" (452). Hilda entered the ideal realm of the world of art and then "returned to the actual world," where, ironically, she is like an actor upon a stage with scenes as her backdrop, suggesting the ideal world of art more real than the actual world, which is staged. The story ends with Hilda stepping out of one picture into another. Hawthorne carefully constructs a dramatic balcony scene, one in which Hilda "seemed to become a portion of the scene" and "the scene exercised its influence over her quick and sensitive nature" (453). Blending from one genre into another, Hilda's transformation through art is a performative act, one designed to bring heaven back down to earth.

In the last chapter of the book, Hawthorne steps outside of the narrative in a direct address to the reader. Explaining the book as a metaphorical tapestry, he warns the "kindly Readers" to "accept it at its worth, without tearing the web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how its threads have been knit together" (455). Yet, he continues to catechize Kenyon and Miriam. The novel may best be read as a rhetorical exercise and exploratory disquisition of the course of empire and the nature of humanity. Throughout the novel,

Hawthorne presents multiple points of view—resisting a fixed interpretation, the point/counterpoint thoroughly considers all subtleties of the questions he explores. Because he presents multiple perspectives, through multiple modalities, this narrative approach ultimately argues for a qualified answer, if there is an answer at all. Perhaps that answer is found in the last chapter, where Hawthorne advises the reader to accept the mysteries. Gazing at Saint Peter's, Kenyon thinks it is "so heathenish, as it were; --so unlike all the snugness of our modern civilization! Look, too, at the pavement directly beneath the open space! So much rain has fallen there, in the last two thousand years, that it is green with small, fine moss, such as grows over tombstones in a damp English churchyard" (457). Hilda's idealistic rejoinder:

> I like better to look at the bright, blue sky, roofing the edifice where the builders left it open. It is very delightful, in a breezy day, to see the masses of white cloud float over the opening, and then the sunshine fall through it again, fitfully, as it does now. Would it be any wonder if we were to see angels hovering there, partly in and partly out, with genial, heavenly faces, not intercepting the light, but only transmuting it into beautiful colours? Look at that broad, golden beam—a sloping cataract of sunlight—which comes down from the aperture and rests upon the shrine, at the right hand of the entrance! (457)

Hilda, a symbol of moral superiority, dreams of an idyllic landscape, or America as Paradise in the national imaginary. Preferring to live in the "clouds," she rejects Kenyon's dark portrayal of civilization. They present two portraits in sublime opposition: the moral corruption of Rome and the purity of American Paradise. Kenyon considers the "genial nature" of Donatello and "had the rest of mankind been in accordance with it, would have made earth a Paradise to our poor friend"

(459). The conditional in this argument, that Donatello might have inhabited an uncorrupted world, is countered by the "rest of mankind," who are not like him. Kenyon reasons,

> It seems the moral of his story, that human beings, of Donatello's character, compounded especially for happiness, have no longer any business on earth, or elsewhere. Life has grown so sadly serious, that such men must change their nature, or else perish, like the antediluvian creatures that required, as the condition of their existence, a more summer-like atmosphere than ours. (459-60)

Yet, from this dismal recognition of human propensity toward error, Kenyon considers how sin has paradoxically elevated Donatello: sin, "like Sorrow" may be "merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained. Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier Paradise than his?" (460). In yet another reversal, Kenyon swiftly recalls his words in response to Hilda's shocked disbelief that Sin and Sorrow may have a useful and perhaps, good, purpose in the education of a human.

If the novel is an explication of this question, then Hawthorne offers the possibility of either resolution. The first edition of the novel ends with Hilda who "had a hopeful soul, and saw sunlight on the mountain-tops" (462), but it is Kenyon, not Hilda, who may provide the means to arrest the inexorable course of history. He forgives the unforgiveable, performing an act of mercy and grace. Will either hope or mercy be enough to stay the course of history and preserve American Paradise?

Conclusion

One can imagine that Miriam and Donatello, who remain in Rome, are condemned, but that repatriation to America may save Kenyon and Hilda from the fatalism of the cycle. The end of

The Marble Faun offers hope; and like Hawthorne's short story, "The New Adam and Eve," *The Marble Faun* may be considered a counter-argument to Cole's *The Course of Empire*. Surprisingly, at the end of *The Marble Faun*, when Hilda and Kenyon make their way back to America, Hawthorne offers the same fragile hope found in the first chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*; "It [the rosebush] may serve, let us hope, to symbolize some sweet moral blossom . . . or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow" (42). For Hawthorne, the unhappy ending belongs in Rome, not the unwritten story of America where Hilda and Kenyon, like the "New Adam and Eve," may recover an uncorrupted innocence not available to them in Europe.

The dramatic trope of corruption and destruction as enacted by Hawthorne and Cole, and other practitioners of the American "School of Catastrophe," was a means to probe the mystery of the fate of nations, and perhaps fashion a different ending through creative attempts to hold back the cycle. The trope, used as prophetic warning, trumpeted disaster in the hope that prophetic intervention might avert it. As the United States moved closer to war there is evidence that Hawthorne modified his dark and pessimistic perspective on the course of history. At a time when the country was moving perilously close to the fulfillment of this prophecy, Hawthorne's comments on the 1862 painting by Emanuel Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way,* (see fig. 5) yields an optimistic perspective on the American experiment, uncharacteristic of Hawthorne. Of the painting, Hawthorne writes, "The work will be emphatically original and American, embracing characteristics that neither art nor literature have yet dealt with . . . it looked full of energy, hope, progress, irrepressible movement onward . . . it was most cheering to feel its good augury at this dismal time, when our country might seem to have arrived at such a deadly standstill." Contrasting the sentiments found in Leutze's painting with those other men who "doubted and feared, or hoped treacherously, and whispered to one another that the nation

would exist only a little longer," Hawthorne marveled at Leutze's vision, so different from Cole's: "But the artist keeps right on, firm of heart and hand, drawing his outlines with an unwavering pencil, beautifying and idealizing our rude, material life, and thus manifesting that we have an indefeasible claim to a more enduring national existence" (qtd. in Gollin 200).

Fig. 5 *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, (Mural Study, U.S. Capitol), by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, (1861). Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The title of Leutze's painting is taken from Bishop Berkeley's poem "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," also thought to be one possible source of inspiration for the title of Cole's paintings. Using the cyclical theory to contrast Europe, who had already cycled through the first four stages of history, with "time's noblest offspring," (presumably the United States), Berkeley offered promise that there would be a new ending in the fifth stage. Alternatively, *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne's last major novel, is marked by Hawthorne's

inability to reconcile the trajectory of history as either hopeful or condemned. Millicent Bell argues,

> While many of the thinkers and poets of his time hailed the prospect of social and material progress achieved by the new partnership of men with Nature, Hawthorne appears to anticipate the view of later generations, which were to find that none of the old human evils of social or personal life had passed away with the increase of man's knowledge. In Hawthorne's portraits of intellectuals we see repeated demonstration of his warning that the isolated life and aim, the exaltation of the will, the monomaniac subordination of personal feelings to impersonal goals, can yield only evil. (28)

In an attempt to reconcile the real and the ideal, Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne provided a conceptual framework for an emergent national identity through the blended genres of visual literature and novelized art. Visual allusion grafted "Old World" European ideology onto "New World" American texts. The importance of the ideas recovered through blended-genre analysis in antebellum art and literature cannot be underestimated; these works were used to sanction the belief in Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism. Therefore, we must alter our perception of the role canonical art and literature performed during nation-building and the ambiguity transmitted through competing ideologies. Cole, Cooper, and Hawthorne were kinship practitioners in the sublime, pictorial, and Romantic literary and visual arts of the nineteenth century, engaged in "reframing" the narrative of a work yet unfinished—the trajectory of the American ship of state.

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APPENDIX A

THE COURSE OF EMPIRE (with Exhibition Notes by Thomas Cole)

Images from the Collection of the New-York Historical Society

Fig. 6. *The Savage State.*

No. 1, which may be called the "Savage State," or "the Commencement of Empire," represents a wild scene of rocks, mountains, woods, and a bay of the sea. The sun is rising from the sea, and the stormy clouds of night are dissipating before his rays. On the farthest site of the bay rises a precipitous hill, crowned with a singular rock, which to the mariner, would ever be a striking land-mark. As the same locality is represented in each picture of the series, this rock identifies it, although the observer's situation varies in the several pictures. The chase being the most characteristic occupation of savage life, in the foreground we see a man attired in skins, in pursuit of a deer, which stricken by his arrow, is bounding down a water-course. On the rocks in the middle ground, are to be seen other savages with dogs, also in pursuit of deer. On the water below may be seen several canoes, and on the promontory beyond are several huts, and a number of figures dancing around a fire. In this picture we have the first rudiments of society. Men are banded together for mutual aid in the chase, &c. The useful arts have commenced in the

construction of canoes, huts, and weapons. Two of the fine arts, Music and Poetry, have their germs, as we may suppose, in the singing which usually accompanies the dance of savages. The Empire is asserted, although to a limited degree, over sea, land, and the animal kingdom. The season represented is Spring (Thomas Cole's prose description of the series, published in a pamphlet in 1836 and reprinted in both *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s. 2 [November 1836]: 513, and *The Knickerbocker* 8 [November 1836]:629).

Fig. 7. *The Arcardian or Pastoral State.*

No. 2—The simple or Arcadian State, represents the scene after ages have passed. The gradual advancement of society has wrought a change on its aspect. The "untracked and rude" has been tamed and softened. Shepherds are tending their flocks, he ploughman with his oxen is upturning the soil, and commerce begins to stretch her wings. A village is growing by the shore, and on the summit of a hill a rude temple has been erected, from which the smoke of sacrifice is now ascending. In the foreground on the left is seated an old man, who by describing lines in the sand, seems to have made some geometrical discovery. On the right of the picture is a female with a distaff, about to cross a rude stone bridge. On the stone is a boy who appears to be making a drawing of a man with a sword and ascending the road a soldier is partly seen. Under the trees beyond the female figure may be seen a group of peasants, some are dancing while one plays on a pipe. In this picture we have Agriculture, Commerce, and Religion. In the old man, who describes the mathematical figure—in the rude attempt of the boy in drawing—in the female figure with the distaff—in the vessel on the stocks, and in the primitive temple on the hill, it is evident that the useful arts, the fine arts, and the sciences, have made considerable progress. The scene is supposed to be viewed a few hours after sunrise, and in the early summer (Thomas

Cole's prose description of the series, reprinted in *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s., 2 [November 1836]: 513, and *The Knickerbocker* 8 {November 1836}: 629).

Fig.8. *The Consummation of Empire.*

In the picture No. 3, we suppose other ages have passed, and the rude village has become a magnificent city. The part seen occupies both sides of the bay, which the observer has now crossed. It has been converted into a capacious harbor, at whose entrance towards the sea stand two phari. From the water on each hand piles of architecture ascend—temples, colonnades, and domes. It is a day of rejoicing. A triumphal procession moves over the bridge near the foreground. The conqueror, robed in purple, is mounted in a car drawn by an elephant, and surrounded by captives on foot, and a numerous train of guards, senators, &c.—pictures and golden treasures, are carried before him. He is about to pass beneath the triumphal arch, while girls strew flowers around. Gay festoons of drapery hang from the clustered columns. Golden trophies glitter above in the sun, and incense rises from silver censors. The harbor is alive with numerous vessels—war galleys and barks with silver sails. Before the Doric temple on the left the smoke of incense and of the altar rise, and a multitude of white robed priests stand around on the marble steps. The statue of Minerva with a Victory in her hand, stands above the building of the Caryatids on a columned pedestal, near which is a band with trumpets, cymbals, &c. On the right, near a bronze fountain, and in the shadow of lofty buildings, is an imperial personage,

viewing the procession, surrounded by her children, attendants, and guards. In this scene is depicted the summit of human glory. The architecture, the ornamental embellishments, &c., show that wealth, power, knowledge, and taste have worked together and accomplished the highest meed of human achievement and empire. As the triumphal fete would indicate, man has conquered man—nations have been subjugated. This scene is represented as near mid-day, in the early Autumn. (Thomas Cole's prose description of the series, reprinted in *American Monthly Magazine,* n.s., 2 [November 1836]: 514, and *The Knickerbocker* 8 {November 1836}: 629-30).

Fig. 9. *Destruction.*

No. 4.—The picture represents the Vicious State, or State of Destruction. Ages may have passed since the scene of glory—though the decline of nations is generally more rapid than their rise. Luxury has weakened and debased. A savage enemy has entered the city. A fierce tempest is raging. Walls and colonnades have been thrown down. Temples and palaces are burning. An arch of the bridge over which the triumphal procession was passing in the former scene, has been battered down, and the broken pillars, and ruins of war engines and the temporary bridge that has been thrown over, indicate that this has been a scene of fierce contention. Now there is a mingled multitude battling on the narrow bridge, whose insecurity makes the conflict doubly fearful. Horses and men are precipitated into the foaming waters beneath; war galleys are contending—one vessel is in flames, and another is sinking beneath the prow of a superior foe. In the most distant part of the harbor the contending vessels are dashed by the furious waves, and some are burning. Along the battlements among the ruined Caryatids, the contention is fierce; and the combatants fight amid the smoke and flame of prostrate edifices. In the foreground are several dead and dying; some bodies have fallen in the basin of a fountain, tinging the waters with their blood. A female is seen sitting in mute despair over the dead body of her son and a young

woman is escaping from the ruffian grasp of a soldier, by leaping over the battlement; another soldier drags a woman by the hair down the steps that form part of the pedestal of a mutilated colossal statue, whose shattered head is on the pavement below. A barbarous and destroying enemy conquers and sacks the city. Description of this picture is perhaps needless—carnage and destruction are its elements (Thomas Cole's prose description of the series, reprinted in *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s. 2 [November 1836}: 514, and *The Knickerbocker* 8 {November 1836}: 630).

Fig. 10. *Desolation.*

The fifth picture is the scene of Desolation. The sun has just set, the moon ascends the twilight sky over the ocean, near the place where the sun rose in the first picture. Daylight fades away and the shades of evening sea over the shattered and ivy-grown ruin of that once proud city. A lonely column sands near the foreground, on whose capitol [sic], which is illumined by the last rays of the departed sun, a heron has built her nest. The Doric temple and the triumphal bridge may still be recognized among the ruins. But, though man and his works have perished, the steep promontory with its insulated rock, still rears against the sky unmoved, unchanged. Violence and time have crumbled the works of man, and art is again resolving into elemental nature. The gorgeous pageant has passed—the roar of battle has ceased—the multitude has sunk in the dust—the empire is extinct (Thomas Cole's prose description of the series, reprinted in *American Monthly Magazine*, n.s., 2 {November 1836}: 514, and *The Knickerbocker* 8 {November 1836}: 630).

APPENDIX B

Permission Granted to Use Images

***The Course of Empire* Paintings: New-York Historical Society**
On Tue, 28 Jun 2016 14:06:00 -0400
"NYHS Rights & Repro" <rightsandrepro@nyhistory.org> wrote:

Hello Ellen,

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Very best wishes,
Rob

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On Tue, Jun 28, 2016 at 1:59 PM, Ellen Ryan <e.ryan@iup.edu> wrote:

I am writing to request permission to use visual images of Thomas Cole's paintings, *The Course of Empire*, in my dissertation. I have defended my dissertation and will upload to ProQuest by July 15, 2016. May I use the images in the appendix of my dissertation?

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Best regards,

Ellen Hallstrom Ryan
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA

***Landscape Scene from 'The Last of the Mohicans'*: Fenimore Art Museum**

Re: Permission

From: Christina Milliman <c.milliman@nysha.org>

Date: 06/30/16 08:19 AM

To: Ellen Ryan <e.ryan@iup.edu>

This message has attached files. Show

Dear Ellen,

Attached is an image of Last of the Mohicans that you can use for your dissertation.

Best Regards,

Christina Milliman | Curator of Photography

Fenimore Art Museum, The Farmers[1] Museum and NYSHA Research Library

P.O. Box 800 | Cooperstown, NY 13326 (mailing)

5798 State Highway 80 | Cooperstown, NY 13326 (shipping)

607 547-1442 | c.milliman@nysha.org |

On 6/29/16 12:10 PM, "Ellen Ryan" <e.ryan@iup.edu> wrote

Dear Christina,

Thank you for your prompt attention to my request! Attached is the form with the bottom completed and I have also sent you a signed copy.

Best,

Ellen Ryan

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***A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)* by Thomas Cole: National Gallery of Art, Washington**

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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***Westward the Course of Empire Makes Its Way* by Emanuel Leutze (1861): Smithsonian American Art Museum.**

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Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington

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