STATES OF INSURGENCY: DISMEMBERMENT AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE AMERICAN 1848

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ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

In this dissertation, I examine how the antipodal forces of insurgency and counterinsurgency are crucial to the articulation of citizenship and identity in antebellum American literature. I suggest that a coherent, self-contained American identity was maintained through acts of physical and discursive dismemberment that disciplined insurgent expressions of democracy and idealized in their stead an enervated, acquiescent body politic. My dissertation traces how a series of American writers confront the dynamic of insurgency and counterinsurgency in an effort to reconcile the nation's revolutionary origin with its colonialist practices. I introduce my argument through a reading of Melville's *Benito Cereno* before exploring in chapter one how the U.S. Constitution's three-fifths clause functions as a form of discursive dismemberment in accounts of the Nat Turner slave revolt, the writing and speeches of Frederick Douglass, and abolitionist writing by William Lloyd Garrison and Henry David Thoreau. In chapter two, I turn to Cherokee author John Rollin Ridge's novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* to examine how the how the term "outlaw" enables the fiction of the United States as an "insurgent empire" and accommodates the violence of colonial incorporation. In chapter three, I posit that in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, "rendering"—the dismembering and processing of whales—metaphorizes the suppression of a transnational body politic. Finally, in a brief conclusion, I read Melville's *Billy Budd* as offering an insurgent practice of reading that resists the dismembering logic of U.S. citizenship.

Keywords: literature; American literature; Nineteenth Century; insurgency; dismemberment; revolution; empire; citizenship; democracy; Herman Melville; John Rollin Ridge; Frederick Douglass; Henry David Thoreau; Nat Turner; William Lloyd Garrison; colonialism; race, *Moby-Dick*; *Benito Cereno*, *Billy Budd*; *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*; *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; "The Heroic Slave"; "Slavery in Massachusetts"; "The Confessions of Nat Turner."

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BB Melville, Herman. *Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative): The New and Definitive Text Edited from an Analysis and Independent Transcription of the Manuscript*. Ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1962. Print

BC Melville, Herman. *Benito Cereno*. *The Writings of Herman Melville*. 1855. Eds. Hayford, Harrison, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle. Vol. 9. Chicago: Northwestern UP, 1987. 46-117. Print.

JM Ridge, John Rollin. *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit*. 1854. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977. Print.

MB Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom*. 1855. Ed. Andrews, William L. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1987. Print.

MD Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick; or, the Whale. The Writings of Herman Melville*. 1851. Eds. Hayford, Harrison, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle. Vol. 6. 15 vols. New York: Northwestern UP, 1988. Print.

INTRODUCTION

Empire, Insurgency, and Citizenship in the American 1848

[B]y art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE, which is but an Artificiall Man.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right to dismember over overthrow it.

Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address

I want to begin with an act of insurgency: a deliberate *mis*reading of a canonical literary text. Herman Melville's novella *Benito Cereno* (1855) describes—or rather, does not describe—a slave revolt on board a Spanish ship, the *San Dominick*. The story begins with its protagonist, Amasa Delano, observing the *San Dominick* sailing into the sheltered harbour where he has anchored his own ship, the *Bachelor's Delight*, in order to gather water. Delano boards the *San Dominick* to exchange hospitalities with its captain, the titular Benito Cereno, but is beset by a vague sense of unease. A series of incidents strike the American captain with the notion that something is not quite right on board the *San Dominick*; however, his discomfort is assuaged by, among other things, the dutifulness of

Don Benito's personal servant, a slave named Babo. Naïve as he is, Delano cannot come to realize what has actually happened: the *San Dominick*'s "valuable freight" (48) of African slaves have revolted and seized control of the ship under Babo's command. While he occasionally suspects Don Benito of subterfuge and imposture, and even considers the possibility that he leads a gang of Malay pirates, the callow Delano never even conceives of the possibility that Babo, by all outward appearances a faithful servant, is the leader of a gang of insurgent slaves. Only when Babo finally makes an open attempt on Don Benito's life does Delano understand what has taken place: "Captain Delano, now with the scales dropped from his eyes, saw the negroes, not in misrule, not in tumult, not as if frantically concerned for Don Benito, but with mask torn away, flourishing hatchets and knives, in ferocious piratical revolt" (99).

Many critics who read *Benito Cereno* focus on Amasa Delano as the novella's "representative American." The narrative therefore becomes a psychological portrait of an American citizen trying desperately to ignore the national rupture that was developing in Melville's time around the issue of slavery. It traces Captain Delano's efforts to resolve the various epistemological crises that slavery presented to the American citizen in the antebellum period. During his visit to the *San Dominick*, Delano witnesses various violations of his sense of order, civility, and power, only to resolve them to himself via repeated invocations of a racialist logic that authorized, if not justified, the continuance of slavery in the antebellum United States. He takes comfort, for instance, in the racial hierarchy that he sees embodied by the close relationship between Babo and Don Benito, and finds solace in his belief that African slavery is copacetic with the "natural"

predilections of Africans toward subservience and unquestioning loyalty to their white masters. "[L]ike most men of a good, blithe heart," the narrator observes, Delano "took to negroes, not philanthropically, but genially, just as other men to Newfoundland dogs" (84). Though Delano claims to be opposed to slavery—he believes that it "breeds ugly passions in man"—his racialist perspective mollifies his moral discomfort and allows him to believe that slavery, while unseemly, is nevertheless consistent with "innate" racial hierarchies. The slaves' revolt thus constitutes a more significant violation in Delano's vision: as the "scales drop[] from his eyes," the ordered logic that allows this justification collapses in on itself. The uprising offers troubling proof that Africans, too, might crave their liberty and be willing to strike against whites in order to gain it.

Benito Cereno examines a U.S. national identity that is ruptured by the United States's involvement in slavery and colonialism. Amasa Delano's genial good nature and his Adamic innocence is corrupted by his knowledge of the slaves' revolution. The story thus traces the cognitive processes by which the American citizen reconciled the nation's providential mission—an insurgent program of expanding freedom and liberty—with the troubling material practices that inhered within such a project. Crucially, in *Benito Cereno* these discrepancies and contradictions are ultimately worked out through processes of dismemberment. *Benito Cereno* thus provides an important frame for this project. *States of Insurgency* is concerned, first and foremost, with how antebellum Americans reconciled the cognitive dissonances of what Timothy Powell calls the United States's "unique form of anticolonial imperialism" (*Ruthless Democracy* 152). As Powell explains, the United States justified colonial expansion by staging it as a bulwark against

a European imperial threat. Throughout the nineteenth century, American rhetoric imagined territorial expansion as establishing, in Thomas Jefferson's famous phrase, an "Empire of liberty" (237). For men like Jefferson, expansionism was, ironically enough, an *anti*colonial practice—what I call "insurgent imperialism," or a form of colonialism that imagined itself as a radical critique of empire. *Benito Cereno* describes the reformation of an American imperial "I" that is faced with the contradictions that inhere within the notion of an "insurgent empire." In part, this project will consider the material and discursive processes that enabled men like Amasa Delano to reconcile such a paradox.

But, far from assuming that Amasa Delano is the only representative American on board the *San Dominick*, I want to consider in this dissertation the implications of reading Babo, too, as representative of some "American" experience. Babo's Americanness is a far cry from Amasa Delano's naïve innocence, but as I will argue, is no less crucial to narratives of antebellum American identity. In a sense, Babo is a focalizing figure for this dissertation. In *Benito Cereno*, Babo's racialized body, punished past the point of death, and ultimately put on display in the Plaza in Lima, Peru, becomes a symbol through which Amasa Delano's fractured identity is reassembled. This process, supplemented by the inclusion of the documents produced by the Lima court that ostensibly "explain" the *San Dominick* revolt, describes how literal and figurative forms of dismemberment provided the means by which the self-contradiction of "insurgent imperialism" was resolved. Not only is Babo physically beheaded and exhibited in an example of what Foucault calls "excessive demonstration" (*Abnormal* 83), but his act of resistance is

severed from the historical record, reduced, as Dana D. Nelson argues, to an aberrance and the product of a lone, misguided intellect (*The Word in Black and White* 127). These various forms of dismemberment serve to obviate forms of insurgency that resist the teleological force of American empire and consign to historical ignominy discrepant ways of practicing democracy. In this dissertation, I take up Babo as a representative American in order to develop an alternative history of the nation. *States of Insurgency* considers American dissent as it is practiced outside of the monolithic history of the American Revolution and the Civil War, developing a constellation of historical irruptions that is inclusive of smaller-scale, but potentially even more radical, expressions of insurgency such as those staged by Babo and his fellow slaves.

In what follows, I read a series of literary and historical texts that animate the tensions between insurgency and counterinsurgency and explore the ways in which the process of "becoming" American demands the submission of individual and collective forms of insurgency to the dismembering force of national citizenship. My argument revolves around two antipodal terms, insurgency and counterinsurgency, and suggests that the dynamic relationship between these two forces is crucial to the production of U.S.-American identity. In short, I argue that a coherent, self-contained "American" identity was maintained through spectacular acts of dismemberment that disciplined active, antiauthoritarian, and discrepant expressions of democratic energy and idealized in their stead an enervated, acquiescent body politic. I interpret the term "dismemberment" broadly to include, in addition to physical resistance, acts of discursive and legal violence such as the U.S. Constitution's three-fifths clause and the

dissimulation of collective anticolonial violence on the U.S.-Mexican borderlands. I address, too, the industrial processing of animal corpses and the division of collective body politics that posed alternatives to state-sanctioned categories of belonging. These various forms of dismemberment contributed in varying ways to the stabilization of a body politic that was constrained to a limited range of political motion. This dissertation explores, then, how efforts to renovate staid concepts of "American" were disciplined and excised from concepts of American subjectivity and citizenship in the antebellum period.

States of Insurgency

In this dissertation, I employ the word "insurgency" to describe a phenomenon that is related to, but not synonymous with, other descriptors of popular uprising and dissent in the United States. Most analyses of such movements tend to revolve around two terms, "revolution" and "rebellion." In *The American Jeremiad*, Sacvan Bercovitch distinguishes between the two:

> [r]evolution in America was the vehicle of providence. It took the form of a mighty, spontaneous turning forward, both regenerative and organic, confirming the prophecies of Scripture as well as the laws of nature and history. And in all this it stood diametrically opposed to rebellion. The [American] Revolution fulfilled the divine will. Rebellion was a primal act of disobedience, as Lucifer's was, or Adam's. Rebels sought to negate, thwart, and destroy; the Revolutionaries were agents of

> the predetermined course of progress. (134)

As Bercovitch's typology suggests, American discourse distinguished between forms of radicalism that were considered consistent with a preconceived national telos and those that apparently ran counter to it. As Maggie Montesinos Sale explains, "revolution" was used to describe acts of dissent committed by individuals who otherwise conformed to received models of republican citizenship—individuals who were already free (*The Slumbering Volcano* 15). Revolution was meant to be deployed as a "necessary spur against the community's backsliding practices, a spur that ensured continual progress" whereas "rebellion" described "the insurgency of the unfit, the unruly, the untamed, against the better government of a civilized people" (8). In a sense, then, "revolution" is paradoxically a form of dissent that is in also a force of conservation. Rather than promoting change within the nation or community, revolution was intended to hold in check more radical expressions of political difference. As Sale argues, the trope of revolution

> did not and was not intended to authorize the revolt of, for example, enslaved Africans and their descendants living in the colonies. Nor did it sanction a wife's murder of an abusive husband. It had a specific meaning within the context of its utterance that was attached to the position of the subject speaking, a Euroamerican male colonist … [r]ejecting what he thought of as political slavery. (15)[1]

1. On the distinction between "political slavery" and "chattel slavery," see Slauter, *The State as a Work of Art*, 176ff.

Rebellion, on the other hand, denoted the resistance of subordinate populations to the authority of those colonists, a dissent that was perceived as being against their own better interests. I want to introduce to this discussion a third term, "insurgency." Ostensibly, insurgency might be understood as a form of rebellion. However, I want to emphasize some of the connotative aspects of the word that mark it as a separate force that exists prior to its recognition as either revolution or rebellion. What I call "insurgency," then, denotes a kind of potential energy that gives rise to political action that might subsequently be understood as revolution or rebellion. It thus denotes a certain liminality, a point prior to that action's recognition as either a legitimate (revolutionary) or illegitimate (rebellious) form of political dissent. The "states of insurgency" I describe, then, are points of contact and conflict between established regimes of power and forces that threaten to renovate such structures, as well as sites at which the nature of subsequent forms of constituent power is determined.

"Insurgent," the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains, might mean one of several things. The first meaning is adjectival, meaning "rising in active revolt." The second, also adjectival, describes "the sea or a flood," and means "[s]urging up or rushing in." Finally, as a noun, "insurgent" denotes "[o]ne who rises in revolt against constituted authority; a rebel who is not recognized as a belligerent." Each of these definitions bears an important relation to the texts that form the archive of this dissertation. As the first definition suggests, "insurgent" describes rising up in active rebellion—an act of defiance against constituted authority. Crucially, though, the third definition adds an additional qualification. If "insurgent" can be deployed as an adjective to describe a rebel, an

"insurgent" means, specifically, "a rebel who is not recognized as belligerent." This definition prompts a series of additional questions: what does it mean to be "belligerent" in this sense? And by whom is this belligerent not (or mis-) recognized? By following the trail to other pages in the dictionary, the distinctions between "insurgent," "rebel," and "revolutionary" become clearer. A "belligerent" is defined as "[a] nation, party, or person waging regular war (recognized by the law of nations)." Thus, we might re-define an insurgent as "[o]ne who rises in revolt against constituted authority; a rebel who is not recognized as" "a nation, party, or person waging regular war (recognized by the law of nations)." An insurgency, then, is an act of rebellion, but one that is not recognized as such by "the law of nations." It is a form of resistance that comes from outside the law and is considered illegitimate by constituted authority. Insurgency posits a kind of uprising that violates rigid structures of power, perhaps even making manifest other forms of political being and belonging that manifestations of state power—such as "the law of nations"—are loathe to recognize. Indeed, an "insurgency" challenges the transcendence of extant forms of political being by suggesting practices of political involvement that run outside the acceptable norms sanctioned by established authority. As Antonio Negri suggests, insurgency is a figure of potentiality, an expression of "constituent power," a form of *potenza* [strength] that refers to a "radically democratic force that resides in the desire of the multitude and is aimed at revolutionizing the status quo through social and political change" (337n3). "[C]onstituent power," writes Negri, is a "source of production of constitutional norms" and holds "the power to establish a new juridical arrangement, to regulate juridical relationships within a new community" (2).

The concept of "insurgency" is crucial to the constitution of U.S. American identity. The duty to resist authority and the right of the multitude to reconstitute the government is ingrained in the national unconscious, a legacy of the nation's myth of its own origin in an act of disobedience to European monarchism. This original insurgency, and its incorporation into the symbolic capital of national discourse, idealized a model of what I term "insurgent citizenship," a way of *being* American that was predicated on one's willingness to resist government actions that were identified as being inimical to the liberty of the people. As Sale points out, the Declaration of Independence organized masculine citizenship around one's willingness to rebel and, moreover, one's willingness to die in the cause of liberty (12-13). As George Washington put it in his General Orders on July 2, 1776, a self-possessing, would-be citizen has "no choice but a brave resistance, or the most abject submission; this is all we can expect—We have therefore to resolve to conquer or die" (211). Such a commandment was part of a bequest left by the Founding Fathers that took the form of vague ideals, iconic phrases, and monumental events (Castronovo, *Fathering* 7-8). This inheritance organized "Americanness" around what François Furstenburg refers to as a "twinned legacy: a call to freedom linked with an obligation to resist" (1302). Furstenburg explains that in American revolutionary discourse, freedom and political autonomy were rights that were not inherent to the political subject but instead had to be earned through active resistance.

Nevertheless, as Negri points out, constituent power "has to be limited temporally, defined, and deployed as an extraordinary power. The time of constituent power … has to be closed, treated, reduced in juridical categories, and restrained in the administrative

routine" (2). Insurgency, in other words, is inevitably confronted by its opposite, the delimiting, confining structure of what Negri calls *potere* [power] or constituted power. In this dissertation, I am paramountly concerned with examining this point of transition between constituent and constituted power. I argue that the state's ability to incorporate expressions of constituent power is not simply an act of closure or reduction but more precisely an act of dismemberment. As I suggest in chapter one, the United States as a nation is founded on an originary dismemberment that is rendered visible in the fissure between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As Trish Loughran points out, these two documents are often mistakenly conflated with one another, existing in the national imaginary as a simultaneous calling-into-being of the nation (167). However, a closer examination reveals that they in fact exist in fraught tension with one another. The former, borne of an idealization of "insurgent citizenship," enshrines the citizen's right to revolt against tyranny alongside a language of Lockean natural rights. The Declaration of Independence is, as Negri argues, "an act of constituent power" (151): forward-oriented, it declares the self-evident truth of fundamental human rights and the right of the people to "alter or abolish" a government that is inimical to the people's "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." However, in the intervening years between the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the Constitution, these invocations of "universal" liberty were tempered by myriad qualifications. Although, as Eric Slauter notes, many African Americans living in the colonies pointed to the second paragraph of the Declaration with hope (174), they soon found that the body politic formed by the Constitution had little place for them. Whereas the Declaration of Independence is an

expression of constituent power, the Constitution reorganizes the political will of the multitude by setting limits to legitimate expressions of insurgent power. The Constitution ostensibly instrumentalizes the abstract principles enshrined in the Declaration, but in fact channels constituent power into attenuated forms of "democracy" that cannot go so far in transforming the character of the nation. U.S. citizenship, thus distinguished from Americanness as an ideological category, is organized less around one's willingness to revolt so much as one's willingness to control that insurgent impulse.

As Nancy Ruttenburg points out, accounts of the rise of democracy in the United States have too easily conflated liberalism and democracy. Democracy, she argues, is a "dynamic symbol system or theater, historically realized in an untheorized and irrational practice of public utterance which gave rise, as popular voice, to a distinctive mode of political (and later, literary) subjectivity" (3). She uses the term "democratic personality" to describe both the political interventions through which this kind of democracy announced its presence and for the performative conditions of its emergence. "Democratic personality," she says, is distinct from liberal philosophy, appearing "in isolation from and well in advance of political liberalism" (3). Thus, she argues, "[i]ts early incarnations demonstrate little, if any, resemblance to the self-owning, rational, and rights-bearing republican citizen or liberal (Lockean) subject" (3). In its emergence in the late seventeenth century, democratic personality was a process of individuation quite separate from the concept of citizenship; it erupted "through the exercise of an authoritative, public voice unconnected to rational debate in a Habermasian public sphere" (3). Democratic personality as Ruttenburg describes it is, like Negri's constituent

power, uncontainable; yet, she points out that an authorial struggle to control democratic personality is crucial to the development of a national American literature that sought to simulate an aesthetic of innocent, pre-political knowledge. As Ruttenburg explains, "the cultural significance of democratic personality was expounded by those who observed, whether sympathetically or critically, the number of individuals emerging so unexpectedly from social invisibility to speak with power and authority in a newly constituted—and uncannily transient—public sphere" (4). Ruttenburg argues that liberal democracy is haunted by the voice of this inarticulate, uncontainable democracy. While the liberal subject and republican citizen are "densely characterized" by "a specificity of rights, values, motives, and actions endowing them with "an individuated, almost embodied … existence," a pre-liberal democracy has largely signified "an anonymous, collective subject (the mob, the mass, the 'people out of doors') without internal coherence" that is repressed and disciplined by accounts of citizenship that demonize such an alternative body politic as anarchic and dangerous (Ruttenburg 15)—what Melville describes in *The Encantadas* as "riotocracy," "a democracy neither Grecian, Roman, nor American.… which gloried in having no law but lawlessness" (149).

The suppression of variant forms of democracy is enacted through documents and social structures that mediate the relationship between "American" as a non-national *concept* of citizenship and a *legal* form of citizenship that is often termed "U.S.-American." The identity "U.S.-American" describes a form of officially sanctioned American citizenship as a particular, legally ordained, practice of "being" American that is often characterized by its lack of involvement in the public sphere and unwillingness to

engage in direct political action. As Nelson argues, the Constitution "encourage[s] citizens to look away from and even to fear democracy's enormous potential for changing their relation to the concept and the practice of nation," urging instead that citizens give over their participatory privileges to a monolithic structure that promises to manage democratic energies and desires ("ConsterNation" 560). The Constitution, she argues,

> promised to replace the messiness of political negotiation with a politically clarifying structure that would result in repeating and functional enactments of political unity. Constitutionalism offered scientifically and expertly to manage the local excesses of democracy; it tapped into unnecessarily rigid desires for unity, wholeness, sameness, and stability. In this, it cultivated citizenship around desires to make us scared of democracy. Constitutionalism's formula for political identity abjected not just identity difference in its construction of an implicitly white, male, property-holding 'universal' citizen, but also political disagreement and what Wollin terms our "birthright of politicalness." (569)

In the process of forming the American body politic and codifying what it meant legally to be an American citizen, the Constitution suspends the constituent power of insurgency, containing it in legal structures that delimit public involvement in the nation and idealize a way of "being" American that is characterized by homogeneity and constancy. Nelson argues that democracy has become narrowly defined as a particular form of American

republicanism that surrenders its possibilities to the national structure of "America." The conflict and debate upon which democracy thrives is instead identified as threatening to democracy itself—an expression of excess that endangers the nation rather than revitalizing it. Indeed, as Russ Castronovo argues, "[t]he U.S. democratic state loves its citizens as passive subjects, unresponsive to political issues, unmoved by social stimuli, and unaroused by enduring injustices" (*Necro Citizenship* 4). Castronovo describes such ways of being American as "necro citizenship." He notes that while republican citizenship idealizes a public sphere characterized by rigorous debate and virtuous civic action, in the U.S. system "a body politic animated by republicanism ran the risk of overexcitement and dangerous stimulation" (9). According to Castronovo, "necro citizenship" idealizes a body politic characterized not only by passivity but by homogeneity and historical amnesia. Attributes that violate the self-contained nature of "necro citizenship" must therefore be "trimmed away as so much excess" (6). According to Castronovo, discrepant forms of constituent power are subject to processes of dismemberment that enforce a prescriptively defined body politic that is amenable and tractable to extant forms of constituted power. In this dissertation, I want to explore and expand upon Castronovo's notion of "trimming away" through an examination of a particularly tumultuous historical moment.

Counterinsurgency and the American 1848

In this dissertation, I suggest that the tensions between constituent and constituted power, "the multitude" and "the people," and between insurgency and counterinsurgency

became especially pronounced in the period that Rogin has designated "the American 1848," a moment in which the constituted form of the American nation was subject to myriad internal and external tensions that threatened to rend the nation asunder.[2] Rogin's term contextualizes developments in American literature, history, and culture against a backdrop of European revolution in a way that usefully links together this dissertation's interest in insurgency, race, empire, and dismemberment. As Rogin argues,

> [w]hile bourgeois Europe faced social revolution, America fulfilled in the Mexican War the Manifest Destiny initiated on Indian soil. While European dreams of equal political rights foundered on the social question, American expansion, in Andrew Jackson's words, "extend[ed] the area for freedom" to the West. But the Wilmot Proviso, which would have prohibited slavery in the territories won from Mexico, foreshadowed the wreck of Manifest Destiny on the rock of slavery. (20)

The years following the U.S.-Mexican War forced the United States to confront the potential of its own dismemberment. The nation's expansion to the Pacific Coast, while long imagined an inevitability, became an immediate, volatile issue. Though colonial expansion had been intended, in part, to defer an increasingly inevitable Civil War, it in fact aggravated numerous fissures that were already dividing the nation (Hietala x-xi).

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2. As Shelley Streeby points out, 1848 cannot be considered as an origin point to U.S. imperialism. "Such a claim," she explains, "would ignore the longer history of U.S. empire-building that antedated 1848" (10). However, much as Streeby focuses on 1848 to illuminate both "the differences but also the many connections" between nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialisms, I want to take up 1848 almost as a case study that I hope will provide a framework from which instances of U.S. empire in other periods and locations might be analyzed.

The annexation of Mexican territory made previously hypothetical questions about the expansion of slavery to the western side of the continent a matter of utmost urgency. Moreover, the American 1848 forced Americans to examine the possibility of an imperial United States. The future of the nation was plotted along the myth of Jefferson's "empire for liberty." Arguing that seizing land in the north would form a bulwark "against the dangerous extension of the British Province of Canada" (237), Jefferson paradoxically saw territorial expansion as an anticolonial practice. Jefferson's "empire of liberty" served a dual purpose: in addition to justifying the United States's own colonial agenda, it effectively repudiated the incipient nation's European origins by constructing the United States as an anti-imperial project. Empire, according to this logic, was an extension of insurgent citizenship. In contradistinction to European imperialism, American imperialism was imagined to conquer in the name of expanding the space of freedom.

In the American 1848, the United States's imperial identity was in flux. Laura E. Gómez argues that the end of the U.S.-Mexican War marks a generational shift from the revolutionary generation to the leaders of the war effort, many of whom would subsequently play significant roles in post-1848 government (20). Moreover, Gómez explains, the U.S.-Mexican War was the United States's first war in which they captured a foreign capital (19).[3] *Benito Cereno* describes a moment of transition between European and American forms of empire in the Americas, only to expose the falsity of this dichotomy. As Allan Moore Emery argues, the *San Dominick* metonymically represents the decayed remains of Spain's western empire (52). Described as a "Spanish

3. Gómez also claims that the U.S.-Mexican War was "the first American war fought on foreign soil" (19). This statement omits the United States's invasion of Upper Canada during the War of 1812. Presumably, Gómez means that it was the first foreign war fought *exclusively* on foreign soil.

merchantman of the first class," the *San Dominick* is "[a] very large, and in its time, a very fine vessel, such as in those days were at interval encountered along that main; sometimes superseded Acapulco treasure-ships, or retired frigates of the Spanish king's navy" (48). But, the ship's forecastle is "[b]attered and mouldy," reminiscent of "some ancient turret, long ago taken by assault, and then left to decay," a monument to Spain's "faded grandeur" (49). The once-impressive ship is in a state of "slovenly neglect" and resembles, in Delano's eyes, a floating corpse launched from "Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones" (48). Its captain, meanwhile, has a constitution to match his ship. Don Benito is evocative of a colonial magistrate beset by indigenous and servile revolts. Beleaguered and "almost worn to a skeleton" (52), he has allowed discipline on his ship to devolve to a state of near misrule, and is utterly dependent upon his servant, Babo. Delano, on the other hand, is a young, energetic America, all too eager to take command of the *San Dominick* from the infirm Don Benito. As Emery explains, the relationship between the two captains is analogous to the ways in which U.S. expansionists in the antebellum period felt that, by taking responsibility for Spain's empire in the Americas, they might reinvigorate the benighted lands and peoples of places like Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua (53). American empire, some argued, would rejuvenate the former Spanish empire through an influx of influence, trade, and above all, democracy. Proponents of the U.S.-Mexican War, for instance, proposed that an American invasion and occupation could regenerate Mexico and "impart energy and industry gradually to the indolent Mexicans, and give them such a consistency as a people, as would enable them to hold and occupy their territories in perfect independence" (O'Sullivan, "Occupation of Mexico" 388). The

first step in such a process was an American war of liberation that would free the nation from the baleful influence of the Spanish conquerors.

American colonialists thus differentiated their expansionism from that of Europe by imagining it as an agent of liberation and rejuvenation, a dichotomy that is illustrated in the contrast between Amasa Delano and Benito Cereno. In Don Benito, Melville invokes *la leyenda negra*, a racist caricature of "the Spaniard" as a greedy, violent, and depraved monster. Delano worries throughout the narrative that Don Benito has ulterior, even piratical motives, and that he, in league with his racialized crew, plots to capture the American ship. Beyond simply providing a caricature that justified Anglo-American racism towards Spanish America, *la leyenda negra* was crucial to the formation of an Anglo-American imperial identity. Maria DeGuzmán argues that the image of Spanish imperialism and its vestiges in Mexico and elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean functions as "an influential parental figure that inspires a certain degree of awe and also provokes anxiety of influence and mixed responses of respectful memorialization and rebellion" (xv). Spain, she argues, is an uncanny double with which Anglo-America identifies but must also disavow. This disavowal is predicated largely on the ability of U.S. expansionists to differentiate U.S. imperialism as being beneficent: far from being a repressive or authoritarian regime, pro-expansion Americans contended that U.S. empire would protect the Americas from the machinations of European monarchism by fostering democratic and republican citizenship.[4]

However, Babo's act of resistance gives the lie to this false dichotomy. His act of

4. On *la leyenda negra* and its importance to the United States's understanding of Mexico, see also Wertheimer, p. 20.

rebellion is a rejoinder to the monolithic narrative of Manifest Destiny as the sole agent of an unproblematized, univocal expression of liberty and reveals the paradoxical impossibility of an enforced democracy. Thus, when Babo's plot is revealed, the possibility of a just expression of racialized rebellion never even occurs to Delano; he immediately sides with his European counterpart against the racialized insurgents. Moreover, even as he urges his sailors to "invade" the *San Dominick* to rescue the Spanish sailors from the insurgent slaves, he appeals not to their sense of justice or liberty but their greed: "The more to encourage the sailors, they were told, that the Spanish captain considered his ship as good as lost; that she and her cargo, including some gold and silver, were worth more than a thousand doubloons. Take her, and no small part should be theirs. The sailors replied with a shout" (101). As Emery suggests, Melville's novella undercuts the notion of a benevolent purpose to Manifest Destiny, suggesting instead that its primary motive is mercenary (55). Far from acknowledging the difference between European empire and American "insurgent" empire, Melville suggests a continuity between their respective practices. In so doing, Melville reveals the contradictions that inhered within the idea of an American imperial "I," which, as *Benito Cereno* suggests, are located among the constraints that were placed on insurgent discourse in the antebellum period.

In the argument that I will pursue, the reconstituted body of American citizenship conforms to a narrow set of characteristics. Indeed, the forms of insurgency that I address in this dissertation comprise not only physical acts of rebellion, but also less spectacular, if no less significant, challenges to the U.S. body politic. Claims by racialized individuals

like Frederick Douglass or John Rollin Ridge to U.S.-American status threatened whiteness's privileged position in U.S. political culture. As Michael Warner points out, the supposed physical particularity of the non-white, non-male, non-propertied individuals precluded their participation in the the abstraction necessary of democratic citizenship (382). As the United States's sphere of influence expanded and the ethnic makeup of its population became increasingly diverse, the dismemberment of racialized bodies such as Babo's, as well Nat Turner's and Joaquín Murieta's, was meant in part to perform in dramatic fashion the reduction of these individuals to inert, biological matter. Dismemberment deprived racially and chromatically different bodies of their political existence, while privileging whiteness—which, as Streeby notes, gradually came to include Eastern European and Irish men in addition to typically Protestant, Anglo-Saxons Americans (15-17)—as a basic qualification for U.S.-American insurgent citizenship.

This model of insurgent citizenship interests with discourses of gender, as well. The dismemberment of the racialized insurgent also served to codify a particular model of masculinity that was organized in part around rational self-control. In contrast, racialized men who exerted their right to revolution were disciplined in various ways. As Richard Yarborough argues, for African-American men, "manliness" was considered a crucial measure by which they could lay claim to U.S.-American status, and so they often modelled their heroic characters and their own public personas around middle-class ideas of masculinity, including qualities such as nobility, intelligence, articulateness, rationality, self-control, and loyalty (168-69). In making more radical claims to insurgency by, for instance, advocating physical resistance to slavery, African Americans risked being

labeled as "brutes" whose invocation of their right of revolution signified not their patrilineal descent from the Founding Fathers but their infrahumanity (Yarborough 174). In chapter two, I will describe how Mexican-American claims to revolution were transformed into acts of banditry. On the U.S.-Mexican border, acts of anticolonial resistance were understood as acts of monstrous depravity, proof that the Mexican-American citizen was not yet qualified for U.S.-American citizenship and could therefore be subject to brutal acts of repression by state-sanctioned, extralegal violence. The space of the United States's colonial periphery was understood not simply as a place where the boundaries of race might be compromised, but where American masculinity, too, might become compromised. As Brian Roberts argues, Hispanic men and women in particular were identified as "the opposites of the self-controlled Yankee: passionate, sexual, and violent," they threatened to tempt restrained American men to lives of excess and even depravity (123).[5] Hispanic men threatened to emasculate of the white, middle-class, American imperial "I." John Rollin Ridge offers a particularly illustrative portrait in his description of the Mexican bandit, Three-Fingered Jack:

> Dead men lay upon every side, both Americans and Mexicans, and in front of Three Fingered Jack were stretched five men with their skulls broken by the butt of his revolver, which he had used as a club after emptying its contents. At the moment Joaquin's eyes met him, he was stooping with glaring eyes and

5. See also Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, pp. 106ff. On the consolidation of white working class identity through its mediation of African American culture, see Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* and David R. Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*.

> a hideous smile over a prostrate American, in whose long hair he had wound his left hand and across whose throat he was drawing the coarse-grained steel of his huge homemade bowie knife. With a shout of delight he severed the neck joint and threw the gaping head over the rocks. He was crazy with the sight of blood and searched eagerly for another victim.… "Ah, Murieta," said he, smacking his lips together, "This has been a great day. Damn 'em! How my knife lapped up their blood." (58-59)

Jack's ecstasy in the kill, replete with imagery of a "prostrate" American, his phallic "huge homemade bowie knife," and his "shout of delight" condenses into one body a number of fears that Americans projected onto the Mexican body in the American 1848: Jack is an irrational predator who threatens the Anglo American with physical and sexual violence. Ridge's depiction registers not only the fear of racial contamination but also of emasculation. In Ridge's depiction of Jack's violence, the American is feminized. Jack's hand runs through his "long hair," his body prone before Jack's sheer animal masculinity. This gory scene registers an anxiety that not only that American feminine virtue might be put at risk, but also that American imperial masculinity might be supplanted by the supposed hypermasculinity of the insurgent other who is not required to conform to "civilized" standards of behaviour and is therefore not bound by the restraint placed upon political culture in the antebellum United States. The scenes of dismemberment that I address in this dissertation are therefore also scenes of castration: the feared inadequacy

of U.S.-American insurgent citizenship is projected outward onto the disciplined body of the racialized subject, which is subsequently imagined as impotent, an act intended to displace white, masculine political culture's own anxiety of political castration.

Not coincidentally, the first African American novel and the first Native American novel published in the United States each contain prominent scenes of dismemberment. William Wells Brown's *Clotel* begins at a slave auction. The title character, the illegitimate daughter of Thomas Jefferson and one of his slave mistresses, is last to be put on the block and causes a great sensation. The auctioneer praises Clotel's many virtues, noting her chastity, health, and intelligence as his customers compete with one another for ownership of the young girl. "This was a Southern auction," the narrator comments, "at which the bones, muscles, sinews, blood, and nerves of a young lady of sixteen were sold for five hundred dollars; her moral character for two hundred; her improved intellect for one hundred; her Christianity for three hundred; and her chastity and virtue for four hundred dollars more" (9). In this blazon, Clotel's body and spirit is dismembered in the evaluating gaze of her would-be purchasers. In the process, she is transformed into fungible capital in a process that reflects the ways in which the rebellious slaves I will examine in chapter one are transformed into the symbolic capital for white claims to revolution. Much as Clotel's "chastity and virtue" are ripped from her "bones, sinews, blood, and nerves," white critics of federal union rent African American's claims to the metaphysics of revolution from their material components, separating body and mind in order to establish their own place in a revolutionary tradition. John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, on the other hand, employs titular bandit's

severed head as a metaphor both for his intervention into the history of United States's invasion and seizure of Mexican territory and as a device that emblematizes his own claim to U.S.-American status. For both African-American and Native American writers, the trope of dismemberment offered a powerful metaphor for their legal and social existence in the United States.

At the same time, claims by racialized men to national status were often staged by imagining masculinity as the common ground of citizenship. In *American Anatomies*, Robyn Wiegman demonstrates how African-American men's invocations of middle-class masculinity were often made at the expense of women's attempts to access similar rights: "[b]y privileging the gendered structures of public citizenship," Wiegman writes, "the tenuous abolitionist analogy between 'blacks and women,' forged as a political imperative against patriarchy and slavery, became instead a figure marking the mutual exclusions and contestations between race and gender that governed in a variety of ways the political rights of the public sphere until at least the 1920s—and that continue to hold a powerful influence in the liberalized discourse of 'blacks and women' on which late-twentieth-century civil rights dwell" (46).[6] As Wiegman's comments suggest, women were also subject to the dismembering logic of antebellum counterinsurgency. Though in this dissertation I am primarily concerned with masculinist articulations of insurgent citizenship, I leave open the possibility for future work that will explore the ways in

6. Among the authors that I study in this dissertation, Frederick Douglass in particular has been accused of basing his claim to American status on his masculine identity in ways that subordinate women. See Wiegman's reading of "The Heroic Slave" in *American Anatomies*, but also Yarborough, "Race, Violence, and Manhood: The Masculine Ideal in 'The Heroic Slave'"; Jenny Franchot, "The Punishment of Esther: Frederick Douglass and the Construction of the Feminine"; and Ellen Weinauer, "Writing Revolt in the Wake of Nat Turner: Frederick Douglass and the Construction of Black Domesticity in 'The Heroic Slave.'"

which women similarly suffered through processes of dismemberment or staged their own forms of dismemberment in order to access the force of democracy in the United States.[7]

Benito Cereno reveals how these discrepant expressions of constituent power were excised from the national body politic through processes of dismemberment. The dismemberment of Babo at the end of *Benito Cereno* is not simply an act of punishment, but an expression that consolidates the American imperial "I" through the containment of the racialized, and gendered, insurgent other. As Michel Foucault argues, in pre- and early-modern society, acts of insurrection against the sovereign, regardless of degree, contained "a fragment of regicide" (*Abnormal* 82). Punishment, Foucault suggests, "was neither simple restitution for damage done … nor something demanded in the name of the fundamental rights and interests of society. Punishment was always something more: It was the sovereign's vengeance, his revenge, and the return of his strength" (82). As Foucault's analysis reveals, the scene of physical punishment is an expression of biopolitical power: the perceived threat to the coherence of the sovereign's power is met with an "excessive demonstration" of public torture that is intended as a reassertion of power. The sovereign suspends the insurgent's rights to the protection of state law, declaring him or her as an exception to the law—an outsider who may be killed with

7. In particular, I believe that Harriet Beecher Stowe's works might offer a valuable archive for a subsequent analysis of the relationship between literature, insurgency, and constructions of the feminine in the antebellum United States. The experience of Anne Hutchinson and the language of the "monstrous birth," might also offer a pre-national historical analog to the processes of dismemberment that I describe here. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon notes that in seventeenth-century New England, the language of the "many-headed hydra," which I address in Chapter Three, was also linked to Hutchinson (91-92). Dillon appropriates Linebaugh and Rediker's figure of hydrarchy to suggest the ways in which Hutchinson was a figure of a non-hierarchical social organization. For Linebaugh and Rediker's discussion of Hutchinson, see *The Many-Headed Hydra* pp. 90-92.

impunity. In her analysis of the trope of dissection in early American anticolonial discourse, Nancy Isenberg explains that dismemberment or dissection "constituted a form of social death legally sanctioned for use against those convicted of capital crimes such as murder, rape, and infanticide. Those executed were denied a proper burial and the possibility of resurrection, and their fragmented bodies reduced them to indistinguishable parts, devoid of spiritual integrity or even a human identity" (75). As Isenberg suggests, dismemberment as punishment reduces the insurgent body to its base biological components—a kind of physical waste, even. Giorgio Agamben theorizes that such an act of banishment is the originary political relation: sovereignty resides in the power to transform political life, or *zoë*, into bare life, or *bios* (6). Acts of dismembering violence such as those committed against Babo literalize this metaphor of excision and transformation. Much as in *Benito Cereno* the dismemberment and exhibition of Babo's head is meant to assuage white anxieties over the artificiality of hierarchies of power, the dismemberment of insurgent threats to a restrictive concept of "American" citizenship serves to reconstitute sovereign power in the wake of radical challenges to "necro citizenship." The act of dismemberment displaces insurgent forms of being, marking them as radically other, even monstrous, and "rebellious," as opposed to "revolutionary." In this dissertation, I similarly understand dismemberment as a crucial trope through which the unstable, fragmented sovereignty of the American imperial "I" constituted itself through acts of physical, discursive, and legal violence directed against discrepant expressions of constituent power.

Re-membering History

In *Benito Cereno*, the physical punishment of Babo is supplemented by an additional form of dismemberment. The court documents that are included in the narrative omit, as Karcher notes, "the primary cause" of the revolt, reporting only the "secondary results" (135). Such an emphasis on "results" at the cost of explaining the revolt's "cause" is consistent with a general pattern of narrativizing rebellion in the antebellum United States, whereby the violence of the revolt is severed from its historical impetus. The rebellion of the slaves on board the *San Dominick* is ripped from the long history of Euro-American colonialism and slavery. The dismemberment of Babo thus doubly signifies as an act of violence against the historical archive itself. It strips the actor from narrative: much as the act of beheading reduces Babo to his basic biological existence, it removes discrepant expressions of constituent power from historical narrative. "[T]he past is passed," Delano tells Don Benito; "see, yon bright sun has forgotten it all, and the blue sea, and the blue sky; these have turned over new leaves" (116). Looking over the Pacific, Delano sees only the infinite, imperial American future. He refuses to recognize that Babo's rebellion might represent a collective will to rebellion that manifests itself outside of a narrative of American revolutionary progress and is peopled not by George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or Patrick Henry, but by Toussaint L'Ouverture, Nat Turner, and Joaquín Murieta.[8]

8. The Haitian slave revolt is the unacknowledged historical context behind *Benito Cereno*, as the ship's name, the *San Dominick*, implies. See Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 140ff. For another comparison between *Benito Cereno* and Joaquín Murieta, see Jesse Alemán's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation *1848 and the Expansion of the American Literary Imagination*. See also Powell, *Ruthless Democracy*, p. 70 and Merish, "Print, Cultural Memory, and John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, p. 56. I return to Nat Turner and Joaquín Murieta in chapters one and two, respectively.

But as Sale argues, *Benito Cereno* invites the reader to share in Delano's naïve, often racialist perspective, only to undermine it by the story's end (*The Slumbering Volcano* 153-54). As Robert S. Levine points out, Melville carefully builds into *Benito Cereno* a sense of apprehension by including "teasing" hints intended to arouse the suspicions of the reader. He notes Melville's emphasis on the colour gray and the importance of shadows (*Conspiracy and Romance* 201), as in the novella's third paragraph:

> [e]verything was mute and calm; everything gray.… The sky seemed a gray surtout. Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters, as swallows over meadows before storms. Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come. (46)

The atmospheric sense of foreboding is accompanied by repeated allusions to the mid-nineteenth century conspiratorial imagination: the novella is rife with references to Catholic subterfuge, an encroaching Southern slave power, and urban class unrest (Levine, *Conspiracy* 201-2). Dana Luciano adds that *Benito Cereno* is "a kind of shock treatment," intended to "jolt the reader out of received thought patterns, uncritical habits learned from exposure to self-satisfied accounts of Americanness and to sentimental celebrations of the regenerative power of private feeling" (194).

Collectively, these readings suggest that *Benito Cereno* is fundamentally about reading; or, rather, the complicity between reading and writing as practices of

counterinsurgency. Amasa Delano is incapable of recognizing the state of insurgency that exists around him not simply because he is a naïve reader, but because he is a willful *mis*reader. He is, the narrator tells us, "a person of a singularly undistrustful good nature, not liable, except on extraordinary and repeated incentives, and hardly then, to indulge in personal alarms, any way involving the imputation of malign evil in man" (47). But, Delano's "willed blindness" (Levine, *Conspiracy* 222) suggests that his naiveté is in fact a practice of reading that supplements and helps justify the physical dismemberment suffered by Babo. Together with the novella's "official" historical record—the legal depositions as well as Babo's head, transformed into a lifeless artifact—Delano's misreading works to repair the fragmented state in his imperial American identity by dissembling and dismembering the insurgent other and his place in history.

Therefore, I suggest reading *Benito Cereno* in an insurgent fashion by displacing Amasa Delano's centrality in the text. In other words, I want to ask what happens if we take Babo's experience as representative of some way of "being" American. By adopting a skewed perspective of the text organized around Babo's experience, it becomes possible to recognize that he, too, might stand as a cipher for an "American" experience and as a figure through which the reader might resist the strictures imposed by the kinds of state discourses that form the latter half of the novella. Imagining an American experience that takes Babo as its representative allows us to consider forms of citizenship and practices of being American that are concealed by the apparatuses of state power in antebellum America.

In this dissertation, I study texts that, in a similar fashion, form an archive that

displaces a coherent sense of U.S. history and directs our attention instead to what Melville in *Billy Budd* calls the "ragged edges" of narrative (128). The body of texts that I have assembled stage interventions into the historical record of the nation. They invoke the kinds of discrepant experiences that are elided by the dismembering force of U.S. national belonging, appropriating and disorienting historical moments and narratives in the service of insurgent and agendas. The fiction, speeches, and pamphlets that I study demonstrate the insurgent possibilities of, to borrow a phrase from Castronovo, "speaking fiction to power."[9] In his reading of William Godwin's "Of History and Romance," Castronovo points out fiction and even romance can have a pedagogical function that exceeds that of the simple historical "fact." As Castronovo puts it,

> A Jeopardy-like array of facts supplies only "the mere skeleton of history. The muscles, the articulations, every thing in which the life emphatically resides, is absent." The contrast is both instructive and chilling: history can be received in forms as impersonal and as inert as Louis XVI's headless body or it can be experienced as a realm of motive power. Sticking to facts (the mere bones of history) leaves praxis as but a dead possibility.

Castronovo's remarks suggest that the fictive and even the imaginary might reconstitute the corpse of history in ways that need not resemble the acquiescent body politic enshrined by the language of citizenship and history. In what follows, I posit a reading of

9. I take this phrase from the title of Castronovo's plenary address to the Canadian Association of American Studies in London, Ontario, on November 13, 2009. I am grateful to Russ Castronovo for his generosity in sharing the forthcoming article that developed from his presentation.

United States literature in aesthetic mediations of history might serve an insurgent function that recuperates and reanimates the dismembered bodies that are produced by discourses like Manifest Destiny.

Though the texts I study bear but an uneasy relationship to an official historical account, the fictive histories of works like *Benito Cereno*, "The Heroic Slave," *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Billy Budd* animate again the citizen corpses of American national discourse, troubling the restrictive and restricted ways of practicing U.S. citizenship that are codified by official, monumental histories. My work responds to recent work in American Studies that aims to destabilize the transcendent category of the nation,[10] while at the same time taking up Castronovo and Nelson's call to relocate democracy from its status as something that is "natural" and "self-evident" to a position that recognizes its historical and material presence. As they argue in their introduction to *Materializing Democracy*, democracy has become understood as some sacred resource that must be protected from people who would abuse it and destabilize its structures (2). They argue that "[f]ormal procedures, legal institutions, and administrative frameworks corral democracy into predictable patterns" (2). Instead, democracy must be understood as a "historical range of *practices*" (3; emphasis added). By reconfiguring "democracy" in this way, Castronovo and Nelson suggest that we might come to a new understanding of citizenship as something that need not be unified or defined by the state,

10. As American Studies' current critical imperative, the "transnational turn" purports to reorient the field away from the confining structure of the nation-state and to similarly explore discrepant ways of "being" American. See in particular Pease and Wiegman, *The Futures of American Studies*; Porter, "What We Know that We Don't Know: Remapping American Literary Studies"; Radway, "What's In a Name?"; Rowe, "Nineteenth-Century United States Literature and Transnationality"; and Rowe, "Postnationalism, Globalism, and the New American Studies." For a critique of the transnational imperative, see Traister. For an analysis of transnationalism's uncomfortable similarity to discourses of Manifest Destiny, see Gillman, Greusz, and Wilson.

but as something that is "always under construction where debate, dialogue, and contestation are continuous" (7).[11] I similarly want to explore forms of democratic citizenship that do not necessarily conform to a status conferred and regimented by state power. In each chapter, then, I examine how various authors contemplated and sometimes challenged such a self-contained notion of democracy and resisted the dismembering, counterinsurgent logic of citizenship in the antebellum United States.

In chapter one, I begin by exploring the strained relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The temporal and philosophical gap between these two documents—the former, an expression of constitutive power and an invocation of the right to revolution; the latter, a document that contains that constituent power—is reproduced in its discursive production of African Americans as dismembered figures. In this chapter, I take seriously Loughran's and Priscilla Wald's claim that fugitive slaves were particularly resonant images of a federally mediated national identity and explore how insurgent African American slaves and former slaves were used by white citizens as cipher figures for their own anxieties about their role as "insurgent citizens." This chapter begins by examining how the Nat Turner rebellion exacerbated both Northern and Southern fears of federal subjectivity through a reading of several textual mediations of the uprising by Samuel Warner, Thomas Gray, and Virginia governor John Floyd. I then turn to examine radical abolitionism's insurgent discourse, beginning with Henry David Thoreau's response to the rendition of the fugitive slave Anthony Burns. I argue that Thoreau's invocation of Burns as a symbol of white political

11. Castronovo and Nelson's re-conception of citizenship derives from their reading of Chantal Mouffe. See also Nelson's essay "ConsterNation," p. 572.

slavery works to reify the dismembering logic of the three-fifths clause by separating physical slavery from mental slavery. Thoreau's essay, I suggest, solidifies the author's link to a prelapsarian, pre-liberal political identity by obviating the imperiled body of the fugitive slave. I subsequently explore the vexed relationship between the white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and his sometimes-"protégé," Frederick Douglass. As a "professional fugitive," Douglass was made to perform as a conduit to what Garrison saw as a purer form of democracy that existed prior to the nation's "bloody compromise" with slavery. However, after breaking ties with Garrison, Douglass sought to reconcile the originary divide between the nation's founding documents and claim his own position as a "representative American" by reinterpreting the Constitution as an open document, subject to practices of re-interpretation and re-reading.

Chapter two explores the "manifest contradictions" inherent in U.S. colonial projects that purport to spread the benefits of liberal democracy to colonial space. Focused on the image of the beheaded bandit, Joaquín Murieta, this chapter takes up John Rollin Ridge's novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* to explore how insurgent challenges to the nation's social and racial make-up on the borderlands of Mexico and the United States were contained through the trope of banditry. I argue that Ridge's novel, the product of a writer who had himself suffered under U.S. colonialism and yet nevertheless remained an adherent to principles of salutary processes of "amalgamation," renders visible the ways in which the uplifting mission of Manifest Destiny, imagined by its proponents as a program of uplift, in fact reified Anglo-Americans' exclusive claims to citizenship. My reading of Ridge's novel emphasizes that

it is not simply a product of his bitterness toward U.S. colonialism but the work of a man who was also one of its ardent proponents. Much as Ridge understands California as a space of constituent potential, I suggest that the insurgent space of the West was made into "American" space in part through the spectacular dismemberment of the outlaw hero, Joaquín—an act of violence in which Ridge is ultimately a participant.

In chapter three, I examine the insurgent space of the sea in a reading of Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick*. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville depicts how the constituent power of the multitude is not simply contained but appropriated. I begin by exploring Melville's depiction of the "hydrarchy," a figure that posits a transnational relation among men that operates underneath nationalized forms of citizenship. Ahab, as a figure of colonial sovereignty, contains the power of the hydrarchy through his appropriation of the animal capital of the whales that the crew hunts, including Moby Dick. I read *Moby-Dick* through theories of sovereignty offered by Agamben and Mbembe, in particular, as well as theories of "the animal" proposed by Cary Wolfe and Nicole Shukin, to examine how the novels' scenes of dismemberment develop into a theory of colonial power and incorporation that utilizes "rendering" as its operative metaphor. A violent alternative to the "melting pot," Melville's rendering metaphor works to highlight some of the ways in which constituent power is transformed into empire's animal capital. Finally, in a brief conclusion, I examine Melville's final work, *Billy Budd*, in which I locate what I will term Melville's theory of an insurgent readership, a practice of reading that resists the monolithic and monumental narratives that dismember and contain discrepant narratives of Americanness.

Throughout this work, I examine how these texts intervene in the "official" histories of the United States. By putting them into conversation with history and with one another, I hope to contribute to their project of locating new ways to imagine the shape, complexion, and history of the United States body politic. Though this work focuses on the American 1848, my aim is not to privilege any particular historical moment. Rather, I understand my work as a case study that might constitute the incipient form of a larger revision of U.S. literary history that begins to assemble from the dismembered remains of figures like Babo an alternative history to what Wald calls the "official story" of the nation (2)—an insurgent history—that resists well-wrought narratives of national progress and posits instead a much messier, but potentially more productive, sense of antebellum American identity.

CHAPTER ONE

"Three-Fifths of All Other Persons": Insurgency, Citizenship, and Slavery

Every man, when he enters into society, gives up a part of his natural liberty, as the price for so valuable a purchase.

William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*

'[T]is in their legislative that the members of a commonwealth are united and combined together into one coherent body. This is the soul that gives form, life, and unity to the commonwealth.

John Locke, *The Second Treatise*

In August 1831, a slave named Nat Turner led a group of free and enslaved blacks in a rebellion against slaveholders in Southampton County, Virginia. Turner's followers killed nearly sixty men, women, and children in what would prove to be the most violent outbreak of slave resistance in U.S. history. Turner was eventually captured by a white militia; however, the insurrection prompted a wave of violent retribution against blacks across the South. Newspapers in the North and the South responded with alarm at the possibility that Turner's rebellion was only the first stage in a larger, coordinated uprising. The Cooperstown, New York newspaper *The Watch Tower* lamented, "[w]hat an abandoned set of banditti these cut throats are! their steps are every where marked with

the blood of women and children" ("The Late Insurrection" 2), while the Richmond, Virginia *Enquirer* observed that "[t]he people are upon the alert, as they ought to be. No further act had transpired to break the quiet peace—but rumors sufficient to keep alive the vigilance of the people" ("The Banditti" 58).[1] Harriet Jacobs describes the state of paranoia in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: "Not far from this time Nat Turner's insurrection broke out," she recounts, "and the news threw our town into great commotion. Strange that they should be alarmed, when their slaves were so 'contented and happy'! But so it was" (63). As Jacobs' wry observation suggests, Turner's rebellion was a bloody reminder that the image of the well-ordered, familial plantation was nothing more than a comforting fiction; slave uprisings, as Eric Sundquist points out, upset the myth of the plantation "family" of faithful slaves who were complacent, loyal servants to white masters (35). Moreover, the Nat Turner Rebellion struck white Americans with the possibility that blacks in the United States were eager to seize their "right to revolution," to throw off the shackles of oppression, and follow the example of the white Founding Fathers or Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti.

Ultimately, Turner was hanged, his lifeless body beheaded, flayed, and quartered.[2]

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1. The *Richmond Enquirer*, like *The Watch Tower*, also refers to Turner and his gang as "banditti." Similarly, in "The Confessions of Nat Turner," Thomas Gray calls Turner the "great Bandit" (303). I return to the significance of banditry with respect to racialized insurgency in chapter two.

2. The ultimate fate of Turner's body is a matter of some speculation. In a pamphlet entitled "Nat Turner's Insurrection," Thomas Wentworth Higginson notes a rumor that Turner sold "his body in advance, for purposes of dissection, in exchange for food"; however, Higginson comments that "it does not appear probable, from the known habits of Southern anatomists, that any such bargain could have been needed," citing a circular from the South Carolina Medical School that promises students "great opportunities for the acquisition of medical knowledge, subjects being obtained among the colored population in sufficient number for every purpose, and proper dissections carried on without offending any individual" (346). Others accounts suggest that Turner's remains were turned into household objects, including a lamp. It remains difficult to ascertain the veracity of these claims. Egerton offers a brief summary of some of the rumors, and notes too that some Southampton whites took pieces of Turner's body as souvenirs, some claiming to be in possession of Turner's skull until well after the Civil War (160).

Moreover, two of his confederates were decapitated, their severed heads impaled on posts at "Black Head Sign Post," an important Southampton intersection that Turner and his followers passed by on their march. These acts of physical punishment work mimetically with similarly dismembering forms of discursive violence that haunt narratives of insurgency in the antebellum United States. The rebellious Turner was rent apart, his revolution re-appropriated by Southern whites to emphasize, among other things, the commodity status of the African American slave, the strength of Southern slave codes, and the futility—not to mention the misguidedness—of African American revolt. Meanwhile, the exhibition of his cohorts' lifeless heads at Black Head Sign Post emphasizes the fungibility of the black body in antebellum Virginia: they are left unidentified, reduced to symbolic objects that stand in for other slaves who might lay claim to the right of revolution. However, beyond being a symbol of the danger of black insurgency, rebellious slaves in antebellum America also became important figures through which white discontents read their own relationship to the right of revolution and a model of masculine citizenship, exemplified in the Founding Fathers' resistance to British political "slavery."[3] This model, which I call *insurgent citizenship*, is characterized by a citizen's willingness to revolt against perceived injustices to one's liberty perpetrated by some figure of despotic power such as a monarch or, by mid-century, the federal

3. In this case, the "insurgent" actions of a "rebellious" slave may encompass a broad range of resistance. As Saidiya Hartman explains, "The everyday practices of the enslaved encompassed an array of tactics such as work slowdowns, feigned illness, unlicensed travel, the destruction of property, theft, self-mutilation, dissimulation, physical confrontation with owners and overseers that document the resistance to slavery. These small-scale and everyday forms of resistance interrupted, reelaborated, and defied the constraints of everyday life under slavery and exploited openings in the system for the use of the enslaved" (51). In this chapter, I primarily consider Turner's revolt but also runaway or fugitive slaves, simply because of the ample archive of textual evidence that is available. Moreover, fugitive slaves' well-documented interactions with dissenting movements such as abolitionism renders them particularly useful figures through which to read the relationship between black resistance to slavery and white resistance to the government.

government. The insurgent slave was a figure through which white Americans could contemplate the legacy of the Founding Fathers' revolutionary posture; moreover, fugitive slaves prompted free citizens to consider their own, as well as the Founding Fathers', culpability in slavery as a national institution. In addition, though, the defiant slave functioned as an uncanny icon of white insurgent citizenship. In this chapter, I will argue that as both the object and limit of white insurgent discourse, insurgent slaves threw into relief the ways in which the language of insurgency, universal rights, and abstract "freedom" that is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence was contained and, as I will suggest, dismembered as a blood sacrifice made in the name of federal union.

At the center of my argument is the Constitution's notorious "three-fifths clause." Indeed, the Constitution—ostensibly the legal instrumentalization and guarantor of "self-evident," universal, democratic rights—inaugurates a legal structure that contains the Declaration of Independence's state of insurgency. The Constitution transforms the abstract, even idealistic, self-constituting act of the Declaration into a set of laws that are designed to delimit the power of "the people." As Trish Loughran notes, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are often mistakenly imagined as existing at the founding of the nation as "inextricably linked events—a continuous and inevitable phenomenon, without intervention" (167). In fact, these documents operate in tension with one another, with the Constitution tempering the revolutionary, insurgent zeal of the Declaration. Whereas the Declaration of Independence draws on a Lockean Right of Revolution and the authority of "the people" to overthrow tyrannical authority, the

Constitution grants the federal government the power to suppress rebellion.[4] Article Four, Section Four grants the federal government a mandate to "guarantee every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence." The final reference to "domestic violence" was included by Federalists who were in part responding to democratic uprisings like Shays' Rebellion (1786-87), and has subsequently been invoked to authorize the suppression of other popular insurrections such as the Whiskey Rebellion (1791-1794) (Rakove 208n79).[5] The Constitution checks the power of the people and protects the interests of elites. As Terry Bouton argues, "[t]he Constitution's framers made it hard for ordinary folk to enact such policies on the federal level by building multiple checks against democracy into the structure of the new national government" (178). In its capacity as a social contract between "the people" and the government, the Constitution guarantees citizens certain protections—particularly pertaining to property rights—in exchange for their right to engage in insurgent activity.

For some white Americans, this might have been a fair bargain. But slaves like

4. In presenting the Declaration of Independence in this fashion, my intention is not to suggest that its writers and editors *intended* it to apply universally to all humans living within what would become the United States; nor do I mean to imply that the Constitution institutes a wholly restrictive, repressive regime. Rather, the relationship between the two documents illustrates a tension between insurgency and counterinsurgency that I believe is predominant in American culture and letters at this time. Insofar as the Declaration of Independence is a statement of the *values* of the nation in the Revolutionary moment, it institutes a *concept* of the "American" nation and its citizens as an insurgent body. The Constitution gives the lie to this concept by suspending the state of insurgency through inclusions such as the three-fifths clause, the provision against "domestic violence," and the fugitive slave law.

5. Shays' Rebellion, led by Revolutionary War veteran Daniel Shays, was a largely agrarian protest movement that developed in response to rising debts and taxes. The rebellion was suppressed by privately funded militia. The uprising provided the Federalists with justification for a stronger federal government. The Whiskey Rebellion, meanwhile, was a Western resistance movement that formed in protest against government taxation of whiskey, among other government policies. After some 500 protestors marched on the home of a Pennsylvania tax collector, the federal government mustered a militia to suppress the insurgents. However, the movement collapsed before the military arrived.

Nat Turner were not parties to such an agreement; in fact, they were not counted as men but rather among the property that was protected in exchange for the states' and citizens' willingness to cede certain powers to the federal government. As Eric Slauter points out, many black readers pointed to the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence in hopes that its language of natural rights would provide a case for their freedom; however, the white framers of the founding documents saw things differently (174-77). While many had defined the relationship between Britain and the American colonies as a form of slavery, they differentiated between the political slavery suffered by white settler-colonists and the chattel slavery endured by blacks (176-77). Chattel slavery was "insignificant compared with the mental and cultural debasement associated with political slavery" (Slauter 203). In essence, Slauter explains, whites justified this distinction by "abstracting the signifier from its material referent" (196)—they separated the *concept* of slavery from its physical counterpart, and in so doing, rent the slave's mind from its body. This act of discursive dismemberment became crucial to the formation of the early nation.

African Americans were objects that were divided—dismembered, we might say—at the negotiating table in the name of forging "a more perfect union." Article I, section II, paragraph III of the Constitution reads,

> Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons,

> including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and
>
> excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

This provision, the so-called "three-fifths clause," was a compromise between Southern slaveholding states and Northern non-slaveholding states. When delegates met at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the enumeration of slaves was one of the issues that was subject to debate. Southerners feared that, were slave bodies discounted completely, they would lose crucial seats in the proposed bicameral legislature (Fehrenbacher 29). The fraction three-fifths, based on the "federal ratio" established in the Articles of Confederation, was a compromise on the part of both sides, and even delegates who were strongly opposed to slavery were compelled to capitulate in the name of forging a stable government. The compromise, as Don Fehrenbacher explains, "was essential for the success of the Constitution as we know it" (44). Fehrenbacher insists that the three-fifths ratio has no racial or symbolic meaning, and was not "intended to denote the slave's dual legal status as both person and property" (24), but his compulsive disavowal only emphasizes how suggestive this act of division is vis-à-vis the role of African Americans in the foundation of the United States.

The three-fifths clause suggests that the foundation of the American nation is dependent on an act of dismemberment. The unification of the various colonies was possible only through the discursive dismemberment of the African American men and women living within them. Above all, the three-fifths clause suggests that legal citizenship in the United States is not only determinable by a governmental body, but that the formation of a consolidated "American" identity—as opposed to the disparate

regional identities that came together with an act of union—is made possible through the dismemberment of some Other who is identified as an exception to the both the legal and philosophical bases of the nation, an exception that is, as Giorgio Agamben theorizes, built into the legal structure of the nation-state itself (15).

In this chapter, I primarily examine the ways in which white Americans ventriloquize figures of black insurgency as a means by which to contemplate individual freedom and the limits of democratic politics. The figure of the black insurgent is deployed as a conduit or material referent to justify white claims to revolution; however, this separation of body and mind tears apart black claims to the philosophy of revolution, rendering their expressions of resistance irrational and apolitical. I begin by returning to the scene of Nat Turner's revolt in Southampton, Virginia, exploring how acts of literal and discursive dismemberment reified the originary sacrifice of the black body in this act of political compromise. I subsequently turn to the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) and, in particular, the rendition of Anthony Burns from Boston in 1855. Reading Henry David Thoreau's response to Burns's plight, I suggest that white northerners' horror at becoming party to the Fugitive Slave Act transforms the endangered slave into a symbol of white powerlessness in such a way as to reify the dismembering terms of the three-fifths clause. In the second half of this chapter, I examine the role of so-called "professional fugitives" in the Garrisonian abolition movement, in particular Frederick Douglass. William Lloyd Garrison, I argue, appropriates Douglass's insurgent voice in an act of ventriloquism that works to rejuvenate white insurgent masculinity even as it contains the former slave's access to insurgent masculinity. Finally, I examine Douglass's own efforts to locate a

form of insurgent masculinity that repairs the dismembered state of the federal union after the dismembering logic of the Constitution.

Dismembering Revolution: Nat Turner as Federal Subject

Following the capture of Nat Turner, Virginia governor John Floyd wrote to Thomas Ritchie, the editor of the *Richmond Enquirer* concerning the recent outbreak of violence in Southampton County. Floyd assured the editor, "[w]e shall attempt to obtain as accurate account as possible of this murderous Bandit … in order, that if any future historian should hereafter paint him incorrectly, as the *Albany Fabulist* has done the Insurgent Gabriel, the facts may be ready to refute his falsehoods" (134). Floyd's letter reveals an abiding concern with the way the Turner insurrection would be assessed by future generations. Noting a Northern newspaper's lionization of an earlier African American insurgent, Floyd writes, in part, to enlist the assistance of the Democratic party organ to maintain rigid control over Turner's image. However, by the time Floyd's letter appeared in the *Enquirer*, the story of Nat Turner had long been in the wild. Though Floyd hoped that, having captured Turner, he might be able to exert a certain amount of authority over the "facts" of Turner's character and personality, the story of his rebellion had been circulating throughout the nation for months. In October 1831, weeks prior to Turner's capture, Samuel Warner obtained copyright in New York for his pamphlet "Authentic and Impartial Narrative of the Tragical Scene Which Was Witnessed in Southampton County." Not long afterward—a week after Turner's hanging—the attorney Thomas Gray published his own account of his interview with Turner as "The

Confessions of Nat Turner."[6] While these texts take contradictory views on the South's "peculiar institution," both evince strong anxieties surrounding the national implications of slavery. Both Warner and Gray express in their accounts a fear of a federal culture that is founded on the dismembered body of the black slave. In each text, Turner's body becomes a cipher figure that comes to stand in for the result of federal consolidation. To some extent, these Southerners and Northerners who responded to the Turner crisis, far from simply turning Turner into an absolute other, identify with Turner. Even as they criticize Turner's rebellion as an example of a revolution uncontained, Turner is deployed as an object through which they can respond to the risks of national consolidation. In a sense, Turner becomes a symbol of the federal subject *par excellence*, his remains an echo of the federal compromise and its meaning not only for blacks but its implications for white citizens.

Most white respondents to the rebellion agreed that Turner's revolt presented the spectre of excessive liberty. As Maggie Montesinos Sales argues, the principles that authorized the revolt of settler colonists in North America or white peasants in France were meant for freeborn landowners, not dispossessed or enslaved blacks (*The Slumbering Volcano* 6-7). The men who threw off tyranny of the monarchy in the United States had been engaged in just *revolution* against political slavery; the rebels of

6. Gray did not represent Nat Turner at the trial, but, according to Kenneth S. Greenberg, had been appointed as representation for several other slaves who participated in the rebellion ("Introduction" 8). Gray may have had many motives in publishing his account, not the least of which was to capitalize on the sensation in order to turn a profit. As Greenberg suggests, the rebellion "was a potentially lucrative venture in terms of money and fame. At the time of the Turner rebellion, the thirty-one-year-old Gray was a man in desperate financial need, a man on the edge of failure as a planter. In 1829 he owned twenty-one slaves and a farm of 800 acres; by 1831 his holdings were reduced to a single slave and 300 acres. And in the midst of the trials which followed in the wake of the slave rebellion, his father died after cutting him out of his will" (8). See also Sundquist, 38-39, fn.

Southampton, on the other hand, were participants in what Sales distinguishes as *rebellion*, "the insurgency of the unfit, the unruly, the untamed, against the better government of a civilized people" (8).[7]

Some Northerners claimed that Turner's rebellion was an inevitability. Men were expected, like Patrick Henry, to make the difficult choice between seizing liberty or fighting for it to the death; to choose otherwise was a sign of one's consent to be enslaved. Turner's revolt, then, was a natural outcome of the enslavement of blacks. Warner, for instance, blames the Turner rebellion on the institution of slavery itself:

> while we shall ever feel it a duty which we owe to humanity, to lend our aid if necessary in suppressing insurrections so fatal to the lives of our countrymen … we cannot hold those entirely blameless, who first brought them from their native plains—who robbed them of their domestic joys—who tore them from their weeping children and dearest connections, and doomed them in this 'Land of Liberty' to a state of cruel bondage! (299)

Turner's rebellion, Warner concludes, is the result of denying men like Turner and his followers the rights of liberty and equality that are guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. "But what do we mean by the term ALL MEN[?]" he asks (300). Warner intends his question to be rhetorical. However, the answer was more debatable than he realized. Warner assumes that the Declaration of Independence's claim "that all men are

7. The distinction between "revolution" and "rebellion" comes from Sacvan Bercovitch. In *The American Jeremiad* Bercovitch distinguishes between revolution, a kind of dissent that is imagined as progressive and a crucial part of the unfolding of providential history, and rebellion, which stymies the forward movement of "progress." See my earlier discussion of Bercovitch in the introduction to this dissertation, pp. 6-8.

created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" should be taken unproblematically at its word. However, after the Second Continental Congress signed that document and the American settler-colonists defeated the British, the practical meaning of those words had to be reinterpreted into a structure of laws that could govern a new nation. The result of that process—the Constitution of the United States of America—makes clear that by 1789, the framers had a very different idea of what was meant by the term "ALL MEN."

Indeed, some accounts of the Turner rebellion used the insurrection to differentiate black revolutionary acts from white. In contrast to the measured, rational revolution of the patriots of 1776, Turner's rebellion was characterized in the press as animal-like in its violence. On August 30, 1831, the *Richmond Enquirer* observed that

> [w]hat strikes us as the most remarkable thing in this matter is the horrible ferocity of these monsters. They remind one of a parcel of blood-thirsty wolves rushing down from the Alps; or rather like a former incursion of the Indians upon the white settlements. Nothing is spared; neither age nor sex is respected —the helplessness of women and children pleads in vain for mercy. ("The Banditti" 43)

As Richard Yarborough explains, in the antebellum United States, resistance to tyranny,

an ideal quality in whites, was seen as evidence of brutishness in blacks (171).[8] *The Enquirer*'s editorial emphasizes that, while for whites, an act of revolution was evidence of manly virtue, for blacks it was proof of an essential inhumanity that marked them not as men but as beasts.[9] Northern accounts, too, emphasized the animalistic excesses of Turner's uprising. Warner's version of the events, while written as a critique of slavery, recounts with lurid detail the violence visited by the rebels on their white victims. He writes that the "bloodthirsty monsters" killed some "FIFTY-FIVE … sparing neither the hoary headed or the helpless infant in the cradle" (284). In particular, he notes the "wanton barbarity" involved in slaying Mrs. Waller, a young female visitor, and ten children, including a "tender infant" (284). He quotes an eyewitness:

> here … was a spectacle of horror to behold, beyond the power of human conception! in one corner of the room lay the mangled corpse of the poor mother, and from those deep wounds the blood had not ceased to flow! and in another the lifeless bodies of ten lovely children, who but a few hours previous were in full enjoyment of blooming health! (284)

For writers on both sides of the slavery debate, Turner's rebellion was a misguided appropriation of the Declaration of Independence.

Both Warner and Gray suggest that Turner's rebellion was the result of

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8. See also Takaki, 121, and Sale, "Critiques from Within," 700. Takaki and Sale each point out that African Americans were identified as either a docile, submissive, and feminine slave—a "Sambo"—or a violent savage—a "Nat Turner." Takaki argues that the "Sambo" figure helped to reassure Southerners that slaves were incapable of even contemplating revolution, though it was tempered, Sale points out, by an accompanying fear that the slave would "revert" to a "more natural and savage state" (700).

9. I return to the figure of "the animal," its position in (or outside of) the law, and its relationship to insurgency in my discussion of *Moby-Dick*. See chapter three.

misappropriation of liberty by black insurgents. Warner reports that Turner "represent[ed] to the poor deluded wretches the Blessings of Liberty, and the inhumanity and injustice of their being forced like brutes from the land of their nativity, and doomed without fault or crime to perpetual bondage, and by those who were not more entitled to their liberty than themselves!" (282). Warner's comments here indicate his condemnation of both Turner and of slavery. Turner becomes a vaguely Satanic figure—a tempter who offers the forbidden fruit of liberty. He "assumed the character of a Preacher" in order to "effect his nefarious designs" and pretends to be engaged in "christianizing and [teaching] them the propriety of their remaining faithful and obedient to their masters; but, in reality, [persuading] them and [preparing] them in the most sly and artful manner to become the instruments of their slaughter!" (282). Warner is sympathetic with Turner's followers, whom he reads as victims of Turner's "nefarious" machinations. Warner says that Turner "represents" liberty to the slaves, his use of that verb suggesting that Turner is a malicious artificer or false prophet whose glib tongue misleads the slaves to their own destruction. The revolt becomes, then, not a black claim to the right of revolution but a horrible mistake; moreover, it is not so much proof that blacks, too, were capable of seizing hold of revolutionary discourse than it is that they are foolish and easily persuaded by "artful" speech, with potentially violent results. Turner's deception of the slaves, then, occupies the uneasy space between the laudable revolutionary philosophy of the white Founding Fathers and the baseless, indiscriminate, unmeasured violence of black "brutes": though Turner justifies the revolt to his followers with "the Blessings of Liberty," coming from Turner's mouth, this is "nefarious," "artful," and "sly" speech—a

perversion of the language of revolution.

Gray, meanwhile, is less sympathetic to Turner's followers even as he upholds Warner's contention that the rebellion was the result of confusion on the part of black discontents. As Sundquist points out, Gray's "Confessions" emphasizes Turner's derangement and fanaticism while obfuscating Turner's claim to the right of revolution as an attempt to grasp at material "beyond [his] reach" (47). In "The Confessions," Gray takes pains to ensure that Turner is understood as a solitary fanatic, a victim of his own intelligence, and a misguided demagogue who misled his followers who are, in turn, presented as a naïve and ignorant group easily swayed by a charismatic, but insane, leader. According to Gray, Turner confesses "the origin, progress and consummation of the insurrectory movements of the slaves of which he was the contriver and head" and reveals that "[h]e was not only the contriver of the conspiracy, but gave the first blow towards its execution" (304). He adds that "a gloomy fanatic was revolving in the recesses of [Turner's] own dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind" (304). Turner's testimony, as recorded by Gray, supports this analysis. Turner says that he was an isolated individual who nevertheless earned the confidence of his fellow slaves for his "superior judgment" (307).

In their common emphasis on the rebels' "confusion" and Turner's "bewildered" mind, Warner and Gray reiterate the originary displacement between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Turner's unfortunate misapprehensions occur as a result of his apparently mistaken belief that the spirit of 1776 had not been contained through articles such as the three-fifths clause. He thus embodies the separation that

exists between liberty in the abstract form, as it was enunciated in the Declaration, and the material, practical forms it was permitted to take according to the Constitution. Turner, who as a consequence of his race is positioned outside of the social contract between the people and the government, therefore becomes an uncomfortable reminder of how an abstract ideation of "freedom" in the United States is delimited by the three-fifths compromise between slave and free states. Nevertheless, as a representative of the revolution uncontained, Turner's rebellion demanded a renewal of the three-fifths clause through the discursive dismemberment of African American claims to insurgency.

Both Warner's and Gray's accounts try to bind the insurrection to a lone perpetrator even as they reveal an anxiety about the existence of a broader, collective revolutionary movement. In the wake of the revolt, rumours abounded that Turner's uprising was merely the first step in a larger rebellion. Warner's "Narrative," cobbled together from news reports in the immediate aftermath of the events in Southampton, warns that though dispersed, the insurgent slaves were amassing in the nearby Great Dismal Swamp where they joined as many as 2000 fugitive slaves who lived there as maroons (286). Additionally, he includes a series of letters from correspondents in nearby states that describe a state of emergency borne of a fear that Turner was but one piece of a much larger conspiracy: "that he had communication with and was promised the support of some of the disaffected Slaves in North Carolina, and possibly Maryland, we have too much reason to believe from the alarming symptoms which they have there since exhibited to revolt" (289). For his part, Gray tries to assuage Southern fears of a larger movement, suggesting that it is impossible due to the slaves' cowardice and inability to

cooperate with one another. Turner's men, Gray claims, "fled precipitately at the first fire; and their future plans of mischief, were entirely disconcerted and broken up. Escaping thence, each individual sought his own safety" (304). In Gray's cross-examination, which follows the extended narrative offered by Turner, he asks repeatedly about the existence of a larger slave conspiracy. Turner denies that he has any knowledge of "any extensive or concerted plan," but admits that others might have seen the same signs that he did and acted in kind (316). Gray's mediation of Turner's testimony disavows the potential for an African-American body politic that can work collectively. Instead, he imagines the insurrectionists as disorganized, chaotic, and bound together only by Turner's "enthusiasm" and misguided interpretation of himself as being providentially ordained. Crucial to Gray's narrative of containment is his characterization of Turner as "bewildered and confounded" (304). Such efforts as Warner's and Gray's accounts work concomitantly with the physical violence visited upon the insurgents after their capture. Their efforts to isolate Turner as the "contriver and head" of a black rebellion and deny the possibility of a larger body politic might be read as a form of discursive beheading: by consigning black insurgency to the head of Turner, Warner and Gray effectively dismember the revolutionary movement. As a body politic, the rebels become disarticulated as they flee into the woods, with Warner reporting that Turner becomes an exceptional instance of black claims to rebellion, and his attempt to access the right to revolution is an aberration that can easily be isolated and severed from slave culture.

Yet, what is ultimately the most fascinating aspect of the Turner documents is the ways in which the authors identify with Turner even as they attempt to excise him from

the revolutionary narrative. Warner's account of how Turner "too well succeeded, by representing to the poor deluded wretches the Blessings of Liberty" devolves into phrasing which makes it difficult to separate Turner's proselytizing from Warner's. Warner says that Turner communicated to the other slaves "the inhumanity and injustice of their being forced like brutes from the land of their nativity, and doomed without fault or crime to perpetual bondage, and by those who were not more entitled to liberty than themselves!" Warner's indirect quotation of Turner's exhortations becomes conflated with his own language of dissent—namely, his effort to make Turner's rebellion an object lesson against slavery. Similarly, in Gray's "Confessions," it is often difficult to separate Turner's voice from the attorney's. The confusion begins with the title: though called "The Confessions of Nat Turner," Gray is the author; the text contains the secondhand reportage of Gray's interviews with Turner, rather than Gray's own confession. Eric Sundquist goes so far as to posit that the text produced under Gray's name is in fact a collaborative work wherein Turner is the dominant voice. Turner, he says, manipulates Gray's attempts to discursively contain slave rebellion, making the pamphlet a textual continuation of his act of physical rebellion. Turner's purpose, Sundquist explains, was not to stage successful revolt—indeed, it is difficult to determine what a "successful" revolt would have accomplished—but rather to incite terror. The fear that Turner's rebellion inspired, and to which Gray's text unwittingly contributed, offered enslaved African Americans an example by which they could exert a "limited tyranny over the masters" (Sundquist 68).

However—and perhaps counterintuitively—I read these brief slippages as

moments of identification between the white author and the insurgent slave. In addition to spawning texts that disciplined slave insurgency by dehumanizing it or suggesting its origin in slaves' mental deficiencies, the Turner insurrection led to a number of works that expressed anxieties about the potential risks of federal union. Warner, for instance, fears that the North's implication in Southern slavery will lead to a common fate in what he sees as an inevitable slave rebellion. In the opening paragraph of his pamphlet, he observes that "[i]n consequence of the alarming increase of the Black population at the South, fears have long been entertained, that it might one day be the unhappy lot of the whites, in that section, to witness scenes similar to those which but a few years since, nearly depopulated the once flourishing island of St. Domingo of its white inhabitants" (282). Turner, Warner says, "represented to [the other slaves] the happy effects which had attended the united efforts of their brethren in St. Domingo, and elsewhere, and encouraged them with the assurance that a similar effort on their part, could not fail to produce a similar effect" (282). Warner's invocation of the Haitian Revolution warns his readers that the uncontained revolutionary fervor that resulted in Turner's uprising not only has precedent, but may lead to a reversal of positions between black and white in the United States as well. Over several pages, he provides an account of the Haitian Revolution as a cautionary example to Americans. Detailing Dessalines' extermination of white French colonists in Haiti, an indiscriminate violence of which Turner's is an ominous echo, Warner cautions Southerners that the Great Dismal Swamp "might afford [insurgent slaves] as secure a retreat as did the almost inaccessible mountains of St. Domingo to their black brethren on that island" (297). The implications,

for Warner, are clear: by continuing to abide the South's "peculiar institution," Northerners risk bearing witness to another bloody massacre that could potentially spill across the Mason-Dixon line.

Gray's text, on the other hand, is part of a larger Southern response to the Turner insurrection that identifies Turner as a product of Northern print culture. Though Gray says that Turner "is surpassed by few minds I have ever seen" in terms of his "natural intelligence and quickness of apprehension" (317), he is nevertheless "a useful lesson, as to the operations of a mind like his, endeavoring to grapple with things beyond its reach" (304), most likely Northern anti-slavery pamphlets. In the wake of the revolt, Virginia Governor John Floyd blamed Turner's actions on a Northern conspiracy. In a letter to South Carolina Governor James Hamilton, Jr., Floyd writes, "I am fully persuaded, the spirit of insubordination which has, and still manifests itself in Virginia, had its origin among, and eminated [*sic*] from, the Yankee population" (275). He alleges that "Yankee pedlers [*sic*] and traders" spread discontent among the slaves

> by making them religious—their conversations were of that character—telling the blacks God was no respecter of persons —the black man was as good as the white—that all men were born free and equal—that they cannot serve two masters—that the white people rebelled against England to obtain freedom, so have the blacks a right to do. (275)

In another letter, Floyd complains about William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, charging that its writers "urge on negroes and Mulattoes, slave and free to

the indiscriminate massacre of all white people" (274). In her reading of Floyd's public address concerning the revolt, Mary Kemp Davis points out that the governor imagines the state of Virginia as the victim of the federal government's and Northern abolitionism's machinations against the South's peculiar way of life, even appropriating the language of the American Revolution to "cast[] the federal government as a latter-day George III" (22). In contrast to the other accounts, Floyd's address never names Turner; rather, the "unrestrained fanatics" are men from "neighbouring States, who find facilities in distributing their views and plans amongst our population, either through the post office, or by agents sent for that purpose throughout our territory" (432).

Floyd casts the South as the terrorized victim of Northern print culture. As Loughran points out, it was not until the 1830s that technological innovations allowed American print culture to become "institutionally immanent"; even after this point, this putatively unifying print culture in fact destabilized the union and was a contributing factor to the Civil War (4-5). In spite of antebellum hopes of integration, Loughran says, the technologies of print and industry revealed the disarticulations of American identity. Floyd's anxieties about the spread of abolitionist documents, as well as radical African American pamphlets like David Walker's *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*,[10] suggests the extent to which the imposition of a Northern print culture was seen as a threat to Southern autonomy and, in particular, its "peculiar institution." Floyd's

10. Walker's *Appeal* warns white Americans that slavery and racial prejudice will lead the nation inevitably toward its destruction, and is notable for its stark depiction of black rebellion. In his introduction to one edition of the *Appeal*, Sean Wilentz ranks it "among the angriest and most controversial American antislavery tracts" (viii). For more on Turner and Walker, see Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 64-83. On the circulation of Walker's text, see Eaton, "A Dangerous Pamphlet in the South" and Rachleff, "David Walker's Southern Agent." On the character of Walker's rhetoric, see Finseth, "David Walker, Nature's Nation, and Early African-American Separatism" and Verner D. Mitchell, "David Walker, African Rights, and Liberty." See also Aptheker, *One Continual Cry*, and Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren.*

address closes with an appeal for Southerners' right to revolution, citing in particular the Tariff Law of 1828. The law, he says, "is calculated to take from our citizens, the profits they have earned by their industry, and is also a violation of the Constitution" (443). He goes on to cite a list of grievances that echo those in Declaration of Independence, including the federal government's appropriation of revenue, which he claims "reduc[es] the States to the conditions of vassals and pensioners, paid by funds illegally exacted from them" (443). The Federal Government, he alleges, "has usurped the rights of the States; and by constituting itself the sole judges of its powers, has created a new political system, subversive of that, to which allegiance is due" (443). Floyd all but quotes Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. His speech on the Turner insurrection slides easily into a revolutionary condemnation of the federal government, ironically citing the kinds of "political slavery" of which the Founding Fathers complained even as he decries Turner and his followers as perpetrators of "the most shocking and horrid barbarity" (431). The irony, of course, runs deep. The analogy that Floyd is trying to draw —between federal trade tariffs and the daily violence suffered by chattel slaves in the South—well exceeds the limits of plausibility. And yet, his comments reveal that for those Southerners who believed themselves victims of Northern aggression, the slave provided a readily available, if specious, metaphor for federal subjectivity in the antebellum period. Of course, not only Southerners drew this connection. In what follows, I will turn to a Northern anti-slavery activist, Henry David Thoreau, and explore how a federally determined notion of American citizenship resulted in a similar process of dismemberment for the fugitive slave.

A Riot of Americanness: Thoreau and Insurgent Citizenship

Turner's punishment, as well as that of his followers, constituted an effort on the part of Southampton County's citizens to reify the terms of the three-fifths clause, and to contain African American claims to democratic liberty. While for many this was a reassuring narrative, by the mid-nineteenth century, many whites who opposed slavery began to recognize in insurgent slaves an uncanny image of white political agency. Passed in the wake of the U.S.-Mexican War, the Fugitive Slave Act was meant to suture together a splintering nation. In exchange for the admission of California as a free state and the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, lawmakers granted the South a more powerful Fugitive Slave Law that required all citizens—even those in Northern, free states—to assist in the return of runaway slaves.[11] The Fugitive Slave Law and the Compromise of 1850 bound together again the nation through the sacrifice of the African American body, echoing the nation's founding over the dismembered black body in the three-fifths clause. Henry David Thoreau's response to the Burns crisis, while critical of the federal government's actions, reveals that his sense of outrage derives less from his concern for Anthony Burns's return to slavery than it does from his fear of what Burns's rendition might mean for his own status as citizen. In Thoreau's essay "Slavery in Massachusetts," the Burns rendition becomes a symbolic threat to white legal personhood, and Burns a cipher figure with whom Thoreau identifies only insofar as he perceives him as symbolic of a threat of white political slavery. Thoreau's response

11. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 authorized slaveholders to "seize or arrest … fugitive[s] from labor" in non-slaveholding territories and states and punishes with a $500 fine any who "knowingly and willingly obstruct or hinder such a claimant." The 1850 version imposed upon citizens in non-slaveholding states the positive duty to assist in the capture of alleged fugitive slaves, even on the barest of evidence.

suggests how the sovereign, federal, "American" body is constituted through such legal dismembering acts as the three-fifths clause and the Fugitive Slave Act; however, he reproduces the logic of this act by obviating the material presence of Burns and transforming him into a symbol of his "own slaveholding and servility" (Thoreau 104).

On May 23, 1854, a former slave named Anthony Burns was arrested in Boston and charged as a "fugitive from labour"—a euphemism for a runaway slave. A Virginia merchant, Charles F. Suttle, claimed that Burns had fled the previous March and, under the auspices of the Fugitive Slave Act (1850), the state of Massachusetts was compelled by federal law to assist in Burns's return to bondage. Almost immediately upon learning of Burns's possible rendition, Boston's abolitionists mobilized themselves. During a hastily organized meeting two days later, Samuel G. Howe called Burns's capture and looming trial as "an outrage not to be sanctioned, or tamely submitted to" (*Boston Slave Riot* 8). Wendell Phillips, meanwhile, proclaimed that "[t]here is now no law in Massachusetts, and when law ceases the people may act in their own sovereignty" (*Boston Slave Riot* 8-9). As Phillips understood the situation, the federal government's decision to uphold the Fugitive Slave Act and impose itself upon the citizens of Massachusetts violated the social contract between state and citizen, absolving all citizens of their obligations to the government. By invoking the right of "the people" to "act in their own sovereignty," Phillips declared the suspension of governmental rule and invoked what might be called a state of insurgency: he seized the right of the multitude to step outside of constituted authority in defense of certain principles of individual liberty and freedom enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. Inspired by

Phillips's invocation of the right of revolution, Boston's abolitionists marched on the Boston court house where Burns was being held. A riot ensued, resulting in the death of federal marshal James Batchelder.[12] Burns, however, remained behind bars.

The arrest of Burns, the abolitionists' march, and the subsequent chaos form what might be called, to paraphrase Ian Baucom, a "riot of Americanness."[13] In the wake of Burns's arrest, a number of competing discourses of what it meant to be an American citizen were pressed into alarming juxtaposition. First of all, the federal government's determination to uphold the Fugitive Slave Act, part of the Compromise of 1850, posits the existence of the nation-state as a consolidated political entity whose citizens are legally arbitrated subjects of the law. And yet, the Massachusetts abolitionists' horrified reaction to their unwilling culpability in this blood sacrifice, and their simultaneous anxiety that they had become, in Theodore Parker's words, "subjects of Virginia" (*Boston Slave Riot* 9), reveals that the political fissures that the Compromise was intended to repair were far from resolved. The Boston Slave Riot was a precursor to the ongoing disarticulation—or the dismemberment—of the union that would culminate in the Civil War. At the root of this crisis was the abolitionists' conflicted notion of what it mean to be American: whereas the Fugitive Slave Law posited a citizenship that was federally legislated and legally determined, Boston's irate citizens invoked a model of insurgent citizenship that eschewed the supreme authority of the government in favour of an idea of

12. An African-American man identified only as "Hopewell" was later arrested for the murder of Batchelder, ostensibly on the evidence that he had in his possession "a large African knife, called a creece —just such a knife as must have been used to inflct the death wound on poor Batchelder" (*Boston Slave Riot* 18).

13. I adopt this phrase from Baucom's "riot of Englishness." In *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and Locations of Identity*, Baucom locates in the disorder of the Brixton Riots of 1981 "a contemporary discourse of English identity," linking the event to a longer history of working class riots as well as contemporary British anxieties over immigration.

"American" as a transcendental ideal that emerges through one's willingness to throw off the shackles of tyranny.

These conflicting notions of American citizenship became all the more apparent in the days following the Boston Slave Riot. After the courts decided to return Burns to slavery in Virginia, U.S. Marshall Watson Freeman contacted President Franklin W. Pierce by telegraph. "In consequence of the attack on the Court House," he wrote, "I have availed myself of the resources of the United States placed under my control … and now have two companies of troops from Fort Independence stationed in the court house" (qtd. in Stevens 273). Pierce approved, and further authorized Freeman to take advantage of "any expense deemed necessary … to insure the execution of the law" (qtd. in Stevens 271). For Pierce, the power of the federal state was needed to maintain the coherence of the nation in the midst of such a divisive political and social climate. Thus, in the wake of Burns's trial, the former slave was marched from the court house to the harbour through streets "lined with soldiers" (Stevens 145) in what was, according to the contemporary account of Charles Emery Stevens, "the first time that the armed power of the United States had ever been arrayed against the people of Massachusetts" (143). But, this display of federal power was met with an equally spectacular performance of insurgent citizenship as Bostonians turned out to express their disapproval of the extradition. Burns's route, Stevens writes, was "thronged with a countless multitude. It seemed as if the whole population of the city had been concentrated upon this narrow space" (146). Citizens draped their windows in mourning, and even suspended a coffin on a rope to mark the occasion as "*the Funeral of Liberty*" (146). These gestures, steeped in Boston's

revolutionary past, offered a counter-performance to Pierce's exercise of federal power, reminding the president of the nation's origin in the insurgent actions of the multitude and their deposition of monarchy in favour of republican democracy. Confronted with proof of the national reach of a supposedly local, Southern institution, Boston's residents offered a monumentalizing critique of the federal government: even as they condemned the events that were unfolding in front of them, they paid homage and laid claim to the founding moments of the nation by emulating their ancestors' protests during the Revolutionary War.[14]

By storming the court house, and by invoking their revolutionary right to act "in their own sovereignty," Phillips, Howe, and their colleagues revealed what they felt to be the American citizen's response to federal imposition. The abolitionists who opposed the government's intervention imagined themselves as insurgent citizens. They modelled their actions after the principles that were outlined in the United States' founding documents, especially the Declaration of Independence, and transformed President Franklin W. Pierce into a figure of absolute, monarchical power and a threat to the freedom of Massachusetts' people.[15] The extradition of an individual to whom the rights

14. My use of "monumentalizing" here derives from Russ Castronovo's concept of "monumentalism." According to Castronovo, "[m]onumentalism stands forth as a particular historical mode of articulating national culture.… [M]onumentalism underscores the interstices between the fabrication of historical consciousness and civic being. From *monere*, meaning not simply 'to remind' but also 'to instruct' and 'to say with authority,' monumentalism suggests that remembering prompts more than independent musings on the past; rather, monumentalism narrates a history exercised with power over citizens. It is indeed power that shapes the history that defines people as citizens and collects them in the construct of the nation" (*Fathering the Nation* 109).

15. Walt Whitman describes Burns's march from the court house to the harbour in his "uncharacteristically bitter" (David S. Reynolds, *A Historical Guide to Walt Whitman* 216) occasional poem "A Boston Ballad." In "A Boston Ballad," ghosts of the Revolutionary War dead rise from their graves, summoned, perhaps, by the parade, which they mistake for a Fourth of July celebration. With chattering teeth and convulsing limbs, they raise their crutches like muskets, horrified at what they mistake for the return of monarchical authority to Boston. In Whitman's poem, the "cute" bargain (42) with slavery is tantamount to the coronation of a federal sovereign; after the soldiers flee the scene, the speaker calls for

of citizenship and, moreover, the right to revolution were denied became a spectacular occasion for white, enfranchised Americans to contemplate their own relationship to federal power and the waning of democratic power in post-Jacksonian America.

Among those who protested Anthony Burns's rendition was Henry David Thoreau. On July 4, 1854, Thoreau spoke at a rally in Framingham, Massachusetts, with other abolitionists, including Wendell Phillips, Sojourner Truth, and William Lloyd Garrison. The speakers' platform was draped in black, and behind the podium, organizers had hung the state insignias of Virginia and Massachusetts, the latter inscribed with the phrase "Redeem Massachusetts" (Cain, "Henry David Thoreau" 46). In his speech, Thoreau offers what is among his most incendiary political commentary. Responding not only to the rendition of Anthony Burns but also to that of Thomas Sims, another fugitive slave who had been returned to bondage by Massachusetts in 1851, Thoreau turns Anthony Burns's predicament into an occasion to meditate on the condition of white citizenship in the federal union. In Thoreau's speech, Burns becomes a cipher figure through which Thoreau contemplates the mandate of insurgent citizenship. Thoreau's essay reveals the ways in which fugitive slaves became troubling, uncanny representations of the limits that had been imposed on democratic freedoms after the Revolution of 1776—a sign of the tension between the liberating discourse of the Declaration of Independence and the consolidating power of the state that is enshrined in the Constitution's discursive dismemberment of the potential political subject in the three-fifths clause. For Thoreau, Burns represents the ways in which citizenship in the

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the exhumation and reassembly of King George III's corpse. A number of critics read "A Boston Ballad" as Whitman's indictment of federal politics, making it a useful companion to Thoreau's essay. See in particular David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America,* 137-38; and Loughran, 371-373.

post-Fugitive Slave Act nation is dependent upon one's relinquishing of their rights as an insurgent, a sacrifice that Thoreau suggests runs counter to the examples of the Founding Fathers. For Thoreau, such a bargain constitutes a critical breach with the transcendental principles of the nation. Burns's rendition becomes the rending of American insurgent citizenship itself. In his excoriation of the Burns rendition, Thoreau hopes to repair that fissure.

In "Resistance to Civil Government" (1849), an earlier political essay written in protest of the U.S.-Mexican War, Thoreau argues that the United States' war with Mexico and its continued participation in slavery should compel the American citizen to resist his or her government. Thoreau writes, "[a]ll men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable" (67). Thoreau cites what Sale calls the "trope of revolutionary struggle," an "incarnation of liberal political theory" that "authorized the revolt of freeborn men against tyrannical governments attempting to enslave them" (Sale, *The Slumbering Volcano* 6). During the American Revolution, Sale explains, this trope justified colonies' separation from the British Empire through recourse to Lockean concepts of property and classical notions of Republican citizenship. In "Resistance to Civil Government," Thoreau argues that the existence of slavery in the United States constitutes conditions wherein American citizens should be willing to claim their right to revolution. "[W]hen a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves," he writes, "and a whole country [Mexico] is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is

not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize" (67). Yet, Thoreau points out, most Americans are willing to sit idly by, though they may oppose slavery and the war (66). This inaction, he suggests, robs men of their humanity and turns them into passive, acquiescent machines or animals:

> [t]he mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, &c. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw, or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these are commonly esteemed good citizens. (66)

Thoreau suggests that Americans' reluctance to resist the U.S. government's tyrannical policies robs them of their essential humanity: they become, in a phrase that Melville will use in *Moby-Dick*, "mechanical" men (562), or animals who blindly submit to federal power and are therefore complicit with tyranny. Rather than providing a framework for participatory government, citizenship involves being mustered into apparatuses of repressive state power. Such a condition, Thoreau goes on to say, puts American citizens in a position that is tantamount to slavery. Americans who wait for a majority to vote against slavery, he says, are themselves political slaves to a tyrannical majority.

Thoreau's response to the Anthony Burns riot expands on this argument. The arrest and extradition of Burns became such a spectacle because it cut to the quick of myriad anxieties surrounding the relationship between Boston's free citizens and their revolutionary ancestors. As Castronovo argues, the Fugitive Slave Act compelled American citizens to consider the temporal distance between "the transparent days of Washington and Jefferson" and their own "inadequate and sketchy conception of those origins" (*Fathering* 13). But at the same time, the Fugitive Slave Act prompted such anxiety less because of Boston's concern over the fate of a fugitive slave than because the slave represented the limits of white freedom. As Loughran argues, fugitive slaves were particularly important public figures in the United States after 1848, embodying the conflicting forces of national consolidation and dissolution in the midst of the slavery crisis and the wake of the Fugitive Slave Act (375). The fugitive slave, Loughran explains, "becomes a special and spectacular kind of federal subject, one whose case, because it crosses and confuses local jurisdictions, must finally be determined by a national (and nationally visible) arbiter: the federal government" (378). For Loughran, the fugitive slave's crossing of state and sectional boundaries reveals the contradictions between the laws and practices of one state and another; thus, even as the Fugitive Slave Act posited a cohesive federal union bound together in law, it nevertheless called to mind the fissures between states like Massachusetts and Virginia over issues like slavery and raised the possibility that the federal government could impose the will of one state over another regardless of the laws or beliefs of that second state's citizens. As Wald argues, the existence of African American slaves revealed in spectacular fashion the power of the

state to legislate legal personhood: "[t]heir presence invoked an anxiety evident in a query posed with increasing frequency in the political oratory of the Jacksonian and antebellum period: what keeps the government from enslaving white men?" (19). The slave, then, was a "visible symbol of legal nonpersonhood: neither *potential* citizen nor alien. A descendent of Africans thereby registered the uncanniness of the legally unrepresentable subject" (43; emphasis in original).

Thoreau suggests throughout his essay that Burns's rendition and the peoples' refusal to resist it is tantamount to a kind of slavery. The trial of Burns, he says "was really the trial of Massachusetts" (96); further, he adds, "[w]hat should concern Massachusetts is not the Nebraska Bill, nor the Fugitive Slave Bill, but her own slaveholding and servility" (104). He moreover charges that newspapers that did not condemn the earlier rendition of Thomas Simms are likewise enslaved: "[c]ould slavery suggest a more complete servility than some of these journals exhibit?" (101). Comparing the judges who found in favour of Suttle's claim to "the marine who discharges his musket in any direction he is ordered to," the judges are "as much tools and as little men" (103). Thoreau's concern is that the Fugitive Slave Act has reduced the free, white citizen to the slave's lot; and, more alarmingly for Thoreau, their quiet acquiescence to the law has revealed that in post-1850 Massachusetts the population is willingly consenting to their enslavement. The Fugitive Slave Act has made slavery of citizenship itself, and Anthony Burns a representative not simply of the conditions of chattel slavery in the South but of political slavery in the North.

This notion of citizenship-as-slavery, moreover, constitutes a kind of

dismemberment whereby man's transcendental essence has been stripped from his material existence. "No matter how valuable law may be to protect your property," Thoreau warns, "even to keep your body and soul together," it is worthless "if it do not keep you and your humanity together" (102). The government "enslaves [its citizens'] understandings and consciences, instead of their bodies" (103). The distinction between "understandings and consciences" and "bodies" that Thoreau makes here is coextensive with the separation between the philosophical content of revolution and the physical act of revolution that is written into the dismembering logic of the three-fifths clause. Much as that law marks the rupture between the declaration of "self-evident" universal human rights and freedoms in the Declaration of Independence and the repressive containment of those principles in the Constitution, the Fugitive Slave Act has imposed a similarly rending force on the free white citizen.

The extradition of Burns, then, and the exertion of federal power over the citizens of Boston, made the fugitive slave a nightmare vision of American citizenship. The event made manifest the potential to sever the citizen from his "self-evident" rights as a self-possessing individual. In "Slavery in Massachusetts," Thoreau charges that Americans have been made virtual slaves through the government's imposition of the Fugitive Slave Act. Burns's rendition, he argues, reveals that "there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts" (91), and concludes that the liberty celebrated on the Fourth of July is simply an illusion:

> Now-a-days, men wear a fool's cap, and call it a liberty cap. I do not know but there are some, who, if they were tied to a

> whipping-post, and could get but one hand free, would use it to ring the bells and fire the cannons, to celebrate *their* liberty. So some of my townsmen took the liberty to ring and fire; that was the extent of their freedom; and when the sound of the bells died away, their liberty died away also; when the powder was all expended, their liberty went off with the smoke. (95)

Americans' misplaced faith in the Constitution has caused them to lose their sense of the greater issue: the moral question that should provide justification for an act of resistance.

Thoreau seeks to recuperate the dismembered federal citizen in a number of ways. He proposes a radical break with the past, insofar as he calls upon his fellow citizens to reject their thoughtless obedience to the government and the Constitution. He tells his audience that they should not obey the law simply because Jefferson or Adams drafted it. It is immaterial, Thoreau argues, whether or not a law is constitutional; virtue is a higher and superior guide than a covenant made nearly a century ago. Regardless of how the Founding Fathers framed the nation's Constitution, the Fugitive Slave Act is morally abhorrent and must be resisted. He calls on "each inhabitant of the State to dissolve his union with her, as long as she delays to do her duty" (104). In so doing, Thoreau proposes a return to the principles of justice that he identifies with insurgent citizenship—a return, in effect, to the founding principles as they were outlined in the Declaration of Independence. And yet, in the process of doing so, Thoreau loses sight of the occasion for his speech and, perhaps unwittingly, replays the nation's originary compromise with slavery.

In composing his revolutionary narrative, Thoreau all but leaves Anthony Burns out. Though his predicament offers the justification for Thoreau's speech, Burns is mentioned by name only twice. As often, he is referred to simply as "the slave." Burns's value to Thoreau lies in his symbolic capital. He provides fodder for Thoreau's own effort to meet the expectations for insurgent citizenship that he idealizes in "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" and "Slavery in Massachusetts," yet Thoreau never considers the possibility of Burns's own role in this revolutionary narrative. Rather, Burns's material existence is stripped away as he increasingly becomes a supplement to white claims to the right of revolution. As the symbolic capital for Thoreau's claim to insurgent citizenship, Burns suffers once again the fate of the figurative slave who was divided between North and South at the negotiating tables that determined the "federal ratio" and the Compromise of 1850; he is exchanged as the cost for consolidating white narratives of "Americanness" as he is removed from narratives of legal personhood and, in Thoreau's essay, insurgent citizenship. Thoreau's essay supposes once again the distinction between "political slavery" and "chattel slavery," and, in valuing the one over the other, he obviates the very real, material threat to Burns's body in his effort to reveal the threat to white citizenship that Burns's fate represents.

Tortured Speech: Garrison, Douglass, and the Insurgent Voice

William Lloyd Garrison was among those who spoke with Thoreau on July 4, 1854. A disunionist, Garrison advocated nothing less than the dissolution of the United States and a repudiation of the "blood-stained" Constitution. As early as 1832, Garrison

denounced the Constitution as "the most bloody and heaven-daring arrangement ever made by men for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villany [*sic*] ever exhibited on earth" ("On the Constitution and the Union" 87). By making a bargain with slavery, Garrison writes, the framers of the Constitution "virtually dethroned the Most High God, and trampled beneath their feet their own solemn and heaven-attested Declaration, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights" (87). Like Thoreau, Garrison saw in the fugitive slave enormous rhetorical potential. Escaped slaves could function for the abolition movement as proof of the potential of freed African Americans (Leverenz 122-23); moreover, they proved to be effective attractions for drawing crowds to abolitionist meetings. As Frederick Douglass remembers in *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), on the abolitionist circuit he was "a '*brand new fact*'" (220). "Much interest was awakened," Douglass writes, and "large meetings assembled. Many came, no doubt, from curiosity to hear what a negro could say in his own cause" (220). But Garrison's relationship with Douglass reveals that even as an abolitionist lecture circuit offered men like Douglass an opportunity to speak on his race's behalf, they were also repressive in their own ways. Douglass "was generally introduced as a '*chattel*'—a '*thing*'—a piece of southern '*property*'—the chairman assure the audience that *it* could speak" (220). As part of the Garrisonian abolition movement, Douglass continued to be positioned as an unthinking, unphilosophizing body. Indeed, inasmuch as Garrison sought to reconstitute the nation through a return of the democratic principles of the Declaration of Independence, his relationship with Frederick Douglass suggests the ways in which the fugitive slave's body

was used as the symbolic object through which Garrison could access a revolutionary American identity that remained uncorrupted by the Constitution's compact with the slave states. Reading through a series of abolitionist mediations of Frederick Douglass's insurgent voice, I will argue that the fugitive slave's voice was appropriated by men like Garrison in an effort to suture together the historical wound of the three-fifths clause. However, while ostensibly offering African Americans a place in which to engage in their own dissent against slavery, the abolitionist meeting actually renewed the three-fifths clause by denying Douglass access to the philosophical content of the Declaration of Independence. Garrison in effect appropriates Douglass's body as a passive conduit for his own efforts to reclaim an insurgent citizen status.

In 1833, Garrison and his American Anti-Slavery Society adopted the "Declaration of Sentiments," a document that consciously evokes the Declaration of Independence. Written by Garrison, the "Declaration of Sentiments" opens by commemorating the revolutionaries of 1776:

> More than fifty-seven years have elapsed, since a band of patriots convened in this place [Philadelphia], to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The cornerstone upon which they founded the Temple of Freedom was broadly this—"that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness. (66)

The citation of the Declaration of Independence, supplemented by the Convention's setting in Philadelphia, works to situate the American Anti-Slavery Society in continuity with the Revolution of 1776. Garrison adds that the Society had met "for the achievement of an enterprise, without which that of our fathers is incomplete" (66). They imagined the Revolution as a process that had been interrupted by the nation's repeated compromises with slavery, dating back as far as the three-fifths clause. Garrison and his followers hoped to repair this historical rupture in part by imagining themselves as the uncanny return of the spirit of 1776. As Robert Fanuzzi argues, Garrison sought to develop a "commemorative and backward-looking" politics that was an "homage to a lapsed revolution and a scathing denunciation of the present moment" (xviii). He thus dedicated his newspaper *The Liberator* to the followers of Jefferson, and alluded to Thomas Paine in its slogan "Our Country is the World, Our Countrymen Mankind" (Fanuzzi xvi). For Garrison, slavery constituted an irreparable breach that could only be repaired through disunion—the dissolution of the nation-state itself. The act of disunion, for Garrison, involved a return to a moment prior to the nation's compromise with slavery in the Constitution.

Fugitive and former slaves played crucial roles in this recuperative effort. In 1842, John L. Collins, a General Agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, wrote to Garrison encouraging the use of former slaves in abolitionist meetings: "[t]he public have itching ears to hear a colored person speak, and particularly a *slave*.… It would be good policy to employ a number of colored agents, if suitable ones can be found" (qtd. in Gara 196). These former slaves were presented as "curiousit[ies] from the South" and

"specimen[s] of the fruits of the infernal system of slavery" (qtd. in P. Gilmore 41). These "professional fugitives," as Larry Gara describes them, worked as writers, lecturers, and agents, soliciting subscriptions and trading on their status as former slaves to win support for the abolitionist cause. But, as Gara suggests, professional fugitives were more than simple examples of abolitionist doctrine. They were also participants in a complex performance that was carefully mediated by the demands and expectations of their audiences as well as those of their white abolitionist friends and employers.[16]

"Professional fugitive" does not simply describe an individual but a performative role—a manufactured identity—that was carefully orchestrated by men like Garrison and Collins. Crucial to the figure of the "professional fugitive" was his speech, which had to conform to audience expectations of African American language. As Frederick Douglass recounts in *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), he was encouraged to "have a *little* of the plantation manner of speech" while being warned against "seem[ing] too learned" (220; emphasis in original). Ironically, Douglass's eloquence could compromise his effectiveness as a speaker on the abolitionist circuit. By sounding too "learned," Douglass risked sowing seeds of doubt in audience members who were skeptical that a former slave could have mastered the arts of speech and rhetoric. According to Douglass, "[p]eople doubted if I had ever been a slave. They say I did not talk like a slave, look like a slave, nor act like a slave, and that they believed I had never been south of Mason and Dixon's line.… Thus, I was in a pretty fair way to be denounced as an impostor" (*MB*

16. See William L. Andrews' "The Novelization of Voice in Early African American Literature." Discussing the early stages of African American writing, Andrews argues that "[t]o sound authentic to whites required [former slaves and African American writers more generally] to adopt a mask, to play a role, to feign authenticity in and through a carefully cultivated voice" (24).

221). As Gara notes, professional fugitives were required to appear "authentically" black while mirroring ideal qualities of white masculinity. Andrews notes that white expectations of the "authentic" black voice put African Americans speakers and writers in an impossible position in terms of their credibility: while speakers like Douglass could "prove" the potential of their race through their mastery of oratory and rhetoric, they were held back from appearing as equals of their white counterparts in the abolition movement and expected to perform accordingly ("Novelization" 23-24). In addition to bolstering the carefully scrutinized credibility of the professional fugitive, Douglass's carefully rehearsed "plantation manner of speech" (24) gave the abolitionist message a credibility it might have otherwise lacked.

In his or her capacity as a performative character, the professional fugitive spoke with the authority of what Nancy Ruttenburg calls "democratic personality," a kind of public speech that she characterizes as "radically inarticulate and yet powerfully persuasive" (4). In spite of Douglass's widely recognized skill as an orator, the abolitionists encouraged him to adopt a "plantation manner of speech" not only to persuade skeptical audiences that he had been a slave, but also because a plain, unschooled voice—or, as Ruttenburg describes it, a voice that was "unanticipated, inarticulate, uncontainable, heedless of the forms, ventriloquizing a higher will and truth" (6)—was thought to reflect the language of democratic innocence and to articulate a "*preliberal democratic tradition*" (6; emphasis in original). The professional fugitive's speech was imagined by many abolitionists as having a peculiarly revolutionary quality, as powerfully illustrated by Nathaniel P. Rogers's account of an early Douglass speech,

delivered only a year before the publication of Douglass's *Narrative*. Rogers, an editor of the New Hampshire anti-slavery newspaper *The Herald of Freedom*, describes Douglass's speech before a Concord audience as

> the storm of insurrection—and I could not but think, as he stalked to and fro on the platform, roused up like the Numidian Lion—how that terrible voice of his would ring through the pine glades of the South, in her day of visitation—calling the insurgents to battle and striking terror to the hearts of the dismayed and despairing mastery. (1:26)

Douglass, Rogers adds, "was an insurgent taking hold on the right to speech, and charging on his tyrants the bondage of his race" (1:26-27). Rogers's account suggests the extent to which a slave speaking back to power was a revolutionary act in its own right, suggestive of "Toussaint [L'Ouverture] among the plantations of Haiti" (1:26). In Rogers's account, the content of Douglass's speech is lost, subsumed into a description of his "terrible voice"; he fixates on Douglass's oratory not for its convincing argument or well-chosen word but as an abstract, unformed sound of an animal that "stalked to and fro."[17] Douglass, for Rogers, is "lion-like," and when a dissenting voice in the audience "ventured to cross [Douglass's] path by a rash word" that speaker is rebuked. Douglass, Rogers reports, "tore him to pieces, and left his untouched fragments scattered around

17. Nor is Rogers alone in omitting the content of Douglass's speech in favour of a more physical description. Robert Fanuzzi suggests that Douglass's skill as an orator were counterproductive not only for the reasons I cite here but also because it compelled his audience to forget the content of his speeches and focus instead on their form (227). Fanuzzi's contention is problematic: the inability of an audience to recall the content of a speech suggests a poor orator rather than a good one. By most contemporary accounts Douglass was a very good speaker and rhetorician; thus, I want to suggest that the audience's inability to recall the content suggests little about the actual quality of Douglass's speech and more about the way abolitionists responded to it.

him" (1:29). Rogers vacillates between fear and awe of Douglass as a sublime spectacle of insurgent citizenship who embodies the terrifying realization of revolutionary discourse even as his body—chromatically differentiated from his audience—makes that discourse strikingly unfamiliar, even uncanny. And yet, while speaking on behalf of other enslaved African Americans, Douglass's role as a professional fugitive is consistent with the terms of the three-fifths compromise. His "performance" is carefully managed to maintain the separation between the abstract philosophy of freedom and its potential as praxis. Douglass, in effect, is a passive vessel—raw material through which insurgent discourse is expressed. As a professional fugitive he is a medium for the language of revolution but as a professional fugitive he can never bridge the significant distance between language and practice.

This containment of language had special significance for Douglass, who in his *Narrative* imagined language as one of the tools with which slaveholders repressed African Americans. In his first autobiography, Douglass frequently links one's access to speech to one's freedom. One overseer, Mr. Gore, whom Douglass describes as "the most dreaded by the slaves" is noted for his "sharp, shrill voice" that produces "horror and trembling" among the slaves (42). Gore's mere presence inhibits his slaves' ability to speak: "[h]e was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of a slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly" (41). Douglass's use of the verb "torture," meant here in the sense of twisting or perverting words, puns on its more obvious meaning—to inflict pain or to extract by torture—to indicate the intimate ties between language and violence on the plantation. The slave cannot speak outside of

the context of "torture" and punishment, while the slaveholder is capable of mastery over not only his own speech but those of his slaves.

And yet, even free of the plantation, Douglass's speech is similarly "tortured" by white abolitionists. In *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a document produced largely as proof of Douglass's past in slavery, Garrison attempts to harness the unruly voice of his young friend in an effort to consolidate his link to an American democratic tradition that existed prior to the Declaration of Independence's suspension in the Constitution. In the closing pages of the *Narrative*, Douglass recounts the first time he spoke before an abolitionist audience:

> But, while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak.… It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren[.] (92-93)

Douglass's account of his emergence onto the abolitionist speaking circuit reinforces a point he makes through his *Narrative*, linking voice and one's ability to use that voice to a sense of liberty. As Andrews argues, in the narratives of former slaves, writing and speaking are acts of self-liberation: "[a]utobiography became a very public way of declaring oneself free, of redefining freedom and then assigning it to oneself in defiance

of one's bonds to the past or to the social, political, and sometimes even the moral exigencies of the present" (*To Tell a Free Story* xi). Jeannine DeLombard offers a similar assessment, explaining that the moment at which Douglass speaks before the antislavery meeting is the crucial moment at which Douglass transcends his status as a slave witness and becoming an activist (246). As DeLombard reads this scene, Douglass's ability to speak freely and to actively denounce slavery is a moment of liberation wherein Douglass becomes a self-possessing individual. In "pleading the case of [his] brethren," Douglass has also seized hold of discourses of resistance and liberty and progressed from the suppressed speech of the slave to the sovereign speech of the freeman. In Andrews' and DeLombard's reading of Douglass's account of the Nantucket convention, Douglass engages in an speech act that constitutes his possession of antebellum manliness and his liberation from the shackles of slavery. Douglass's speech, in other words, mimetically reproduces the self-justifying speech act of the Declaration of Independence.

However, Douglass's is not the only account of the Nantucket Slavery Convention in the *Narrative*. Rather than closing off the *Narrative*, Douglass's mention of his speech in Nantucket obliges his reader to return circuitously to the text's beginning, and, in particular, William Lloyd Garrison's preface. Contrary to Andrews' and DeLombard's narrative of transcendence, this recursive structure actually contains Douglass's access to revolutionary discourse and, moreover, appropriates its insurgent potential in an effort to repair the historical breach between philosophy and practice. This might properly be called an act of re-Constitution: Garrison's opening apparatus, even as it exhorts its reader to insurgent action, reifies the terms of the three-fifths clause and stages white

insurgent citizenship through a symbolic appropriation of the dismembered insurgent slave.[18]

Unencumbered by the expectations imposed upon Douglass, Garrison's version of the Nantucket convention cannot but overshadow Douglass's modest account. Garrison writes, "I shall never forget his first speech at the convention—the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind—the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory, completely taken by surprise—the applause which followed from the beginning to the end of his felicitous remarks" (23). Garrison's praise is effusive, but as soon as Douglass finishes his speech, the focus of the preface's account shifts to fix squarely on Garrison:

> *I* rose, and declared that PATRICK HENRY, of revolutionary fame, never made a speech more eloquent in the cause of liberty.… So *I* believed at that time—such is *my* belief now. *I* reminded the audience of the peril which surrounded this self-emancipated young man at the North.… and *I* appealed to them, whether or not they would ever allow him to be carried back into slavery,—law or no law, constitution or no constitution. The response was unanimous and in thunder-tones—"NO!" (24;

18. In *To Tell a Free Story*, Andrews does note that "[i]n a very troubling sense, the alpha and omega of the 1845 *Narrative* is Garrison, whose words, we are told on the last page of the *Narrative* proper, became Douglass's 'meat and drink' in the North and whose sentiments, concerning political action, for instance, are echoed in the intervening chapters of the *Narrative*" (217). Andrews makes this comment in the context of introducing *My Bondage and My Freedom* as "in many respects a greater testimony of freedom" (217). However, Andrews says, Garrison's presence is "not so much an enclosing presence as a crucial parameter in the text that dictated in an inevitably restrictive way the range of Douglass's thinking about some key questions and the rhetorical form of his expression of that thinking" (217). Andrews admits the restrictions imposed upon Douglass by Garrison, but continues to read the *Narrative* as an expression of liberty; however, he admits that it is not "*truly* a free story" (217; emphasis added), presumably in contrast to *My Bondage and My Freedom*. In other words, Andrews seems to say, the *Narrative* gave Douglass a modicum of liberty, but it was not until he wrote his second autobiography that he felt "truly" liberated.

my emphasis)

Garrison's narration claims the revolutionary zeal that follows Douglass's speech is not the result of the former slave's eloquence but rather Garrison's ability to excite the audience: it is Garrison who unites the "whole mass" to speak "with an energy so startling, that the ruthless tyrants south of Mason and Dixon's line might almost have heard the mighty burst of feeling" (24). As David Leverenz remarks, in this preface Garrison announces himself "as Pygmalion for the untutored youth he has discovered and raised so high" (122). Realizing the potential value of Douglass on the abolitionist circuit, Garrison writes that he "therefore endeavored to instil hope and courage into his mind, in order that he might dare to engage in a vocation so anomalous and responsible for a person in his situation" (24). Garrison thus attributes Douglass's "manliness of character" (25)—as evinced by his courage and rhetorical prowess—to his successful tutelage under Garrison.

Douglass's eloquence effectively becomes a product of Garrison's insurgent program, and Douglass becomes a bodily vessel through which Garrison himself can engage in insurgent speech. Much as in Rogers' account, Douglass is physically present —Garrison notes that his subject is "in physical proportion and stature commanding and exact"—but the content of his speech is conspicuously absent. Garrison fixates instead on Douglass's body rather than the meaning of his words.[19] In the preface, it is Garrison, not

19. This is consistent with an earlier account of this meeting, published by Garrison in *The Liberator* on July 1, 1842. Garrison writes that Douglass "stood there as a slave—a runaway from the southern house of bondage—not safe, for one hour, even on the soil of Massachusetts—with his back all horribly scarred by the lash" ("On Frederick Douglass" 108). Douglass spoke, Garrison reports, "not to counsel retaliation, not to advocate the right of the oppressed to wade through blood to liberty, not to declaim after the manner of worldly patriotism—O no!—but with the spirit of christian forgiveness in his heart, with the melting accents of charity on his lips, with the gentleness of love beaming in his

Douglass, who elicits "thunder-tones" from the audience. Douglass becomes, in effect, a conduit through which Garrison is able to make his own claim to a revolutionary genealogy. In spite of Leverenz's characterization of Garrison's relationship to Douglass as that of Pygmalion and his creation Galatea, it is more accurate to think of their roles as that of a ventriloquist and his puppet. Garrison provides the "philosophy" for his pupil, and Douglass the body. As Fanuzzi argues, Garrison sought "an outcast status" for his movement that "identified [it] with and as the oppressed" (12). He actively cultivated a status outside the law that simulated the legal position of the slave. The forms of dissent that Garrison advocated—his advocacy of non-participation in civic functions such as voting, and his policy of non-resistance—seems "an initiative designed to institutionalize the fantasy of an abject, subaltern stage for enfranchised citizens" (Fanuzzi 13). This act of withdrawal from the political sphere was intended to confront the American public with an anachronistic political culture composed of the disenfranchised, a revenant democratic body politic that existed, for Garrison, in some halcyon, pre-Constitutional past (xv; xxii).

However, by making Douglass the conduit for his attempt to resurrect this idealized, pre-liberal democracy, Garrison repeats the dismembering of Douglass's body. To some extent, the professional fugitive was presented to evoke sympathy from his or her audience. Douglass's narration of his life as a former slave was designed to evoke an "outburst of affect" from his audience (Hendler 6) that would, ostensibly, prompt a

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eyes!" (108). Though Garrison describes Douglass's speech as "clear and emphatic," he reports only that Douglass declared "the cause of non-resistance"—that is, Garrison's own cause—"to be divine" (108). Garrison's interest lies not with what Douglass himself thinks, but rather that Douglass sees that Garrison's own cause is "plain" and "in accordance with the genius of Christianity." In the face of Garrison's brand of common sense, Douglass "found it difficult to argue the question" (108).

political response. However, as Hartman points out, a doctrine of sympathy also allowed audiences to indulge in a fantasy of equivalency. As black speakers and writers recreated in lurid detail their sufferings under slavery, white abolitionists imagined themselves in the place of the suffering slaves (Hartman 18). This act of identification, Hartman explains, was as much a "scene of subjection" as the violence of the whip: in identifying with the slave's suffering, the abolitionist "begins to feel for himself rather than for those whom this exercise in imagination presumably is designed to reach. Moreover, by exploiting the vulnerability of the captive body as a vessel for the uses, thoughts and feelings of others, the humanity extended to the slave inadvertently confirms the expectations and desires definitive of the relations of chattel slavery" (19). In other words, the fugitive slave's performance allows the white audience member access to an identity outside of the structures of federal law; however, in gaining access to such an identity, the abolitionist in fact repeats the foundational moment that underwrites white citizenship through an act of violence agains the slave body.

As Douglass's amanuensis in the *Narrative*, Garrison reinforces this structure by guiding the reader towards certain episodes in the text, often in conflict with Douglass's own narrative efforts. In his preface, Garrison attempts to wrest control of the text's climax from Douglass by citing as the book's central passage Douglass's apostrophe to the ships on Chesapeake Bay. "This narrative contains many affective incidents," Garrison writes,

> but I think the most thrilling one of them all is the description DOUGLASS gives of his feelings, as he stood soliloquizing

> respecting his fate, and the chances of his one day being a freeman, on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay—viewing the receding vessels as they flew with their white wings before the breeze, and apostrophizing them as animated by the living spirit of freedom. (26-27)

Douglass, meanwhile, refers to his fight with the slave-breaker Covey as "the turning-point in my career as a slave" and the moment of his "glorious resurrection" and transformation from "brute" to "man" (69). Garrison favours a moment calculated to evoke an emotional response to the reader and in which Douglass becomes a passive vessel "animated by the living spirit of freedom" (27). Douglass proposes as the key moment in his *Narrative* a scene of active resistance to slavery; Garrison, however, shifts the reader's focus to the slave's capacity for "affective" identification. Garrison insists upon a scene that allows Douglass's audience to indulge in the fantasy of equivalency, in order to maintain his access to the pre-liberal, pre-Constitutional historical moment to which Garrison hoped to restore the nation.

However, in so doing, Garrison confines Douglass to his role as the supplementary, symbolic capital to white claims to the right of revolution. In effect, Garrison stages his act of revolution—his restoration of the nation to a prelapsarian state of insurgency that antedates the political slavery imposed by the Constitution—by containing Douglass's own attempts to invoke the same right of revolution. In the Chesapeake Bay scene, Douglass is a passive object of the "living spirit of freedom," rather than a subject who is capable of acting in his own sovereignty. By highlighting the

Chesapeake Bay scene as the climax of Douglass's transformation from "brute" to "man," Garrison in fact re-constitutes his insurgent American identity by dismembering once again the African American body. Much as the three-fifths clause consolidated the American nation through the dismemberment of the black body, Garrison constructs his monumental sense of his insurgent American identity through this act of discursive violence on Douglass's narrative.

"A Representative American"

Following the publication of the *Narrative*, Douglass traveled to Great Britain and Ireland out of fear of reprisal for his autobiography. He continued to lecture overseas against American slavery but also underwent a "transformation," as he put it in a letter to Garrison ("To William Lloyd Garrison" 127; qtd. in Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story* 171). Whatever affection he had for the American nation was mitigated, he wrote, because "all is cursed with the infernal spirit of slaveholding, robbery, and wrong.… America will not let her children love her" ("To William Lloyd Garrison" 126). As Andrews notes, Douglass's experience of "equal humanity" in England, Scotland, and Ireland prompted a revision of his concept of a "free America" that implicated the North as well as the South in the mistreatment of enslaved *and* free African American subjects (*To Tell a Free Story* 171). Douglass returned to the United States a free man—his English friends purchased his freedom on his behalf—but continued to feel like an outcast in his own country. Though he longed to "love" America, he was disheartened to realize that those feelings might never be reciprocated. In 1847, in words that anticipate Thoreau's expression of

melancholy in "Slavery in Massachusetts," Douglass confessed to a New York City audience that "I have no love for America, as such; I have no patriotism. I have no country" ("Country, Conscience, and the Anti-Slavery Cause" 2:60). The late 1840s and early 1850s were among the most tumultuous in Douglass's life as a free man. He began to search for a model of black insurgency that would repair the wounds caused by white anti-slavery discourse, but oscillated between his desire to claim a national legacy and his understanding of the violence that such an inheritance entailed. Douglass's sense in this period of what Du Bois would later call "double-consciousness" (215) is a product of his past experience with the Garrison movement: though offered up as a symbol of abolitionist discourse and a surrogate for abolitionist claims to insurgent citizenship, Douglass nevertheless remained just beyond the ability to claim that citizen status for himself.

However, by the middle of the following decade, Douglass's sense of exile had abated. In 1855, Douglass published his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*. More than a simple update of his life's story, *My Bondage and My Freedom* represented Douglass's effort to completely revise the narrative of his autobiography (Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story* 217). The volume's preface—composed not by a white abolitionist but Douglass's African-American friend James McCune Smith—heralds *My Bondage*'s subject as "a Representative American—a type of his countrymen" (17). Douglass, Smith writes, "bears upon his person and upon his soul every thing that is American. And he has not only full sympathy with every thing American; his proclivity or bent, to active toil and visible progress, are in the strictly national direction" (17). In

My Bondage, Douglass fully repudiates the tenets of Garrisonism. He rejects disunionsim and turns his eye toward a "national direction," now extolling the virtues of the Constitution as an anti-slavery document. As Wald points out, the Douglass of *My Bondage* had come to embrace a unified federal identity and claimed his status among "the People" of the Constitution (Wald 73). The sense of grief that Douglass admitted in 1847 had apparently healed.[20]

That Douglass is able in 1855 to be identified as a "Representative American" is the result of a longer project in which he attempts to resuscitate the Constitution as a liberty document. In two crucial texts, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852) and "The Heroic Slave" (1853), Douglass tries to reinvigorate the Constitution by positing a practice of reading that emerges from the "ragged edges" left by processes of dismemberment. In these texts, Douglass adopts what Dana Luciano calls a "countermonumental perspective" (170). Countermonumentalism, Luciano explains, disrupts the presumed unidirectional trajectory of past, present, and future and reconfigures them in an "ever-evolving array" (171). Whereas monuments are meant to evoke a sense of simultaneity and a collective experience, Douglass's countermonumental perspective insists instead on discrepant experiences that expose the

20. Leverenz and Levine each link Douglass's claim of a "Representative American" status to his adoption of white-middle class masculine traits. As Leverenz points out, the 1845 account of the fight with Covey is more self-conscious, and contains simpler, more direct language. Douglass is deferent to his audience, and self-abnegating, his verbs equivocal. In the 1855 revision, however, Douglass explicitly positions himself as superior to the white man Covey while implying a certain "chumminess" with his reader (110-12). Moreover, Douglass adopts a confident tone that not only belies the anxiety of the fight but positions himself as a genteel man of culture, the equal of his reading audience, who joins him in his humiliation of Covey (115-18). Levine, meanwhile, notes Douglass's adoption of "temperate revolutionism" that imagines violence as an intoxicant. Douglass emphasizes in *My Bondage and My Freedom,* "The Heroic Slave," and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" a measured, reasoned approach to violent resistance that is derived from contemporary discourses of alcoholism and temperance (*Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* 101; 127-28).

cracks in a self-contained narrative of history. He develops what Castronovo calls "a deliberately unfixed positionality that would produce, not a fragmented self, but an active, critical consciousness capable of fragmenting forms and institutions of racism coincident with the modern nation-state" ("As to Nation" 246).

In "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", Douglass makes himself out to be a representative American, but reverses what being such a representative means. "This Fourth of July is *yours*, not *mine*," he says; "*You* may rejoice, *I* must mourn" (2:368; emphasis in original). He stands before them as proof of the dismembering logic of the national consolidation and the divide between the nation's principles and its practices. Douglass reveals his awareness that, as a fugitive slave, he was deployed as a cipher for some facet of American identity and confronts his audience, demanding that they reconsider the nature of that role. However, Douglass disrupts his audience's sympathetic identification with him, breaking the fantasy of equivalency that had been enforced by Garrison. He insists instead on the vast gulf between their collective experiences. As Douglass argues in his speech, the day of "*your* National Independence, and of *your* political freedom" (2:360; emphasis mine) is for him a day of mourning (2:368; emphasis in original). Thus, he asks, "why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence?" (2:367). Douglass answers his own question by refuting what he assumes is a call to "confess the benefits and express the devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us" (2:367). He understands that he is present at the celebration to stand as proof of the progress of the nation—a synecdoche for the freeman who supposedly embodies the expanding reach of

freedom.

Instead, Douglass destabilizes the meaning of the holiday by insisting on the contingency of the meaning of the nation's founding documents, and takes the radical step of positioning himself as the ideal reader of their meaning. From this position, he attempts to redefine the terms of the Constitution as an anti-slavery document. Though, as Ivy G. Wilson suggests, Douglass is trying to rehabilitate the Constitution, before he can do so he must engage in an act of dismemberment. "[I]nterpreted as it *ought* to be interpreted," he says, "the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT" (2:385; emphasis in original). As Douglass knew all too well, the act of interpreting the Founding Documents was always contingent on one's relation to them. In describing how the Constitution *ought* to be interpreted, Douglass denies its status as a self-contained, closed text and breaks it open for reinterpretation. He argues that his contemporaries, who so easily recite the nation's history, have forgotten the "merit" of the Founding Fathers' example: "[t]o say *now* that America was right, and England wrong, is exceedingly easy. Everybody can say it: the dastard, not less than the noble brave, can flippantly discant on the tyranny of England towards the American colonies. It is fashionable to do so" (2:361; emphasis in original). Supposedly radical discourse, he says, has becoming meaningless—simple fashion—because Americans have forgotten what it means. He notes that the Revolution has become an overdetermined signifier, but instead of trying to close off that meaning once again, Douglass takes advantage of its fragmented existence to recuperate its consolidating power. Douglass charges his audience to "[r]ead [the Constitution's] preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among

them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? it is neither" (2:385). Douglass takes hold of the ragged edges left by the processes of dismemberment and attempts to use them to reinterpret the meaning of citizenship in the United States. Rather than being contingent upon containment, the meaning of "America" becomes malleable and uncontainable.

In "The Heroic Slave," Douglass exploits this malleability in order to reconstitute the dismembered body of the insurgent slave through his fictive representation of Madison Washington. Washington's name and origin in Virginia disrupts national historical teleologies in a fashion similar to Douglass's intervention into the Constitution.[21] Douglass opens his novella by contextualizing his story as part of a Revolutionary American history. Madison Washington, the narrator says, is a man "who loved liberty as well as did Patrick Henry,—who deserved it as much as did Thomas Jefferson,— and who fought for it with a valor as high, an arm as strong, and against odds as great, as he who led all the armies of the American colonies through the great war for freedom and independence" (132). However, whereas this triumvirate of monumental heroes are well-known of Virginia's historical pantheon, Madison Washington, Douglass suggests, "lives now only in the chattel records of his native State." Douglass constructs an image of a broken past. The list of Henry, Jefferson, and Washington is syntactically separated by dashes, fractured by telling gaps that would, but for the institution of chattel slavery, be occupied by equally heroic men such as Madison Washington. Washington, Douglass writes, is "brought to view only by a few transient incidents.… Like a guiding

21. I adopt the term "fictive" from Andrews. Andrews uses this term to characterize African American writing in the 1850s that occupies "a special marginal position between authenticatable history on the one hand and unverifiable fiction on the other" ("The Novelization of Voice" 26).

star on a stormy night, he is seen through the parted clouds and the howling tempests" (132). Washington, obscured in the "annals" of Virginia's "multitudinous … statesmen and heroes" is accessible only by focusing on the rough edges of the monumental past.

In "The Heroic Slave" Douglass satirizes the relationship between the white abolitionists and the insurgent slave. The northerner Listwell, pausing in the woods of Virginia to water his horse, happens upon an enslaved Madison Washington. Washington, like Douglass in his apostrophe to the ships on Chesapeake Bay in the *Narrative*, laments his lack of freedom through an address to an external object that is capable of free movement. Each speaker's deeply affective, emotionally overwrought speech provides evidence of his interiority and his humanity while at the same time developing into a resolution to engage in more active resistance. Much as Douglass's outpouring of emotion leads to his conviction that "I had as well be killed running as die standing" (65), Washington's results in a similar decision to "at least make the trial [of running away]. I have nothing to lose. If I am caught, I shall only be a slave. If I am shot, I shall only lose a life which is a burden and a curse" (134). Listwell observes the scene in secret, but is moved by a combination of fear and sympathy. Captivated, he "almost tremble[s] at the thought of his dangerous intrusion. Still, he could not quit the place" (134). Even after Washington departs, Listwell

> remained in motionless silence, meditating on the extraordinary revelation to which he had listened. He seemed fastened to the spot, and stood half hoping half fearing the return of the sable

> preacher to his solitary temple. The speech of Madison Washington rung through the chambers of his soul, and vibrated through his entire frame. (135)

Inspired by what he has heard, Listwell immediately resolves to "atone for [his] past indifference … by making such exertions as [he] shall be able to do, for the speedy emancipation of every slave in the land" (135). In Listwell, Douglass offers his reader an example of the appropriate response to the testimony of the fugitive slave: faced with undeniable proof of both the humanity of the slave and the inhumanity of slavery, the sympathetic northerner cannot but be moved to take up the cause of abolition.

And yet, even as this scene makes the case for the power of moral suasion, Listwell's response is excessive to the point of parody. His simultaneous sense of fear and desire, his vibrating frame, and his trembling wonder at what he has witnessed reveal that the slave's testimony was not simply an appeal to white sympathy or a call to action, but a spectacle for white consumption. As Washington contemplates his resistance to slavery and resolves to escape or die in the attempt, Listwell, who "had long desired to sound the mysterious depths of the thoughts and feelings of a slave" looks on enthralled while Washington stands with "his fetters … broken at his feet" (134). The scene almost resembles a moment of sexual initiation, with Washington's fetters taking the place of a discarded nightgown. Washington, through Listwell's gaze,

> was of manly form. Tall, symmetrical, round, and strong. In his movements, he seemed to combine, with the strength of a lion, a lion's elasticity. His torn sleeves disclosed arms like polished

> iron. His face was "black, but comely." His eye, lit with emotion, kept guard under a brow as dark and as glossy as the raven's wing. His whole appearance betokened Herculean strength; yet there was nothing savage or forbidding in his aspect. (134)

As much as Listwell is moved by Washington's speech, he nevertheless fixates on the slave's pure physicality as an exotic, potentially dangerous, object of erotic desire, noting in particular his "torn sleeves," his "arms like polished iron," and his "dark and glossy" skin. In this scene, Douglass completes an erotic circuit: he offers a fictional version of himself for the consumption of a white audience. But if, in Listwell, Douglass is presenting a representative of those white Americans who sat before the abolitionist stage, he does so with considerable irony. Douglass satirizes the Garrisonian fetishization of the black insurgent, revealing that even as abolitionists sought to appropriate the voice of the fugitive slave, they remained fascinated by his body.

Indeed, Madison Washington's soliloquy in the woods stages the scene of the Garrisonian dismemberment of the fugitive slave. As Listwell intrudes on the scene, the voice of Madison Washington precedes his physical presence. As Robyn Wiegman notes, in "The Heroic Slave" Douglass defers Washington's corporeal presence, a device that allows Listwell to become convinced of the slave's humanity without having to confront the difference of his racialized body (72-73). Wiegman explains that Washington's eloquence effectively suppresses his physical blackness; the physical signs of his difference are exchanged for metaphysical evidence of similarity, namely his masculinity

and his achievement of hallmarks of white (republican) superiority (74).

However, Douglass's rendering of this scene in the woods, far from modeling an idealized interaction between fugitive slave and white abolitionist, stages an ironic rebellion against Garrisonian discourse. The scopophilic gaze of the abolitionist audience rendered Douglass the passive, feminized object of the abolitionists' rhetoric. He provided testimony intended to bolster his white audience's sense of themselves as masculine, insurgent citizens. In "The Heroic Slave," however, the moment when Listwell is inspired to commit himself to the anti-slavery cause is a dramatic reversal of this structure. Douglass builds up Washington as the embodiment of heroic masculinity through a series of mythological and biblical allusions (Yarborough 172-73). At the same time, Listwell's masculinity is compromised. His behaviour is akin to that of a heroine in a sentimental novel: he fearfully quivers, hidden away, when faced with the force of Washington's sheer masculinity. Douglass thus reverses the typical hierarchy of Garrisonian abolitionism: rather than the fugitive slave being the object of white discourse, and an object of spectacle performing for a white gaze, the white northerner becomes supplemental to an African American narrative of freedom.

Washington reconfigures the closed circuit of revolutionary philosophy that characterizes abolitionist discourse. As a representative of Garrisonian abolitionist philosophy, Douglass was a passive conduit. The language of liberty was given to him by Garrison, and Douglass's only role was to convey the principles of the Declaration of Independence to his white audiences. In "The Heroic Slave," however, this circuit is much more complicated. In the wake of Washington's successful mutiny, the *Creole*'s

mate Grant, who was unconscious for the duration of the fighting, addresses Washington as a "murderous villain" and attempts to resist. Washington parries Grant's attack, but refuses to kill his assailant, instead offering a rejoinder to Grant's insult:

> You call me a *black murderer*. I am not a murderer. God is my witness that LIBERTY, not *malice*, is the motive for this night's work. I have done no more to those dead men yonder, than they would have done to me in like circumstances. We have struck for our freedom, and if a true man's heart be in you, you will honor us for the deed. We have done that which you applaud your fathers for doing, and if we are murderers, *so were they*. (161; emphasis original)

Washington lays claim to the trope of revolution even as he forces Grant to re-examine the distinction between "murder"—defined in the passage as an act of violence committed with malice—and revolution—a form of violence that is committed in the cause of liberty and freedom. Madison Washington thus becomes the representative and arbiter of insurgent citizenship, both able to instruct Grant on the nature of revolution and embodying the revolutionary subject. Even Grant is compelled to admit that his speech "disarmed me. I forgot his blackness in the dignity of his manner, and the eloquence of his speech. It seemed as if the souls of both the great dead (whose names he bore) had entered into him" (161).

However, the conclusion of "The Heroic Slave" is ultimately ambivalent. Grant concedes that "I felt myself in the presence of a superior man; one who, had he been a

white man, I would have followed willingly and gladly in any honorable enterprise" (163). But, Grant's caveat "had he been a white man" still imposes a significant barrier: "[o]ur difference of color was the only ground for difference of action. It was not that his principles were wrong in the abstract; for they are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior" (163). Though Grant knows that, theoretically, Washington embodies the qualities of insurgent masculinity, he nevertheless continues to refuse access to the trope of revolution to the African American on account of the colour of his skin. He cannot let go of the essential separation between freedom in the abstract and revolution as a practice that is as available to black slaves as his white ancestors. While Douglass is suggesting that the rebellious slave may, in fact, be a better representative of insurgent citizenship than his white counterparts, his narrative closes with this ambivalent sense that Washington's example is for naught. In the end, Washington and his compatriots must relocate to Nassau, and cannot return to the United States. Though Grant shares the story of Washington with a resistant audience and resolves to never again participate in the slave trade, the revolution in "The Heroic Slave" is never fully realized. Perhaps this is why Douglass is unable to narrate the actual events on board the *Creole*, presenting them only through the words of a man who was never witness to them. Regardless, Grant's equivocation serves as a sobering indicator that Douglass's efforts to bridge the gap between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are incomplete. Douglass acknowledges that he is still denied access to an unproblematic status as an "American." At this point, he remains unable to reconcile the dismembered body of the African

American with the arguments for universal liberty that he hoped to re-invigorate.

CHAPTER TWO

John Rollin Ridge's *Joaquín Murieta*: Containing Insurgency after 1848

Justice removed, then, what are kingdoms but great bands of robbers? What are bands of robbers themselves but little kingdoms?

St. Augustine, *The City of God*

This is a story about a human head in a jar. This is a story about bandits, about Joaquín Murieta, a nineteenth-century Mexican, a matinee idol among bandits, who may or may not have been a murderer, who may or may not have been killed and beheaded one yellow morning in Fresno County in 1853. This is a story about legends and lies and the romantic stories Californians have told one another and withheld from impressionable children for over one hundred years.

Richard Rodriguez, "The Head of Joaquín Murieta"

On August 19, 1853, patrons of the Stockton House saloon in Stockton, California were offered a rare opportunity: a chance to glimpse the bodily remains of two of the region's most notorious bandits, Joaquín Murieta and his "lieutenant," Three-Fingered Jack.[1] The pair had recently been apprehended in Arroya Canyon by the California Rangers, a state-organized posse assembled by special order of the governor and placed

1. Historical and literary sources use a variety of spellings of "Murieta." For the sake of clarity, I have adopted the spelling John Rollin Ridge uses in his novel. However, when quoting directly from primary and secondary material, I preserve the source's spelling.

under the command of Captain Harry Love, a veteran of the U.S.-Mexican War. To prove the success of their mission, Love and his men had preserved Murieta's head and Jack's hand in alcohol and toured them around the state in order to, in Love's words, "let it become fully known and established that the much dreaded assassin is at last captured and slain" (qtd. in Secrest 31). Moreover, the traveling exhibit offered a convenient means by which the Rangers could recoup expenses incurred in pursuing their quarry. After the show had outlived its profitability, Joaquín's head was sold at police auction, and changed hands several more times before ending up as exhibit 563 in Louis L. Jordan's Pacific Museum of Anatomy and Natural Sciences in San Francisco. There, the remains were displayed alongside other fragmented examples of the non-normative: corpses of syphilitic babies, the remains of Haitian pirates, and body parts ravaged by venereal disease. The head remained in Jordan's museum until 1906, when it was lost in the earthquake of that year.[2]

As a gruesome signifier of the containment of outlaw violence, Joaquín Murieta's head played an important role in what Anton Blok calls the "theatre of law." Blok argues that in the absence of a stable, regular police force and other forms of discipline, authorities turn to "theatrical violence, terror, and defamation" to demonstrate their power (102). Captured bandits were frequently the subject of such performances. As Juan Pablo Dabove adds, in nineteenth-century Latin America, bandits "were not simply executed; they were hanged from conspicuous trees, publicly shot, decapitated or quartered, exposed at crossroads, in markets, on pikes, on fences, in squares, and even photographed

2. For a comprehensive history of the circulation of Joaquín's head, see Secrest's "The Horrifying History of a Highwayman's Head" and Ken Gonzales-Day's Lynching in the West, 1850-1935 (178).

in order to obtain maximum publicity from the punishment" (24). The exhibition of the decaying remains was, in Foucault's terms, an "excessive demonstration"—an act of state-sponsored terrorism designed to warn against any future transgressions of the law (83). Joaquín Murieta's head was a trophy for the state, providing grisly proof beyond doubt that any future insurgents faced swift, violent reprisal at the hands of state-sponsored posses, hastily organized vigilance committees, or the mob justice of "Judge Lynch." It advertised to residents of California that even on the periphery of the American nation, state authority was absolute and that the threat, real or imagined, of an armed Mexican resistance had been contained. An elaborate performance of power, Joaquín's posthumous tour across the state reterritorialized Alta California and reclaimed in the name of the United States those hills and canyons that he and his gang had haunted. The dismembering and exhibition of the outlaw, then, is part of a vocabulary of domination through which the United States established its sovereignty over its new territorial acquisitions.

However, advertisements for the morbid presentation reveal an underlying anxiety over this self-contained narrative of colonial conquest. One poster (figure 1) includes a lively image of the notorious outlaw, juxtaposed with an illustration of a group of spectators who look with varying degrees of alarm at the severed head, pickled in a jar. Curiously, the head of the live Joaquín bears little resemblance to the deathly, preserved visage: the latter has short-cropped hair and a moustache, while the former has long hair and is clean-shaven. This discrepancy leaves open the possibility of mistaken identity; indeed, the text of the poster suggests some questions remained about the true identity of

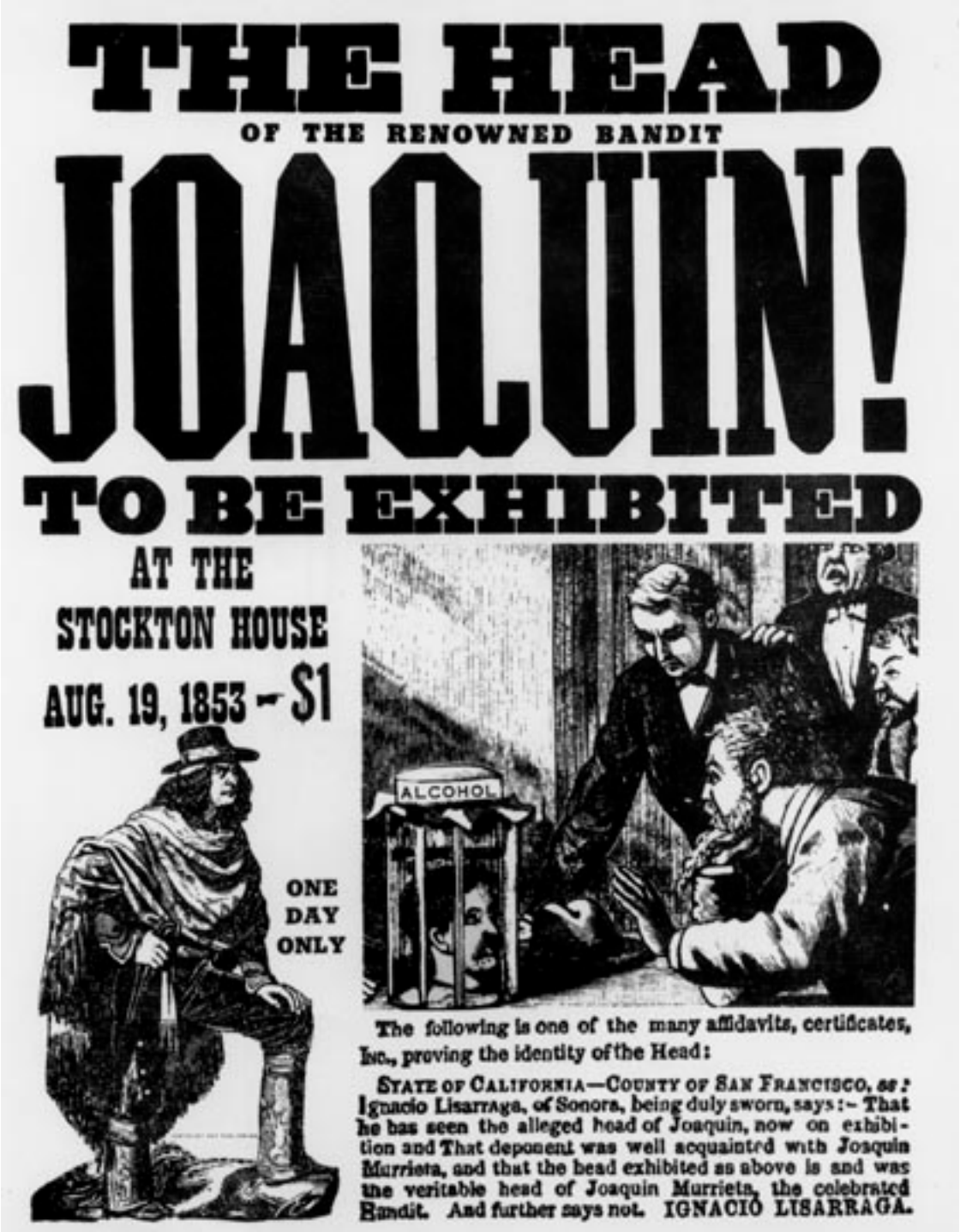

Fig. 1. Advertisement for the Exhibition of Joaquín Murieta's Head. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

the head on exhibit. The advertisement provides "one of … many affidavits [and] certificates … proving the identity of the head," citing in particular the testimony of a man named Ignacio Lisarraga, who claims to have "seen the alleged head of Joaquín, now on exhibition" and swears "that the head exhibited above is and was the veritable head of Joaquín Murieta the celebrated bandit." Another poster offers a similar statement attesting to the authenticity of the head, protesting that "[n]o reasonable doubt can be entertained in regard to the identification of the head now on exhibition as being that of the notorious robber, Joaquín Murieta, as it has been recognized by hundreds of persons who have formerly seen him." Such disclaimers were necessitated by an ongoing debate over the veracity of Love's claims. A newspaper article in the *Alta California*, for instance, argued that "it is more than probable that the 'Joaquín Rangers' … were mistaken in their man, and decapitated an unlucky person who went out with a party from Los Angeles to capture wild horses" (4). The Rangers, the article speculates, "wanted a human head for exhibition, and to secure the reward offered for Joaquín, the one they have will answer as well as another" (4). The *San Francisco Chronicle*, meanwhile, remarked that the remains "could only have been displayed by a couple of unscrupulous tricksters the like of which could only have gotten away with this in California" (qtd. in Thornton 25). Many in the gold diggings were skeptical that the Rangers had captured Joaquín at all; indeed, some contemporary scholars have suggested that Joaquín Murieta may not have even existed.[3] Rather, as Gonzales-Day argues, the figure hunted by the Rangers was likely a composite of several persons (173). The "celebrated bandit" Joaquín

3. See Dabove 11; Kroeber 5; and Owens 38.

Murieta, then, was perhaps not so much a real individual than he was a cipher for the anticolonial resistance of those individuals living in the newly acquired American Southwest—a symbolic figure through whom the United States sought to establish its authority over the unintegrated space of the borderlands.

The newspapers' questions about Love's claims foreshadow the concerns of this chapter. These articles' skepticism indicates not only the dubious nature of Love's particular claims but also a similar incredulity and even discomfort with the American colonization of California. The *Alta California*'s offhand remark that "the [head] they have will answer as well as another" testifies to the violent practices that were necessitated by the American invasion and occupation of the Southwest; meanwhile, the *Chronicle*'s disparaging characterization of Love and his men as "unscrupulous tricksters" evinces a certain uneasiness with the state's collaboration with extralegal, civilian violence. Together, the articles recognize the importance of the head not as a physical object but as a symbol. It is irrelevant *whose* head Love possesses. What matters is what the head signifies: the state's ability to quell armed resistance to its authority and to legitimate its control over an increasingly diverse population. At the same time, though, the newspapers' remarks imply a certain level of anxiety over the physical practices of colonialism that were required to establish state control over a liminal, colonial space. In other words, the newspaper editorials highlight the discrepancy between the narrative of the United States's colonial mission—its Manifest Destiny—and the material realities of U.S. imperialism.

Joaquín's story might have been consigned to the same fate as his bodily remains

if not for the efforts of John Rollin Ridge, a Cherokee journalist and poet who in 1854 published *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit*, a fictionalized history of Joaquín Murieta's exploits. As Henry Joseph Jackson argues in his introduction to the University of Oklahoma Press edition of *Joaquín Murieta*, "[i]t is not going too far to say that in this little book Ridge actually created California's most enduring myth.… [I]t was Ridge's *Life* of that outlaw, as preposterous a fiction as any the Dime Libraries ever invented, that sent this vague bandit on his way to be written into the California histories" (xi-xii).[4] Ridge's version of the life of Joaquín Murieta has since been told and re-told by historians such as Hubert Howe Bancroft and Theodore Hitell,[5] by poets such as Joaquín Miller and Pablo Neruda, and by prose writers such as Richard Rodriguez. As Shelley Streeby has noted, Joaquín has been the focus of numerous Latin American *corridos* (275ff), and John Carlos Rowe cites Ridge's version of Joaquín as an influence on the creation of frontier heroes such as O. Henry's Cisco Kid and various incarnations of Zorro (169n30).[6]

But more than this, Ridge's novel is also noteworthy for its value as an artifact of the post-1848 United States borderlands. As Rowe puts it, *Joaquín Murieta* is "an extraordinary example of how literary texts condense the contradictory political, social, legal, cultural, and psychological effects of colonial conquest" ("Highway Robbery" 149). Specifically, Ridge's novel details the ways in which the violence of colonial expansion was reconciled with the United States's notion of its own manifest destiny

4. Sandell, too, argues that Ridge is responsible for the endurance of the Joaquín legend (22).

5. For more on Bancroft's and Hittell's appropriation of Ridge's novel as a historical source, see Kroeber, p. 10.

6. Streeby and Rowe each offer more exhaustive lists of the various incarnations of Joaquín in literary and popular culture. See Streeby, p. 254, and Rowe, p. 169.

through a logic of counterinsurgency. Ridge's novel traces the processes by which California, a territory that was, as Laura E. Gómez notes, "the product of a unique process of 'double colonization,' first by the Spanish and later by the Americans" (10), was transformed into American space.

The circulation of the head offers a powerful metaphor for the United States' colonial practices in the wake of its war with Mexico and what Michael Paul Rogin calls the "American 1848." This historical moment is defined by the potential fruition of the nation's Manifest Destiny on the Pacific coast. However, this act of imperial aggression prompted fractious questions over the expansion of slavery in the continental United States as politicians and the public debated whether or not the annexed territories would be slaveholding states or not (Rogin 20-21). More pertinently to this chapter, the United States' apparent victory in Mexico presented a new set of problems as well, challenging received definitions of American citizenship by extending it legally, if not practically, to non-white residents of the Mexican Cession. Even as proponents of Manifest Destiny justified the invasion of Mexico by citing narratives of democratization, the incorporation of a new category of American—the Mexican American—was fraught with racial anxiety. The figure of the Mexican-American citizen stoked Anglo Americans' fears of democracy gone too far, threatening their imagined monopoly on liberal subjectivity. At the same time, Whig critics of the war argued that such brazen expansionism was a betrayal of the values of the Declaration of Independence and subverted American democracy from within.

While Mark Rifkin has already noted how Ridge's novel addresses the persistence

of alternative publics within colonized national territory, I want to explore more particularly how the novel's specific focus on "banditry" as a form of insurgency reveals one of the means by which the space and population of California were, however loosely, integrated into the United States. As Rowe points out, the image of the Latin American bandit was ingrained in American minds well before the U.S.-Mexican War. "The legend of the Mexican *bandido*," Rowe writes, "is traceable to the political divisions of the anti-colonial forces in Mexico from the 1820s, when strong military leaders, *caudillos*, like Santa Anna, supported various regimes according to their preferences and special interests" (156). These stereotypes were circulated throughout the U.S.-Mexican War in popular fiction that "celebrate[d] U.S. heroes who are 'thinly disguised Natty Bumppos'" and "demonize[d] the enemy as ruthless Mexican *bandidos* and *caudillos*, who stand in the way of the Mexican people's desire for liberty" (156). As David P. Sandell adds, U.S.-Mexican War discourse depicted Mexican resistors as a horde of highway robbers and assassins, "the ultimate dramatization of frontier mythology in which the role of the heroic frontiersman was played by the United States army and that of the wilderness by Mexicans" (35).

Ridge's novel, I argue, exposes how the language of banditry served to legitimate the contradictions that inhered within the United States's supposedly benevolent program of Manifest Destiny. The invocation of the "bandit," I will argue, was imposed by the state onto racialized expressions of anticolonial insurgency that delegitimized racialized claims to rebellion while sanctioning Anglo-American acts of extralegal violence against the Mexican-American population of the borderlands. The language of banditry was

deployed as a form of counterinsurgency that reorganized Mexican territory as American space; it afforded the United States the capacity to establish its authority on the peripheries of the nation by putting the enforcement of the border in the hands of citizens, its *posse comitatus.* Moreover, the appellation "banditry" contributes to a historical revision of United States colonial practices by turning the sovereign nation of Mexico into a non-state, illegitimate body politic. In this chapter, I will explore how Ridge engages in an act of insurgent authorship by historicizing Joaquín's resistance. However, I will also demonstrate how Ridge participates an act of *counter*insurgency, staging his claim to "American" status against the violent exploits of his protagonist.

"Like with Unlike Pollen Mixed"

In writing *Joaquín Murieta*, Ridge claims a historical perspective: his agenda, he says in his book's "Editor's Preface," is to "preserv[e], in however rude a shape, a record of at least a portion of those events which have made the early settlement of this State a living romance through all time" (4). He acknowledges that his novel is not as valuable as an aesthetic object as it is as a historical archive; its "chief merit," he admits, "consists in the reliability of the ground-work upon which it stands and not in the beauty of its composition" (4).[7] In *Joaquín Murieta*, Ridge attempts to piece together a fragmented history of the settlement of California. His novel assembles a variety of primary sources, even quoting the *Marysville Herald* directly (21). As Lori Merish argues, in *Joaquín Murieta* Ridge consciously challenges the discourse of historical writing (35). In an act of

7. Ridge publicly, and vehemently, defended the historical accuracy of *Joaquín Murieta*. When one reviewer challenged its veracity, Ridge challenged his critic to reproduce the extensive research he had conducted for the novel (Parins 105).

what might be called insurgent authorship, Ridge attempts to appropriate contemporary print technologies and cultures in order to undermine print's privileged space as a font of objective, universal "truth" (Merish 35).[8] His blending of fiction and history in *Joaquín Murieta* troubles the kinds of official histories that charted the course of Manifest Destiny across the United States by filling in the gaps in the "living romance" of Western expansion, much as Douglass in "The Heroic Slave" aims to fill in the gaps in Virginia's history through his fictive account of Madison Washington.

As Maria Mondragón argues, Ridge sought to challenge white monopolies on historical narrative. Indeed, he considered historical writing a valuable tool that could be deployed to advance Native American interests in the United States. He wrote *Joaquín Murieta* in hopes that it would sell enough copies to fund a newspaper devoted to

> the interest of the Indian race.… The Indians certainly need friends and a newspaper properly wielded would be the most powerful friend that they could possibly have. It would be a medium not only of defending Indian rights and of making their oppressors tremble but of preserving the memories of the distinguished men of the race, illustrating their characters and keeping green and fresh many of the most important events of Indian history which should not be allowed to perish. ("To Stand Watie" 9 October 1854, 82-83)

For Ridge, the historical record was an important site for his critical intervention. As

8. Kroeober calls Ridge's blending of the historical and the fictive an "impure" mode (10).

editor of such a newspaper, he believed that he would be able to write a Cherokee history "as it *Should* be written, and not as white men will write it and as they will tell the tale, to screen and justify themselves" ("To Stand Watie" 9 October 1854 83). Ridge hoped that his newspaper would contribute to a reconstituted Native American history that had been dismembered by white historical writing. His newspaper, he hoped, would make "[m]en [and] governments … *afraid* to trample upon the rights of the defenceless Indian tribes when there is a power to hold up their deeds to the execration of mankind" ("To Mrs. S. B. N. Ridge" 86).

Most critics who read *Joaquín Murieta* read it as part and parcel with this critical agenda. Ridge's novel is, according to this reading, an expression of Ridge's outrage at the treatment of the Cherokee people at the hands of the United States government. Joaquín is a thinly veiled surrogate for Ridge himself, and the violence he experiences in the novel is a metonym for violent displacement suffered by the Cherokee. In his seminal reading of the novel, Louis Owens claims that "Ridge transforms himself and his bitterness against the oppression and displacement of Indians, becoming a haunted shapeshifter writing between the lines" (32).[9] However, as Powell astutely points out, reading *Joaquín Murieta* simply as an expression of "minority rage" reductively elides

9. Kroeber makes a similar point, arguing that "[t]he Californians' treatment of the Mexicans parallels the Georgians' treatment of the Cherokee, whose expulsion was in part precipitated by a discovery of gold in their territory" (6). See also Alemán, p. 75; Merish, p. 33; and Lape, pp. 77-78. These readings tend to overemphasize the similarities between the Cherokee and the Mexicans to point of quite reductively conflating two different experiences of colonial violence with one another. Above all, Ridge was adamant that various groups' experiences could not be spoken of synonymously; much of his editorial writing is dedicated to the notion that some races were innately superior to others; even then, the individual experiences of particular members of a given race or community may differ dramatically. *Joaquín Murieta* makes this patently clear in its depiction of the "half breed Cherokee" who perform the unseemly work of hanging Mexican outlaws who capitulate to the law. Meanwhile, Ridge's literary treatments of the Chinese workers and of the "Digger" Indians are strikingly racist. On the complexities of Ridge's raciology in *Joaquín Murieta*, see Christensen, "Minority Interaction in John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*."

the complexity of Ridge's positionality regarding race, nation, and empire.[10] The historical intervention that Ridge hopes to make with *Joaquín Murieta* is far more elaborate than a simple indictment of U.S. colonial policies; rather, Ridge hopes to flesh out the processes by which Manifest Destiny deals with its own contradictions. More than that, though, *Joaquín Murieta* constitutes Ridge's own attempt to appropriate those practices and lay his own claim to an unfettered American identity.

Much like Joaquín in his novel, Ridge was eager and willing to assimilate to "Americanness," but had been denied as a consequence of his alterity. Ridge was from a slaveholding family in the South, and supported the Confederacy during the Civil War. He believed in the salutary potential of Manifest Destiny, which he thought would bring about a millennial American nation through a process that he called "amalgamation." Nevertheless, he had also been witness the violence committed in the name of American colonialism. Like the Joaquín Murieta of his novel, he had come to California in part to escape a chaotic situation back home, namely a violent split in the Cherokee Nation over the Treaty of New Echota (1835).[11] Ridge's family had supported the treaty, which sold Cherokee land to the United States and ultimately led to the forced death march of his people now known as the Trail of Tears. His father, John Ridge, believed his support of the treaty to be a pragmatic move: he and his "Treaty Party" Cherokee assumed that the

10. Powell suggests that Ridge's novel reveals the "multicultural history of the state that has carefully been edited out of the 'official story'" (*Ruthless Democracy* 51). He elsewhere admits that There is "compelling biographical evidence that might connect Ridge's own sense of rage to Murieta's personal war of vengeance" ("Historical Multiculturalism" 189), but also suggests that *Joaquín Murieta* has been unduly burdened as a consequence of being the first novel published in the United States by an aboriginal author, "being asked to speak for those Native Americans and Mexican Americans who were brutally repressed in the first half of the nineteenth century" (186).

11. Ridge left Arkansas for California after killing a member of the Ross Party Cherokee. Though he claimed to have been acting in self-defense, he doubted that he would receive a fair trial and moreover feared reprisal from the rival faction (Parins 55).

United States would seize their land regardless of how they responded to the Treaty. However, members of a second faction, led by John Ross, declared members of Ridge's family to be in violation of a Cherokee law prohibiting land sales to the United States. They thus pronounced and carried out a death sentence on John Ridge and several of his allies.[12]

Ridge put no small share of the blame for his father's death and the divisions amongst the Cherokee on the United States government, suggesting that it had all but abandoned the Cherokee to a state of lawlessness and misrule. In December 1848, he wrote,

> a furious banditti must exist, defying law and order, until a strong arm is extended over them—I mean the laws of the United States. I would advocate a measure, therefore, which looks to the event of making the Cherokee nation an integral part of the United States, having senators and Representatives in Congress, and possessing all the attributes, first of a territorial government, and then of a sovereign state. ("The Cherokees" 52)

Ridge alleges that the conditions between his people were the result of "the policy of the U.S. gov." and "oppressions, practiced upon [the Cherokee] by the State of

12. Ridge describes the killing of his father in a biographical statement that serves as the preface to his collection of poetry. The lurid detail is reminiscent of some of the sensationalistic violence in *Joaquín Murieta*: "I saw my father in the hands of assassins.… They dragged him into the yard and prepared to murder him. Two men held him by the arms, and others by the body, while another stabbed him deliberately with a dirk twenty-nine times.… My father fell to earth, but did not immediately expire. My mother ran out to him. He raised himself on his elbow and tried to speak, but the blood flowed into his mouth and prevented him" (7).

Georgia" ("The Cherokees" 52). Ridge concludes that only the imposition of a strong rule of law can resolve the state of misrule among his people.[13]

Maria Windell argues that Ridge's comments are indicative of his acculturationist perspective, suggesting that Ridge's advocacy of a "sovereign [Cherokee] State" in the Union was meant to provide a legally guaranteed space for his dual identity as both Cherokee and American (176). However, the balance of Ridge's editorial writing on U.S. colonialism suggests a different understanding of how such an interaction might unfold. In 1857, Ridge published an editorial in the *Daily Bee* in which he wrote, "[w]e cannot help wishing to see Uncle Sam the dominant lord of every square sod of ground, from Panama to the Arctic Circle, on the soil of North America.… Young America has a mission to accomplish, and you might as easily write and preach the whirlwind into composure as to check him in the career marked out for him by an unswerving destiny" ("Evangelization" 2). A member of the Knights of the Golden Circle (Parins 180-83), Ridge was disappointed when William Walker's filibuster government collapsed in Nicaragua, though he remained confident that "the process of Anglo-American acquisition will … not be permanently checked" (qtd. in Parins 126).[14] Instead of

13. According to Cheryl Walker, "Ridge considered 'the rule of law' one of the most important contributors to national stability, and in his mind the constitution of the nation as a legal entity was essential to its longterm viability" (112). She writes, "*The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* can be read as a novel about the law" that "continually puts pressure on the question of what is 'lawful'" (112). Walker contends that the novel highlights the discrepancy between state law and natural law, making Ridge's novel an unlikely but complementary companion text to some of Thoreau's political essays.

14. The Knights of the Golden Circle was a society dedicated to the annexation of territories in the Caribbean and Central America as a means to extend Southern slavery. William Walker was among the most famous American filibusters, leading mercenary expeditions into Mexico and South America. In 1856 he managed to install himself as president of Nicaragua before being ousted in 1857 by a coalition of Central American troops and American mercenaries financed by Cornelius Vanderbilt. For a history of U.S. filibustering, including discussions of Walker and the Knights of the Golden Circle, see Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*. On literary mediations of Walker's career and his relation to U.S. empire, see Brady Harrison, *Agent of Empire: William Walker and the Imperial Self in American Literature*.

"acculturation," Ridge understood U.S. colonialism as a process of "amalgamation"—a pseudo-Darwinian process of social evolution whereby the best features of select members of various, privileged races would intermingle to bring about a millennial society that was identified, quite explicitly in Ridge's work, as "American."[15]

Ridge articulates his theory of "amalgamation" over a series of editorials and essays, as well as his often overlooked poetry. In the *Daily Bee* he argued, "[i]n the march of events, those races which have an affinity will be brought together; the others will be improved while they last, and afterwards become extinct" ("The Present Century" 2; qtd. in Parins 124). He elaborates on his racial theory in a series of pseudoanthropological articles he contributed to *The Hesperian* in 1862. Ridge, whom Blake Allmendinger notes was a proponent of scientific racism and racial Anglo-Saxonism, develops a curious theory of white supremacy that arranges not only Anglo-Americans but Native Americans into a fixed hierarchy. He differentiates between aboriginal persons from the western part of North America and those from the east. "Those west of the Rocky Mountains," he writes, "are not the best specimens of the race, if indeed, they belong at all to the same stock" ("The North American Indians" 69). In the same essay, however, he valorizes eastern nations, and especially the Cherokee, as "manifest[ing] the traits upon which the immemorial idea of Indian heroism, nobility of character, and dignity of thought are founded" (69). The Cherokee, to whom Ridge accords a privileged place in his schema, are noted for having a "lighter complexion" than adjoining tribes (73). As Michaelsen notes, Ridge believed that the Cherokee complexion darkened over time as a result of

15. As Parins argues, Ridge supported American seizure of Mexican claims in California as well, and even advocated further annexation of Mexican territory as far as Sonora (139). See also Cheryl Walker, p. 119.

their exposure to other, supposedly inferior, tribes (142). In contrast, Ridge suggests that contact with Anglo-Americans could potentially bring about a harmonious world "inhabited by a few leading races, speaking each a language not hard to be understood by the other, and having a few well perfected forms of government … while all other distinctive languages, peoples, and governments will go down into the gulf of the past" (qtd. in Parins 124).[16]

Ridge's concept of "amalgamation" is best illustrated in a poem he delivered to a meeting of the Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mechanics' Society of the Northern District of California in 1860. This piece, simply entitled "Poem," develops an extended agricultural metaphor to describe California as the locus of his millennial account of "amalgamation." The poem extolls the virtue of the plow as "[t]he first, great, civilizer of the race" (2) and outlines a stadial theory of human development. Civilized society, Ridge suggests, begins in a "hunter state" (29); progresses to a pastoral, nomadic state; and finally culminates in a "third state" in which "the restless Nomad [did] cease to roam" (53). This final state, organized around agriculture, develops into a society formed "on mutual interests and needs" (65), including an "armed alliance" against "the still untamed and savage man" (67-68). Ridge argues that California is best suited for the flowering of such a civilization through an extended metaphor of a garden. California, he says, is a horticultural marvel wherein crops as disparate as "tasseled maize," the "many-seeded fig," and "the grape, as rare and fine / … / As ever grew in shepherd days of peace" grow together "like miracles" (309-22). Ridge connects this metaphor to the

16. See also Ridge's editorial "Mongolian and Celtic Amalgamation."

state's heterogeneous population:

> But, like with unlike pollen mixed, till strange
>
> Creations bloomed and wonder marked the change;
>
> The human soul, the Man, expanded too,
>
> And found in realms of thought the strange and new. (195-98)[17]

As Harry J. Brown argues, "[f]or Ridge, California is the America of tomorrow, a synthesis of races and cultures in constant political flux, where communal and legal boundaries are indefinite and permeable" (134). He saw in California a site of constituent potential, wherein American identity would be forged anew, steeled by its "amalgamation" with exceptional members of other, "superior" races.

Ridge's romanticized vision of colonialism is relatively consistent with that of some of his Anglo-American contemporaries. Advocates of imperialism saw the U.S.-Mexican War as a logical stage in the *translatio studii* of Anglo-Saxon progress. John L. O'Sullivan, editor of the fiercely expansionist *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, similarly imagines America's empire as a progressive force of democratization. O'Sullivan describes the United States as "the great nation of futurity" and, in words that anticipate Ridge's boasts,

> our national birth was the beginning of a new history, the formation and progress of an untried political system, which separates us from the past and connects us to the future only; and so far as regards the entire

17. With few exceptions, Ridge's poetry has been all but overlooked by scholars who offer readings of *Joaquín Murieta*. Whitley's essay "The First White Aboriginal: Walt Whitman and John Rollin Ridge" is a notable exception. See especially pp. 111-13 for Whitley's discussion of Ridge's theory of "amalgamation."

> development of the natural rights of man, in moral, political, and national life, we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity. (16)

In a particularly florid passage, O'Sullivan claims that the United States is "the nation of progress, of individual freedom, of universal enfranchisement.… We must onward to the fulfillment of our mission—to the entire development of our organization—freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality" (21). Western North America, and especially California, was the apotheosis of American progress. Exemplary of this concept is Walt Whitman's poem "Facing West from California's Shores." Whitman's speaker gazes over the Pacific "towards the house of maternity," Asia, and traces human progress from "Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere" (5) to see the "circle almost circled" (4) and the course of human civilization reaching its zenith on the Pacific coast of the United States.[18] As optimistic philosophizing, the views expounded by Benton, Whitman, Ridge, and others were an attractive theory. As a *concept*, the discourse of Manifest Destiny promised to fulfill the trajectory of the nation that had been charted out in the Declaration of Independence and was consistent with that document's invocation of universal rights and freedoms. Ridge seized on the notion of a transcendent American state that could, to borrow a phrase from Whitman, "contain multitudes" ("Song of Myself" 1326). For Ridge, the American imperial "I" was an identity cultivated from the superior stock of various races who met in California—in other words, a man not unlike Ridge's notion of

18. For an extended discussion of the relationship between Ridge's and Whitman's concept of California and its role in the United States's Manifest Destiny, see Whitley.

himself. However, as a *practice*, Manifest Destiny proved to be far more contentious.

Indeed, Ridge's interest in the future face of the American citizen in California resonates with a larger ontological crisis in American identity that developed following the U.S.-Mexican War. After 1848, the cleavages between the nation's foundational ideals and the *realpolitik* of American colonial power became increasingly visible. The passage of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was only the latest in a number of critical gestures that exacerbated social and political conflicts that were already pushing the nation towards the Civil War. The annexation of Mexican territory made previously hypothetical questions about the expansion of slavery a matter of the utmost urgency. "The Mexican War," Michael Paul Rogin writes, "shattered the Jackson-Van Buren alliance between Northern Democrats, Southern planters, and Western farmers. It split Jacksonian democracy into four parts—into free-soilers, secessionists, Young America expansionists, and conservative, proslavery Unionists" (130). Expansion, long imagined as an inevitability, became an immediate and volatile issue, no longer displaced into an indefinite future. The debate over whether new additions to the union would be slave states or free came to the fore, as well as questions regarding the fate of extant non-white populations in territories that had been seized by the United States.

Indeed, many opposed the annexation of former Mexican territories precisely because of their fear that instead of infusing "benighted" non-Anglo-American races with the values of democracy and progressive individualism, the expansion of the nation's borders would corrupt the United States by transfusing the national body with mixed blood. While Manifest Destiny imagined a benevolent American empire that would

liberate and civilize the world, most Americans could not accept the idea of whites and non-whites coexisting in American society. As Reginald Horsman notes, in the Anglo-American mind, Mexicans were a mongrel race, unfit to participate in American democracy (216). The writing of war correspondent and travel writer Thomas Bangs Thorpe, for instance, describes Mexicans in language that is almost the inverse of Ridge's notion of "amalgamation." Mexicans, Thorpe writes, are "degraded being[s]—a strange representation of different races, where the evil qualities of each particular one is alone retained" (*Our Army at Monterey* 96). In *A Voice to America*, Thorpe observes, "Spain, victorious over the Moors, became the discoverer and mistress of the New World. What a magnificent *present*! What a glorious *future*! All peoples looked to her as first amongst the nations, and sovereigns trembled at her power" (150). In contrast, Thorpe characterizes the Mexican soldier as a racially miscegenated, monstrous other, that comprises the worst qualities of Native Americans, Asians, Africans, and Arabs:

> Their countenances were hideous from natural physiognomy; every style of expression was represented: the African, with low forehead and protruding lips; the besotted Indian, his straight hair hanging over his regular features, giving it additional ferocity; the Malay-looking mongrel, with tawny skin, slight moustache, and cold-blooded, treacherous eyes; the low, cunning, yet intelligent, brutish white man. All these various faces peered out from among the loose folds of white cloth, that fall about them, giving them the appearance of Arabs, or of

> some eastern crew of a pirate ship. And yet these were all Mexicans, and might have been, without offence to that people, blood relations, members of the same family. (*Our Army on the Rio Grande* 152-53)

A far different image of California cosmopolitanism, Thorpe's depiction of the Mexican troops as animal brutes is a veritable catalogue of racist caricatures, attacking the very humanity of those who fall under his gaze. They wear but "slight" moustaches and are notable for their barely human, "cold-blooded" eyes. To Thorpe, the Mexican army presented the worst possible outcome of intercultural contact: a once proud European race, the Spanish, that had become debased and impure, monstrously heterogeneous, through racial intermingling.[19]

Still others feared the political implications of the United States as a colonial power. They could not, Horsman notes, "accept the idea of United States colonial rule in the area, for this would endanger the republican form of government; the power of the president would be enhanced, militarism would be rife, and corruption would sap the vitals of a free America" (238). Colonialism was identified as a betrayal of those principles upon which the United States had been founded and threatened to pervert American democracy, sending the nation spiralling toward the revolutionary chaos that was running rampant in Europe. According to Streeby, American dime novelists often

19. See also William Hickling Prescott's *A History of the Conquest of Mexico*. As Jenny Franchot argues, Prescott's romantic history imagined Catholicized Aztecs being defeated by a Protestant Cortés. Yet, even as his book forecasts the victory of the Protestant United States over Catholic Mexico, Prescott is nevertheless deeply concerned with Aztec hetereogeneity and its aftereffects in the blooodlines of contemporary Mexico. Though Spain succeeds in its military conquest, the Aztec live on in the racially mixed Mexican body (Franchot, *Roads to Rome* 48).

"imagined themselves a nation" by "staging their unity against the imagined disunity of Mexico, which was repeatedly called a 'false nation' in the penny press" (39). At the same time, though, Mexico presented a possible future for a colonialist America: a racially heterogeneous nation ruled by a powerful elite at the expense of a marginalized peasant class, no longer recognizable under current definitions of the word "American." Colonial contact in 1848, then, was not simply a case of spreading American values across the globe, but a threshold at which Americans risked becoming something other than American. Turning now to Ridge's novel, I will explore how the discourses of insurgency and counterinsurgency, particularly as they focalize around banditry and outlaw violence, worked to reify the distinctions between American and un-American citizenship and practices in the borderlands.

Becoming Bandit

In late 1852, California newspapers began to report on the activities of a roving gang of outlaws who preyed on Anglo-American settlers. The outlaw gang, as the press depicted them, was phantom-like, capable of striking in multiple places at once and easily eluding authorities at every turn. They prompted, in the words of historian Leonard Pitt, an "unprecedented hysteria of statewide dimensions" (78). In response, the state government was compelled to act: it issued a bounty on Joaquín's head and authorized the creation of the California Rangers, a posse led by Captain Harry Love, to capture or kill "the party or gang of robbers commanded by the five Joaquín's, whose names are Joaquín Muriati, Joaquín Ocomorenia, Joaquín Valenzuela, Joaquín Botellier, and

Joaquín Carillo" (qtd. in Streeby 261). Eventually, the five Joaquíns were further condensed into one man, identified simply as "Joaquín." So successful and widespread were the raids that some Anglo Americans feared that Joaquín was capable of uniting the Spanish-speaking population of California against the white settlers in a mass uprising that would restore the newly one territory to Mexico. Harry Love claimed that Joaquín could easily muster an army of two thousand other bandits to "scour the entire southern country, sack the small settlements, and … announce himself at Sonora" (qtd. in Thornton 80). The so-called "Joaquín scare" seemingly denoted something more than a rash of criminal activities. Rather, it described Anglo-American fears of a collective, racialized, anticolonial resistance to the United States's invasion and occupation of California.[20]

In condensing the collective violence from five men to the work of one lone mastermind, state authorities reduced an expression of anticolonial resistance to Manifest Destiny into the work of a social deviant who did not represent the will of the entire Hispanic population of the borderlands. At the same time, though, the descriptions of "Joaquín" that circulated throughout the borderlands in 1852 and 1853 were vague enough that they might have described almost any Hispanic man. In February, "Joaquín" was described as being "about six feet in height … of immense muscular strength" and as having a "dark, sallow complexion" (qtd. in Thornton 26). Five days later, the

20. For an extended description of the "Joaquín scare," see Johnson, 34-48. Rifkin compares the Joaquín uprising to a supposed Native American revolt in Southern California called the "Garra Uprising," in which a man named Antonio Garra and a group of lower-class Californios supported a rebellion against American settlers. Rifkin argues that Joaquín's plan in Ridge's novel matches closely with accounts of Garra's campaign: "a violent and amorphous collection of outlaws that seems to be in multiple places at once; a charismatic leader whose personal magnetism will drive the actions of his band; a plot of widespread and sustained assault in the southern counties; Californio aid of the rebels/bandits; and the absence of collective will in the wake of the leader's death" (Rifkin 38).

government proclamation offering a reward for his capture described him as a "Mexican of 'good address,' 5'10'', with black hair and black eyes" (qtd. in Varley 61). By the end of March, however, Joaquín was described as a "very ordinary looking man, about five feet six inches in height, twenty-two years of age, [with] a scar on his right cheek" (qtd. in Thornton 26). Joaquín's alternating lack and excess of surnames and distinctive physical features created the sense that Joaquín was, or could be, any Mexican male in the diggings, a fact that did not go unnoticed by some officials. State Assemblyman Jose Covarrubias, for instance, wrote of his concern that the bounty placed upon Joaquín's head would inspire some Californians to "magnify fancied resemblance" and collect "dozens of heads" (4). California newspapers and government proclamations engaged in a early form of racial profiling, conflating markers of "Mexicanness" with signs of banditry, interpellating an entire population into potential criminals who were always already participating in the subversion of state power (Streeby 260). This discursive act was crucial to the United States's incorporation of the borderlands into national space as well as its reconciliation of its own practices of colonial violence with the myth of its anticolonial empire. The invocation of "banditry" allowed the state to authorize acts of extralegal violence against a population that had been, however tenuously, absorbed into the legal definition of "American." As Ridge's novel reveals, the discourse of bandit violence and the space of the California frontier is the point at which the United States reifies its (white, Anglo-American, anti-)imperial identity by demonizing resistance to its colonial mission as the work of an "unjust enemy."

The historical conflation of "Mexican" and "bandit" is dramatized in the opening

pages of Ridge's novel. "The war with Mexico had been fought," the narrator observes, "and California belonged to the United States" (8). The late war had compelled Joaquín to thoroughly repudiate his former home, leaving him "[d]isgusted with the conduct of his degenerate countrymen" (*JM* 8). Joaquín is lured from Mexico not only by the prospect of wealth but also his "enthusiastic admiration of the American character" (8). He hopes to become an American citizen, a fact Ridge clarifies in the third edition of the novel (1874), in which Joaquín twice cites the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as giving him the right to live in California as an American citizen (7-8).[21,22] Intelligent, cultivated, and literate, Joaquín possesses all those qualities that, in Ridge's mind, qualify him to become a citizen of the United States. As Rowe puts it, Joaquín is "the embodiment of a liberal individualism Ridge imagined would 'solve' the problem of racial discrimination" ("Highway Robbery" 168). And yet, in spite of his desire and willingness to assimilate, Joaquín is attacked by a gang of "lawless and desperate men" who rape his mistress, Rosita, before his eyes; hang his half-brother on a trumped-up charge of horse theft; and tie Joaquín to a tree to be publicly whipped. Ridge's account of Joaquín's failed attempt to assimilate makes him a synecdoche for the collective experience of many

21. These page references refer to the revised 1871 edition of *Joaquín Murieta*; all others refer to the 1955 University of Oklahoma Press edition.

22. Under Article VII of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans who had lived in the Mexican Cession prior to the war and desired to stay were given one year to decide whether or not they would retain their Mexican citizenship. If they made no indication either way, they would be revert to American citizenship, now operating as the "default." Article IX elaborates on the legal processes involved: those to whom the Treaty applied "shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States and admitted, at the proper time (to be judged of by the Congress of the United States) to the enjoyment of all rights of citizens of the United States." Amy S. Greenberg argues that the Treaty implied that some Mexicans would now be considered "white" (94); however, her argument conflates "whiteness" with citizenship as a legally guaranteed status. Neither were unproblematically accessible to "Mexican Americans," even those to whom the Treaty clearly applied. Mexicans who lived in the Mexican Cession were never assured of their status as citizens. Legal citizenship and social citizenship worked independently of one another, leaving Mexican Americans of the nation, potential objects of state authority, and yet never quite socially integrated to the extent that they could expect to invoke the state's protections.

Mexicans who lived in California at the time of annexation: though some expected to be recognized by the United States government as potential citizens, a variety of legal, physical, and discursive measures worked to exclude non-white subjects from ever being fully incorporated into the nation.[23]

Upon his arrival in California, Joaquín is such a liminal figure, neither fully American nor non-American. Rather, he is a potential citizen, and a subject ripe for amalgamation. Ridge's narrator describes him as having a complexion that is "neither very dark nor very light, but clear and brilliant," black hair and eyes, and a "frank and cordial bearing" (8). Joaquín is racially ambiguous, and through much of the novel is able to "pass" as Anglo or Mexican to the extent that in one episode he converses openly with a posse that is pursuing him but nevertheless is unable to "make out whether he was a Mexican or an American" (85). He embodies Anglo-American fears of racial undecidability and ambiguity, a human representative of the destabilized meaning of "American" in the wake of Guadalupe Hidalgo. His "off-whiteness"(DeGuzmán xxvii) is uncomfortably familiar enough to remind the Anglo-American miners of Manifest Destiny's potential to "mongrelize" the blood of American citizenship. As Alemán points out, "the most criminal act of Rollin Ridge's Murieta in the eyes of the Anglos and the Mexicans in the novel is not his violent banditry but his process of becoming an American" (75).

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23. A considerable amount of work has illustrated the various ways in which non-Anglo-Americans were discriminated against in the borderlands. In researching this chapter I have found Laura E. Gómez's *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* to be especially useful. Timothy B. Powell also offers an overview of a number of pertinent legal decisions in his reading of Joaquín Murieta in *Ruthless Democracy* (63-4). See also Richard Griswold del Castillo's *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*.

However, as Noreen Groover Lape points out, after his experience of violence he begins to "psychically 'darken'" (79) in ways that resituate him along the lines of chromatic racial difference. As Joaquín is repeatedly attacked by the American miners, he takes on racial signifiers ascribed to Mexicans in Anglo American discourse. Following the hanging of his half-brother, he is abjected from the community and becomes the bandit:

> the character of Joaquín changed, suddenly and irrevocably. Wanton cruelty and the tyranny of prejudice had reached their climax. His soul swelled beyond its former boundaries, and the barriers of honor, rocked into atoms by the strong passion which shook his heart like an earthquake, crumbled around him. (12)

After that moment, the narrator says, "[h]e walked forth into the future a dark, determined criminal, and his proud nobility of soul existed only in memory" (14). This chromatic transformation coincides with Joaquín's social alterity in the eyes of the Anglo miners. Joaquín succumbs to passion, an attribute frequently associated with Hispanic persons in mid-nineteenth century racial discourse, and his honour is compromised, along with any semblance of Anglo-American notions of propriety. In a confessional moment, Joaquín explains his transformation to a former friend, Joe Lake: "'Joe,' said [Joaquín], as he brushed a tear from his eyes, 'I am not the man that I was; I am a deep-dyed scoundrel, but so help me God! I was driven to it by oppression and wrong'" (50). Joaquín, who began "neither very light nor very dark," has become "deep-dyed," his

experience of colonial violence also the moment of his racialization as "other" to the miners.

Rowe reads this scene in *Joaquín Murieta* as depicting the Anglo Americans' failure to respect individual liberty and, concomitantly, warning the reader of the potentially chaotic results of the law's failure to uphold democratic idealism. *Joaquín Murieta*, Rowe says, is "a reasonable indictment of violence unchecked by law, whether such anarchic violence was experienced personally amid the political upheavals of Cherokee Removal or in the gold fields of California" ("Highway Robbery" 154). Jesse Alemán, on the other hand, contends that the problem in *Joaquín Murieta* is rather an excess of law: "laws in fact inspired the violence done to Cherokee Nation, within Cherokee Nation, and in California: The Indian Removal Act; the Cherokee laws prohibiting the unauthorized sale of land to whites; and, among others in California, the Foreign Miners Laws." For Alemán, Ride's novel reveals the inability of "the individual and collective racial body politic" to appeal to American ideology for social equality (173). Rowe and Alemán misrepresent the colonial space as existing either inside or outside the law, as if the two are mutually exclusive. The situation is much more complex. As Achille Mbembe argues, sovereignty in the colonial space "consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law" (23). Mbembe's concept of the colony reminds us that the law is not a transcendent force that applies to all persons equally, but is structured in part around an uneven system of imposition and revocation. The sovereign, Mbembe suggests, is within his right *inside* the law to dictate that another individual stands *outside* the law. In the case of Ridge's novel, Mbembe's theory usefully

provides an apparatus through which we can understand how the discourse of "outlaw" violence restructures the colonial space in such a way as to delegitimize certain forms of constituent power and sanctify others. The colony, Mbembe explains, is "the location par excellence where the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended—the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of 'civilization'" (24). In Ridge's novel, the invocation of "banditry" works to authorize such suspensions, and, in so doing, marshals the citizens of the state as a *posse comitatus* that supplements a weakly integrated state apparatus in the space of the frontier. In so doing, it also sediments the synonymity of "whiteness" with "American" by authorizing acts of dismemberment and violence that have been, and will continue to be, directed against racialized others in the borderlands.

Ridge's novel exposes the crucial role of extralegal violence in the incorporation of colonial bodies and, indeed, territory. For Ridge, the life of Joaquín is "a part of the most valuable history of the State" (7), and the "Joaquín scare" a foundational moment in the consolidation of American authority in California. Indeed, in his novel he describes the transformation of what was formerly Mexican territory into American space. The borderlands, as Ridge describes it in *Joaquín Murieta*, are suspended in a liminal position between regimes of law; though the United States has won the war, their control over the region is flimsy at best. The bandit uprising, Ridge's narrator suggests, was practically an inevitability: "[t]here had never been before this, either in '49 or '50, any such as an organized banditti, and it had been a matter of surprise to everyone, since the country was so well adapted to a business of this kind" (15). The unintegrated space of California

makes it particularly susceptible to the kind of violence that Joaquín and his gang engage in. With "the houses scattered at such distances along the roads, the plains so level and open in which to ride with speed, and the mountains so rugged with their ten thousand fastnesses in which to hide" (15), bandits like Joaquín are able to operate "with almost absolute impunity" (19). Agents of state law, meanwhile, are insufficient to the task of policing this unincorporated space. In Ridge's novel, "[t]he scenes of murder and robbery shifted with the rapidity of lightning. At one time, the northern countries would be suffering slaughters and depredation, at another, the southern, and, before one would have imagined it possible, the east and the west, and every point of the compass would be in trouble" (15).

American rule in Ridge's novel is porous, incapable of reinforcing American sovereignty over California or its people. Indeed, Joaquín's gang is able to take advantage of the lingering presence of Mexican structures of authority, exposing the limits of the American occupation. As Rifkin argues, the terrain bears the traces of an older order of laws. Ridge's novel, Rifkin says, reminds its reader that "[t]he legacy of expansionism resulted in the absorption of peoples and polities which continued to exist in residual (if altered) forms within the putative boundaries of the nation" (27). Joaquín's gang capitalizes on these traces, forming a network of "many large rancheros who were secretly connected with the banditti, and stood ready to harbor them in times of danger and to furnish them with the best animals that fed on their extensive pastures" (19).

As a sign of the incompleteness of the United States' integration of colonial space, the persistence of the *ranchero* system belies the notion that the Treaty of Guadalupe

Hidalgo suspended the state of war between the United States and Mexico. As Streeby notes, "Murrieta's gang is a sort of international army that both recruits and deploys soldiers across national boundaries" (266). More accurately, Joaquín's gang is incognizant of the national borders imposed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: they carry on as though the Treaty had never been signed, their ramifications reaching, as Joaquín boasts, both Sonora and American California (*JM* 74-75). As Rifkin points out, *Joaquín Murieta* recontextualizes the historical bandit uprising as a late stage in an uninterrupted U.S.-Mexican War (30). The Americans who attack Joaquín identify him as a "conquered subject," their seizure of his land reproducing the original violence of invasion and annexation. Throughout the novel, the conflict between Joaquín's gang and the various American parties who hunt him are cast in terms that echo the violence of the war. Harry Love, for instance, is a veteran of the war, noted for his bravery in fighting "the dreaded 'guerillas' who hung upon the skirts of the American army, laid-in-wait at mountain-passes and watering-places, and made it their business to murder every unfortunate straggler that fell into their hands" (*JM* 34). Joaquín, meanwhile, leads a gang composed of Mexicans like Joaquín Valenzuela and Luis Vulvia, who likely numbered among those "guerillas" who had threatened Harry Love during the war. Joaquín's grand designs for revenge, far from being a simple campaign for revenge, become a scheme of anticolonial warfare that is intended to restore California to Mexico:

> "I am at the head of an organization," said [Joaquín], "of two thousand men whose ramifications are in Sonora, Lower California, and in this State. I have money in abundance

> deposited in a safe place. I intended to arm and equip fifteen hundred or two thousand men and make a clean sweep of the southern countries. I intend to kill the Americans by 'wholesale,' burn their ranchos, and run off their property at one single swoop so rapidly that they will not have time to collect an opposing force before I will have finished the work and found safety in the mountains of Sonora." (*JM* 74-75)

As Merish argues, Joaquín's army—by sheer numbers it exceeds any definition of "gang"—takes on national significance (57). The band makes manifest Anglo-American fears that an underclass of Mexicans living within United States territory threatened a massive subversion of the Americanization of the borderlands. According to Alemán, Joaquín's plan is "nothing short of a large-scale Mexican rebellion that crosses Mexican-American socio-economic lines.… a national conspiracy to overthrow Anglo America" (85-86). Joaquín's war is retributive: not motivated out of greed, he instead seeks revenge for "our wrongs, and some little, too, for the wrongs of our poor, bleeding country" (*JM* 75).

However, in transforming Joaquín's response to both the invasion of Mexican territory *and* the personal violence he suffered at the hands of the miners into "banditry," the state authorizes the invocation of its own forms of extralegal violence in the person of non-state, mercenary actors like Harry Love, as well as forms of civilian violence such as lynch mobs. While Rifkin argues that the general state of violence that dominates the narrative of *Joaquín Murieta* is "symptomatic of the *failure* of U.S. governance in

addressing/redressing the conflicts created by its own territorial ambitions (36; emphasis added), he underestimates how the novel's depiction of frontier violence reveals the ways in which the state deploys such a state of emergency to supplement its sovereignty over the nation's peripheral territory. Banditry, as Juan Pablo Dabove argues, is a "difference effect": it does not describe any *particular* practice so much as it denotes a *mark* imposed upon some form of dissent by state power. Dabove explains that in labelling the historical Joaquín and his gang as "bandits," state authorities in post-1848 California attempted to "label as criminal the threat … of an interclass alliance between Mexicans and Californios struggling for land, cattle, and mining rights" (11). Joaquín and his gang represent the possibility of another form of body politic that challenges the authority of Anglo-Americans in the mines and goldfields and engaged in legitimate resistance against U.S. imperialism. By labelling these peoples' acts of resistance as "banditry," Anglo-American discourse stripped their dissent of its political content and transformed it into illegitimate expressions of rebellion, hostile to the putatively benevolent program of "democratization" and "stabilization" of Mexico. Bandit violence, in contrast to state violence, is characterized as barbarism, the product of a pre-political state of nature. As Dabove notes, the bandit is variously depicted as a wild beast or a monster, the death of whom represents the arrival of a particular region into "civilized" status (288).

By invoking the language of banditry, then, state discourse reduces expressions of legitimate resistance, like that of Joaquín and his followers, to illegitimate, antisocial behaviour, and therefore justified the use of extreme force in the name of suppression. Bandits are "unjust enemies" who live in willful violation of the law and are therefore

exceptions to it. As Baucom explains, the figure of the "unjust enemy" or *homo inimicus* was crucial to juridical arguments in favour of colonial violence ("Cicero's Ghost" 126). The *homo inimicus* was characterized as refusing to abandon the state of nature and submitting to the commonwealth of sovereign (i.e. European) governance. Indigenous populations who resisted European colonial governance became exceptions to the law of nations, a "non-sovereign foe against whom a sovereign state could go to war while excepting that enemy from the rights and protections stipulated by the laws of war" (131). As Baucom points out, such populations were identified as "unjust enemies" by dint of their social organization, which appeared to European colonists to be akin to that of "brigands" (129). Anglo-American discourse in California engaged in a similar process in its representation of Mexican-American resistance as an outlaw gang rather than a legitimate, ongoing resistance to Anglo-American imperialism.[24] Banditry, as it was deployed in the borderlands, offered state authorities with what Nasser Hussain calls an "external signature of legality" (107). As Hussain argues, "[b]ecause a given act of violence contains no integral difference whether executed by those under legal authority or by those set against it, the law in resorting to violence, a material act of killing, produces an intensified need" for such signatures in order to differentiate legitimate violence from illegitimate (107). Invoking the language of banditry gave the acts of violence committed by Anglo-American settlers additional justification, authorizing the

24. Baucom identifies the bandit as one of the "inimical enem[ies] of the state" who haunt trans-national colonial projects (133), while suggestively linking these colonial discourses to the contemporary War on Terror and identifying the "unlawful enemy combatant" as a more recent iteration of the *homo inimicus* (138). Dabove also links the bandit to the contemporary figure of the "terrorist" (4). See also Hobsbawm, p. 19. I read Baucom's and Dabove's work as complementary with one another, offering useful ways to think about a genealogy of imperial power that refuses to acknowledge the War on Terror itself as an exception but rather a recent stage in a continuum of colonial war.

lynchings and assaults that were deployed against Mexicans and Hispanics who challenged Anglo-American supremacy in the mining camps. By characterizing Joaquín and his followers as bandits, Anglo-American authorities marked him and his confederates as being exempt from the legal protections that might be afforded them not only as citizens of the United States, but of any sovereign state.[25]

In *Joaquín Murieta*, vigilante violence is revealed to be the means by which the state incorporates peripheral territory that exceeds its capabilities to police on its own. The term *posse* is a shortened form of *posse comitatus*, a group of civilian men mustered by local law enforcement to repress insurgent violence (*OED*). In a space like the California borderlands, where U.S. sovereignty is disarticulated by territorial expanse and the residual presence of another legal order, the *posse comitatus* serve as extensions to the sovereign's reach, limbs that constituted the body politic of colonial power, while dismembering the older political order, as *Joaquín Murieta* suggests. The miners who initially attack Joaquín do so in order to rebuke his claim to citizenship status. Claiming his property rights under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Joaquín challenges whiteness's monopoly on U.S. citizen status. As Ridge's narrator says, the miners are unable to overcome "[t]heir prejudice of colour" (*JM* 9). Subsequently, the bandit uprising is used to justify a more generalized campaign of racially motivated violence.

25. There are myriad examples of Mexican American citizenship claims being subject to scrutiny. In 1853, the letter of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was still being debated, when a Mexican ambassador to the United States complained about the treatment of Mexican miners in California. Washington responded by insisting that the treaty had not been violated since Mexicans who migrated to California after 1848 were not subject to the protection of the law (Griswold del Castillo 67-68). As late as 1869 the Treaty's parenthetical clause that Mexicans would become citizens "at the proper time (to be judged of by the Congress of the United States" was used to dispute the candidacy of Pablo de la Guerra for district court judge (Griswold del Castillo 69). Arizona's recent passage of the "Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act," or SB 1070, is arguably a contemporary iteration of the same forms of legal racism.

After Joaquín's initial rash of killings, "[s]uspicion was directed to the Sonorian Camp, it being occupied exclusively by Mexicans" (*JM* 22). Using torture to extract information, the Marysville Vigilance Committee obtains the justification it needs to enact its own violent campaign against the Mexicans who inhabit the borderlands. The state of emergency engendered by the supposed "Joaquín crisis" allows the state to muster every citizen into its service as extensions of its sovereignty: after Luis Vulvia is captured, he is guarded by "[t]he people *en masse*," who intend to hang him without trial in spite of the fact that the only evidence against him is that a recent wave of robberies had been committed by "a gang of suspicious-looking Mexicans armed to the teeth" (*JM* 92-93). There are frequent, almost serial, scenes in *Joaquín Murieta* in which Mexicans are targeted as conspirators and bandits simply because of their race. In another episode, Reyes Feliz is hanged under suspicion of "being a party to the assassination of General Bean, and, although no evidence appeared to implicate him in this transaction, yet enough was elicited to show that he was undoubtedly a thief and murderer" (54). As the "Joaquín crisis" mounts, the citizens of California become citizen soldiers, acting as surrogates for the state: "[t]he harbouring places and dens of the robbers were found out, and the enraged citizens went to work tearing down and burning up the houses of this character. The conflagration lit up the vault of heaven, and its sound roared among the mountains for miles around" (*JM* 122). State power is here exercised through what Alemán calls a "culture of discipline and punishment": "[a]rrests were continually being made; popular tribunals established in the woods, Judge Lynch installed upon the bench … pursuits, flights, skirmishes, and a topsy-turvy, hurly burly mass of events that set narration at

defiance" (Alemán 89; Ridge 135-36).

Ridge makes clear in his novel that these forms of violence are troubling, even unseemly. The bandit gang and the posses and lynch mobs resemble one another, each employing similar practices to advance their respective agendas. The Americans, no less so than the bandits, are "lawless and desperate men" (9); moreover, their tactics of hanging Mexicans in "California trial[s]" (121) and burning the bandits' "harbouring places and dens" merely match similar practices employed by Joaquín and his followers. The distinctions between state and outlaw violence become so blurred that Joaquín's actions are described with terms that give his gang a state-like authority: they levy "tributes" on Anglo-American settlers (145) and Joaquín spares the life of some Germans noting that he might collect "taxes off of them for 'Foreign Miners' Licenses,' at some other time" (130). Meanwhile, Ridge's narrator comments on the troubling practices employed by the state to bolster its presence on the borderlands. In the wake of one lynching, he notes, "Bah! it is a sight that I never like to see, although I have been civilized for a good many years" (*JM* 138). Ridge's use of the conjunction "although" to introduce the clause "I have been civilized many years" suggests that the kind of extralegal violence enacted by the lynch mob is, in fact, civilized violence, a careful ironization of the practices that underwrite the United States' colonial project. Elsewhere, the lynch mobs rely on the putatively uncivilized "Cherokee half-breeds" to perform punishments that are morally distressing to the settlers. After apprehending a Mexican and extracting a confession from him with the threat of hanging, some of the Anglo Americans question whether or not it is right to execute their captive. Instead, the posse

leaves him "in charge of the two Cherokee half-breeds with the request that they would give a good account of him.… Nothing more was said on the subject, and the next day, he was found hanging on a tree by the side of the road" (128). Ridge's novel suggests here the extent to which programs of "democratization" and "civilization" rely on practices that are understood as "uncivilized," more appropriate to a lawless, Hobbesian state of nature than American statehood.

But in the clash between these forms of extralegal violence, the distinctions between "American" and "un-American" become clearer. In one fight scene, Ridge's narrator observes that the posses and the bandits are virtually indistinguishable: "[i]t could scarcely be called a battle between two distinct forces—it was rather a number of separate single combats" (58). In the midst of this conflict, however, Joaquín's confronts "at the very threshold [a] young Anglo-Saxon" (58). Crucially, this fight takes place at a "threshold," and as Joaquín's opponent becomes racially identified as an "Anglo-Saxon," Joaquín undergoes another transformation. In the brief narration of the fight, Ridge's narrator describes how

> [a] flash of recognition passed between them, and Joaquín turned as if to leap upon a rock at his right, but, at the moment that his antagonist jumped in that direction to intercept the movement, he wheeled to the left, and, throwing out his foot with a sudden and vigorous stroke, knocked the young man's heels from under him, and he fell with violence upon his face. Before he could rise, the wily bandit leaped upon him like a

panther and sheathed his knife in his heart. (58)

Though initially the two sides of the conflict are "scarcely … distinct," over the course of a paragraph their difference becomes fixed along racial lines. The two exchange "a flash of recognition," understanding their roles in the conflict Joaquín's opponent is racially marked as an "Anglo-Saxon," while Joaquín descends to an animal-like blood lust as a racialized outlaw.

The process of colonial incorporation is most fully realized in the exhibition of Joaquín Murieta's head. In preserving Joaquín Murieta's head, the California Rangers sought to finally draw to a close the American conquest of the Southwest, arresting anticolonial dissent by turning the figurehead of Mexican resistance into a trophy of state power. This account translates the brutal state and civilian violence of lynch mobs, posses, and vigilance committees into a heroic victory of civilization over a lawless, monstrous, chaotic threat, reifying the original terms of Manifest Destiny as a program of democratization. Moreover, it condenses Mexican opposition into one gruesome, abject signifier, offered up as proof of the state's ability to contain the destabilizing forces of insurgency. In effect, the exhibition of the head collapses a longer history of Mexican presence in California into dead biological material in such a way as to make permanent the original threshold moment described by Ridge in *Joaquín Murieta*. Joaquín's remains symbolize the violence of incorporation and the containment of resistance, as well as providing an historical artifact through which Americans could "read" the history of the conquest of California. The head becomes what Castronovo calls a "social corpse," a body unfettered by historical weight that "negates the human actor's embodied cultural

density and palpable historical existence" (*Necro Citizenship* 8).

The exhibition of the head, then, reinforces the historical amnesia that underwrote the characterization of Mexican resistance as banditry. It elides the American invasion of Mexico that initiated the conflict between the two nations, calling up instead a series of racist stereotypes that imagined Mexico as the "false nation," or an "unjust enemy"—a figuration which authorized the United States's invasion of another sovereign nation-state. Exhibited with little more context than its identification as once belonging to the "renowned bandit Joaquín Murieta," the head reduces the racially differentiated body to nothing more than a symbol of the state's disciplining of its insurgent others. Much as the five Joaquín's were condensed into one lone bandit, Joaquín Murieta, and finally into the severed head, a generalized Mexican unrest is similarly confined, turned into the product of a single actor, an exceptional, deviant individual. Joaquín's head is a site of what Pauline Wakeham calls taxidermic "colonial disciplining" (5): it is a mechanism by which the Mexican insurgency is reduced to a fragmented, excessive embodiment in the bandit citizen, who is always already denied his claims to the protections of the state and may therefore become the object of unrestrained violence. Through the logic of this exhibition, state authorities offered a means by which the United States could make sense of anticolonial resistance to the "empire of liberty," contextualizing it in the logic of dime novels and travel narratives that had already established the stereotype of Mexicans as a roving bandit horde. Fixed in time by preservative agents, Joaquín's severed head extends the logic of the social corpse beyond physical death and offers a form of discipline that obviates the tragic history of Joaquín's life while consigning his resistance to frozen

pastness.

"In However Rude a Shape"

In the closing pages of the novel, Ridge duplicates Love's account of the necessity of the beheading and preservation of the outlaw's bodily remains. According to Ridge's narrator,

> It was important to prove, to the satisfaction of the public, that the famous and bloody bandit was actually killed, else the fact would be eternally doubted, and many unworthy suspicions would attach to Capt. Love. He, accordingly, acted as he would not otherwise have done; and I must shock the nerves of the fastidious, much against my will, by stating that he caused the head of the renowned Murieta to be cut off and to be hurried away … to the nearest place … at which any alcohol could be obtained in which to preserve it. (155-56)

Ridge's narrator insists that the head is Joaquín's, "thoroughly identified in every quarter where its owner was known" (156), eliding contemporary debate over the authenticity of Love's claims. However, Ridge adds an additional detail: his narrator notes the "phenomenon which death presents in the growth of hair," and comments that "[m]any superstitious persons … were seized with a kind of terror to observe that the moustache of the fearful robber had grown longer since his head was cut off" (156). Ridge gives Joaquín's head a historical afterlife. The head, even contained in a glass jar, still exerts

an aura of fear—a continuing presence that destabilizes the state's narrative of closure.

Ridge's description of the head, then, makes it an apt metaphor for *Joaquín Murieta*'s literary and historical project. Ridge seemingly extends the terms of Joaquín's existence by giving it an afterlife, inserting it into the historical record of California. In general terms, Ridge's novel is an indictment of the practices of violence that underwrite the nation's imperial projects; it exposes how the establishment of constituted power in colonial space depends on a violence that can only be exerted outside the law, and how the state shores up its monopoly on extralegal violence through the invocation of counterinsurgent discourse. He returns to the historical record an account of the violence that "set narration at defiance" (136). This historical intervention reinscribes into a lifeless archive proof of a "manifest contradiction" (4) to a self-contained narrative of Manifest Destiny that imagines its victims as lawless insurgents who stand in the way of U.S. progress. Indeed, to some extent Ridge seems interested in recuperating Joaquín Murieta. Early in the novel, he notes that Joaquín's initial resolve "to labor on with unflinching brow" in spite of his initial victimization "throws its redeeming light forward upon his subsequently dark and criminal career" (11). Ridge, it seems, wants to reverse the logic of the threshold moment: whereas the discourse of banditry imposed upon Joaquín a kind of "darkening," Ridge explains that his novel will "redeem with refulgent light the darkness of his previous history and show him to aftertimes, not as a mere outlaw, committing petty depredations and robberies, but as a *hero* who has revenged his country's wrongs" (80). As Brown argues, "[t]he immediate and mythic relevance of Ridge's novel lies in its peculiar vision of Joaquín's outlawry as an expression of

democratic protest rather than racialist criminology" (130). Ridge suggests that his novel will restore to Joaquín's career its political content, positioning it not as an act of banditry but of legitimate resistance to the tyrannical violence of the American settlers.

The ability of Joaquín's severed head to exert a terrifying force over "superstitious persons" indicates Ridge's belief that the historical artifact—whether in the form of a pickled head or the written word—could continue the project of anticolonial resistance. Though the narrator claims at the end of the novel that Joaquín's "mighty organization.… exists now only in scattered fragments over California and Mexico" and "will make themselves felt in nothing more, it is probable, than petty out-breaks, here and there" (158-9), Ridge's novel survives as a record not only of the daring deeds committed by a heroic individual driven to revolution by injustice but also as a continuation of that revolution in its own right. In narrating the life story of Joaquín Murieta, positioning him a tragic figure who was the victim of racist American violence, Ridge gives Joaquín the historical presence denied him by the American narrative of conquest, recuperating him from the dehumanizing discourse of outlaw citizenship. Whereas for the Anglo-American account of annexation Joaquín's head is a testament to the successful containment of an anarchic, insurgent, Mexican threat, for Ridge, the head is proof of life. Like Ridge's novel, Joaquín Murieta head is evidence of the unseemly—and, according to Ridge, un-American—practices that underwrite colonial expansion into California. It is not simply an ahistorical corpse; for Ridge, it is an undead body that is heavy with historical meaning—a record of the violent practices that were endemic to the "progress" of Manifest Destiny as it was practiced in California.

As I noted earlier in this chapter, the tendency among most readers of the novel is to read Joaquín as a surrogate for Ridge himself, and to suppose an equivalency between the literary work of Ridge's novel and the actions performed by Joaquín. Owens, for example, says that "[i]t does not require a leap of imagination to conclude that Ridge … is acting out his often-sworn desire for revenge in the form of the invented bandit" (38); Merish, meanwhile, adds that through *Joaquín Murieta* Ridge imaginatively avenges the losses of his people (33). Such readings are given credence by frequent comparisons in the novel between Joaquín's acts of violence and acts of reading and writing. Ridge's narrator frequently refers to Joaquín as an "author": after Joaquín kills one man, the narrator notes that "many persons knew the author of this most cool and bloody deed by sight" (*JM* 20), and elsewhere describes Joaquín as an "author who acted out his own tragedies" (109). Moreover, Joaquín deploys Anglo-American print culture against itself, using newspapers to keep track of his followers and to elude his pursuers. Joaquín, the narrator notes, "gathered a pretty good knowledge of what his followers were about from the newspapers, which made a very free use of his own name in the accounts of these transactions" (*JM* 30). Joaquín's literacy even becomes an effective means to spread terror among the camps. Finding a poster advertising a $5,000 reward for his capture, Joaquín appends the words "I will give $10,000. JOAQUÍN." His gesture—nothing more than graphological proof of his presence among the settlers of California—inspires "[n]umerous … Exclamations of astonishment" from this who read it (68). Joaquin's textual trace alone, proof of his historical liveliness and presence, is sufficient to provoke a reaction of fear and horror among the Anglo settlers of California.

To an extent, then, Ridge adopts the mask of Joaquín Murieta to indulge his own desire to resist the processes of colonialism he suffered as a member of the Treaty Party Cherokee. Ridge's personal correspondence reveals that he desired to enact revenge against those who had victimized his family. While it is uncertain whether or not Ridge actually participated in any of the skirmishes that occurred between Ross- and Treaty Party Cherokee in the mid-1840s (Parins 50), he exchanged letters with his cousin Stand Watie in which he admitted harbouring thoughts about killing John Ross. On April 14,1846 he wrote inquiring after Ross's movements and travel plans ("To Stand Watie" 35-36); three days later he wrote again, asking his cousin to procure for him a Bowie knife ("To Stand Watie" 17 April 1846 38). In 1849 Ridge reported that a number of individuals had encouraged him to pursue vengeance but that he had "held back his sentiments on these subject" in deference to Watie's advice ("To Stand Watie" 2 July 1849 64-65). These letters reveal that, while Ridge felt an urge to engage in his own form of vigilante violence, he was conflicted when it came time to act upon those desires. In *Joaquín Murieta*, it seems, Ridge acts out on these feelings through his literary surrogate.

But, as Blake Allmendinger points out, we cannot so easily conflate John Rollin Ridge with Joaquín Murieta. As Allmendinger explains, Ridge "felt ambivalently" toward Joaquín, disapproving of his tactics even as he identifies with him (34). In fact, in the opening pages, Ridge explicitly distinguishes himself as an "exceptional" example of his own race by emphasizing his literary practice. Noting that his novel will draw interest as the work of "a 'Cherokee Indian,' born in the woods—reared in the midst of the wildest scenery—and familiar with all that is thrilling, fearful, and tragical in a forest-life" (2),

Ridge concludes his "Publisher's Preface" by noting *Joaquín Murieta*'s value as "an opportunity to estimate the character of Indian talent. The aboriginal race has produced great warriors, and powerful orators, but literary men—only a few" (3). Ridge's use of Joaquín as a surrogate might thus also be seen as displacing his own desire for revenge, protecting his own claim to liberal subjectivity by projecting it onto Joaquín Murieta. Indeed, as much as Ridge identifies with Joaquín Murieta, the bandit, he also identifies with Harry Love, the leader of the posse that captures and beheads Joaquín. Like Love, Ridge "act[s] as he would not otherwise have done" and "shock[s] the nerves of the fastidious" by offering a luridly sensationalistic novel of frontier violence, in spite of his claim in its early pages that he writes "not for the purpose of ministering to any depraved taste for the dark and horrible in human action" (7). Thus, Ridge lays claim to his own U.S.-American status by marking *himself* as an exceptional Native American who spurns the pistol for the pen. This is not, as Allmendinger or Alemán suggest, evidence of some kind of divided consciousness, but a tactical gesture, well-calculated on the part of *Joaquín Murieta*'s author. Ridge, too, beheads Joaquín, in the interest of making his own claim to "civilized" and self-possessed Republican citizenship over the dismembered body of the outlaw. Ridge, *Joaquín Murieta* assures us, is a *literary* man whose act of insurgency is carefully contained within the pages of a book.

CHAPTER THREE

"A Butchering Sort of Business": Dismembering Subjects in *Moby-Dick*

For God's sake, be economical with your lamps and candles! not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of man's blood was spilled for it.

Herman Melville, "The Affidavit"

The prophecy was that I should be dismembered; and—Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophesy that I shall dismember my dismemberer.

Herman Melville, "Sunset"

In a recent issue of *PMLA*, Margaret Cohen commends recent advancements in literary scholarship that recognize the importance of the "terraqueous globe" as a unit of analysis (658). Twentieth-century literary scholars, she argues, suffered from hydrophobia: they too readily mapped the land onto the sea, imagining the ocean as a metaphor for landward practices. In so doing, Cohen points out, they disregarded ocean travel even when it was the explicit subject matter of literary texts. "Thus," Cohen writes, "Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange, Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner* was read as the memoirs of a capitalist *homo economicus* or of a colonizer settling new territories; the ship's crew on the *Pequod* in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* offered an image of factory labor; and Joseph Conrad's portrait of an inexperienced

commander in 'The Secret Agent' limned a narcissist ripe for a Freudian case study" (657-58). In the essays that follow Cohen's introduction, a range of scholars offer important interventions in an effort to establish what might be called, in the words of Hester Blum's contribution to the same issue, "Oceanic Studies." Oceanic Studies advocates a scholarly focus that shifts away from "methodologies and frameworks imported from existing discourses" to one that "takes the sea as a proprioceptive point of inquiry" (671). According to this nascent sub-field, the sea is an insurgent space: it violates and defies representational schemas through its liquidity, atemporality, and sheer uncontainability. The sea, according to Iain Chambers, is "[a] liquid medium without obvious confines and firm frontiers"; this "liquidity, its seemingly anonymous materiality, resonates with a postrepresentational understanding, an anchorless image loaded with time" (679). It evokes, Chambers adds, "the laboratory of another modernity, in which hegemonic time and space of capital are viewed in askance, diverted, and subverted" (679). Along with recent gestures toward a "post-national" or "trans-hemispheric" rubric for American Studies, Oceanic Studies seeks to discard the category of the nation as a primary lens. The sea offers a powerful operating metaphor for such efforts, its global current suggesting the interrelationship between distant regions of the earth and, indeed, a transhemispheric and planetary connectivity that renders artificially discrete categories such as "nation" obsolete. "This fluid matrix," Chambers says, "interrupts and interrogates the facile evaluations of a linear mapping disciplined by the landlocked desire of unilateral progress and a homogeneous modernity" (681).

As attractive as these ideas may be, they must be tempered with some

qualification. Taking up Herman Melville as an example, we might see how Oceanic Studies overlooks some of the ways in which the sea is itself a locus of national power. Not surprisingly, Melville has become somewhat of a darling for the pioneers of Oceanic Studies, as Cohen's invocation of the *Pequod* suggests. Melville was himself a sailor, serving on merchant ships, military vessels, and in commercial whaling outfits for a significant portion of his life. Additionally, perhaps more than any other U.S. writer, Melville adopts what might be considered a terraqueous perspective. Ishmael's reading of the Pacific in *Moby-Dick* (1851), for example, emphasizes just such a disregard for temporal and physical borders:

> [i]t rolls the midmost waters of the world, the Indian ocean and the Atlantic being but its arms. The same waves wash the moles of the new-built California towns, but yesterday planted by the recentest race of men, and lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between float milky-ways of coral isles, and low-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans. Thus the mysterious, divine Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth. (482-83)

Ishmael's meditative description emphasizes the ways in which the sea "zones" space in such a way as to collapse the geographical space between California and Japan. The Pacific, Ishmael says, reaches across even the most impenetrable borders and brings into

intimate juxtaposition lands separated by both time and space. As Hsuan L. Hsu puts it, Ishmael describes the Pacific as "[a] liquid refutation of national and continental distinctions" (133). The effect is so powerful that Ishmael himself begins to lose a sense of his own identity. He makes his observations from the *Pequod*'s masthead, a vantage point that Ishmael sought out because he desired an opportunity for contemplation and was attracted by the lure of transcending his identity (Blum, *The View from the Masthead* 1). The ocean becomes a "visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature" (*MD* 159)—a sign of transcendental interconnectedness that eschews the rigid categories and hierarchies of the nation-state.

Of course, it is worth remembering that as attractive as such ideas are, in Melville's world they are actually dangerous, not because they are particularly subversive but because the material reality of the ship precludes such inattention. Ishmael cautions the reader that this kind of contemplation is a risky business: "But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch, slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror" (159). Ishmael's moment of transcendence is an idyll interrupted; abstract philosophizing capsizes against concrete materiality. Ishmael's warning is worth emphasizing to those who see in Oceanic Studies a panacea to "national" thinking. Indeed, to return to Ishmael's description of the Pacific, we might consider, too, how his description is redolent with the imperial logic of Manifest Destiny. Ishmael's reference to Californians fresh arrived in the gold diggings as "the recentest race of men" who contrast the "faded … skirts of Asiatic lands" is strikingly reminiscent of Whitman's "Facing West From California's Shores." Much as Whitman's speaker gazes westward at

"the circle almost circled" (4), Ishmael imagines the procession of civilization beginning in East Asia and moving westward to culminate in the United States which will, in time, cross the Pacific in order to fulfill its national errand. In so doing, the national project of Manifest Destiny—of which Ishmael, as an American whaler, is a part—"zones" space just as much as the Pacific does. Indeed, within fifty years of *Moby-Dick*, the United States will have colonized some of the "unknown archipelagoes" and within a hundred accepted the surrender of "impenetrable Japan" on the deck of an ocean-going warship.[1]

While the critics in this particular issue of *PMLA* rightly insist that the sea should be considered on its own terms and that it is reductive to conflate the land and the ocean, they underestimate the extent to which the sea is also a space over which colonial lines are inscribed. Even as the sea itself is ignorant of national borders, the ships that traverse its surface are most frequently national entities that disperse colonial power and enforce boundaries between space. The sea is often a battleground between nations jockeying for position over strategic waterways; moreover, the sea is an avenue of international commerce and capital, its shipping lanes fiercely protected by national and commercial interests. To this day, national governments work to "establish sovereignty" over aqueous spaces such as the Northwest Passage and the Arctic Ocean.[2] While the sea itself may

1. Hsu similarly links Whitman's poem to Melville's description of the Pacific, placing each in a longer context of American Pacific empire. I came across Hsu's work very late in the process of writing this dissertation and so offer no extended engagement with his work. We are both interested in the tensions between the "open" space of the sea and its inscription in a logic of global American empire and capital, as well as the ways in which *Moby-Dick* depicts a transnational labouring population that is "deprived of of the self-determination and human rights accorded to citizens of nation-states" (153). However, whereas Hsu's argument focuses largely on Melville's depiction of geography and space, I examine how this narrative unfolds in the novel's operative metaphor of the whale hunt.

2. A pertinent recent example is Canada's deployment of Coast Guard vessels to the Northwest Passage. In October 2010, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the Canadian government was considering arming icebreakers and redeploying Canadian troops from Afghanistan to the North in order to bolster Canada's claims to Arctic ocean space, citing concerns about terrorism, drug-smuggling, and illegal immigration (Boswell and Fisher).

offer a model for an insurgent epistemological shift away from categories of the nation-state, it nevertheless remains a space that is always subject to inscription and organization by empire and capital.

Indeed, we might consider—following Stephanie LeMenager's example—how Ishmael's comments evoke a concept of the ocean as a "postwestern space."[3] She argues that Melville essentially declares the west "closed" in 1851, four decades before Frederick Jackson Turner's similar gesture in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893): "Melville's postwest is a fictional world in which the continental territories that recently had been taken in the U.S.-Mexican War are already wholly domestic and Manifest Destiny, if it is to have any continuing significance, must be considered in global terms" (109). Thus, she argues, Melville turns to the Pacific as both the horizon and location of U.S. culture, a space through which Melville could imagine "a theory of commercial empire that could not adequately be imagined in either national or continental terms" (110).[4] As she points out, Melville describes the Pacific with a series of metaphors and comparisons that link formerly unintelligible prairies, plains, and deserts to the disorienting space of the sea. LeMenager implies that the ocean is almost supplementary to the prairie, an unremitting extension to the frontier that offers American identity both an apparently endless supply of natural resources—Ishmael's innumerable whales, she says, replace the already diminishing buffalo herds of the plains

3. "Post-western" denotes not only a temporal distinction—that is, after the supposed "closing" of the Western frontier—but also an epistemological category whereby the West has lost its place of privilege as the organizing myth of American identity. For a review of such typologies of the West and the frontier in recent American Studies scholarship, see Nina Baym's essay, "Old West, New West, Postwest, Real West."

4. See also Hsu, who argues that "[a]s the western boundary of the continent, the Pacific became a privileged site and symbol of the notion that America was Europe's successor as the protagonist of world history" (132).

—as well as regenerative space where the nation can be founded and re-founded, over and over again.[5] "Melville," she says, "makes the ocean the site of the naturalization of a global capitalism that, like an idealized Nature with a capital 'N,' seems eternal" (112).

But, the two spaces are not synonymous. Indeed, this is the most important insight made in the *PMLA* issue: that we cannot wholly conflate the landscape and the seascape. Much as Oceanic Studies is too easily taken in by the "view from the masthead," to borrow a phrase from Blum, LeMenager, too, takes Ishmael too readily at his word and thus commits the same epistemological error that Melville's narrator does, eliding the significant differences between colonialism in landlocked North America and colonialism in the South Pacific. The sea does present challenges to received concepts of the American nation on a number of levels that are, in some cases, consistent with those I have addressed in earlier chapters. The ship makes manifest a new set of problematics over which the "ship of state" risks breaking up, as the *Pequod* does, or—perhaps more alarmingly—taking on an entirely different complexion altogether. The insurgent space of the sea *does* in fact posit an alternative epistemology of the nation, as Oceanic Studies proposes. Melville is cognizant of the fact that the sea's porosity, as well as its sheer distance from the structures of state power, make it a site wherein the nation can be imagined differently and where a new revolution might take place. However, this does not constitute a revolution in and of itself; the epistemological challenge presented by this re-imagining requires a material manifestation as well. What *Moby-Dick* concerns itself

5. LeMenager refers to Ishmael's comments in "Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?—Will he Perish?" Ishmael claims that, unlike the buffalo of the Great Plains, whales have not decreased in number but have instead, "influenced by some views to safety, now swim the seas in immense caravans, so that to a large degree the scattered solitaries, yokes, and pods, and schools of other days are now aggregated into vast but widely separated, unfrequent armies. That is all" (461).

with, in particular, is the ways in which such alternatives are contained. Indeed, *Moby-Dick* is significantly a work wherein insurgency does *not* become manifest.[6]

Indeed, in Melville's sea fiction, the ship, far from representing a "countersite or heterotopia of modernity" (Chambers 679), is a site where modernity emerges through the containment of the sea's insurgent potential.[7] On the *Pequod*, Melville imagines the conflict between a consolidating, dismembering force of U.S. sovereignty and the potential constitution of an alternative kind of nation in the ship's crew of mariners, renegades, and castaways. He describes, in particular, the ways in which authority constitutes itself over the insurgent, postnational crew, but also the instability and risks that accompany that form of sovereignty. Melville distills the argument I have been advancing throughout this dissertation: that the transformative potential of insurgent challenges to the coherence of a particular account of the "American" nation were contained and incorporated through tropes of dismemberment. In *Moby-Dick*, the potentially transformative concept of a transnational body politic, an identity that cut across geopolitical and racial boundaries and hierarchies, is contained through the dismemberment and reformation of an inert, pacified multitude that is, in Melville's words, a "mechanical man," directed by the magnetic power of autocrats like Ahab.[8] The

6. Nor is *Moby-Dick* unique among Melville's *oeuvre* for this quality. As Michael Paul Rogin observes, mutiny or desertion is a crucial element to the plot of most of Melville's sea stories, including *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi*, *White-Jacket*, *Benito Cereno*, and *Billy Budd*. However, the only successful mutiny in all of Melville's fiction is that of the African slaves in *Benito Cereno*, and even this takes place prior to the narrative and is only revealed in Don Benito's retrospective deposition, isolated from the story proper (Rogin 209-10). "The Town-Ho's Story" is the only other exception; I will address this chapter of *Moby-Dick* below.

7. Chambers's use of "heterotopia" comes from Foucault's essay "Of Other Spaces." See also Cesare Casarino's "Gomorrahs of the Deep; or, Melville, Foucault, and the Question of Heterotopia" and *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis*.

8. "Mechanical" is used here in the sense of "acting or performed without thought; lacking spontaneity or originality" (*OED*). Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government" also invokes the figure of the "mechanical man": "The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with

constituent potential of transnational figures like the *Pequod*'s crew, and the whales that the crew hunts, are incorporated into the nation as disciplined bodies, processed and homogenized into the fuel of empire.

Instead of offering scenes of revolution, Melville's fiction, and *Moby-Dick* especially, describes how insurgency is contained and appropriated by figures of sovereignty. The novel offers up the possibility of a syncretic, globalized, post-American nation-state—a transcendent nation that was uncontainable and cut across measures of space and time.[9] As I have argued throughout this dissertation, this concept of a postnational America—a community that could, as Whitman put it, "encompass worlds" and become the "Nation of many nations" ("Song of Myself" 565; 334)—was at once the telos of the American mission as laid out in the Declaration of Independence, an ideal that underpinned American thought, but also a sublime horror and threat to standards of American citizenship that were reluctant to incorporate difference. Ahab's quest for the White Whale represents a nation impelled toward that simultaneously alluring and terrifying idea of national progress. But, as I will argue in this chapter, the drive toward a unified postnational body politic or a "nation of many nations" is dependent on acts of dismemberment and the subsequent containment, rather than the promotion, of democratic challenges to the nation-state. While *Moby-Dick*'s terraqueous setting may

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their bodies.… In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense … and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well" (3). Thoreau's comments invite comparison to Ahab's conversation with the *Pequod*'s carpenter, in which Ahab fantasizes about the creation of "a complete man after a desirable pattern. Imprimis, fifty feet high in his socks; then, chest modelled after the Thames Tunnel; then, legs with roots to 'em, to stay in one place; then, arms three feet through the wrist; no heart at all, brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains; and let me see—shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards" (470).

9. See Dimock, *Empire for Liberty*, 13-15.

suggest to some critics Melville's "No! in thunder" to monolithic concepts of nation and citizen, I instead follow John Michael's example in reading the novel as a "colossal and spectacular monument to American failure" (71). However, whereas Michael understands the novel as depicting the failure of American self-reliance, I read it as the representation of the failure of insurgent citizenship.

Melville's Motley Crew

In her contribution to the *PMLA* feature on "Oceanic Studies," Hester Blum suggests a focus on the sailor as a means of revealing new ways of understanding citizenship, mobility, rights, and sovereignty. "Acknowledging the sailor," she posits,

> allows us to perceive, analyze, and deploy aspects of the history, literature, and culture of the oceanic world that might otherwise be rendered obscure or abstract. If methodologies of the nation and the postnation have been landlocked, in other words, then an oceanic turn might allow us to derive new forms of relatedness from the necessarily unbounded examples provided in the maritime world. (671)

In making such a claim, Blum situates herself within a recent body of scholarship that looks to the organization of sailors as an alternative form of belonging to hierarchical constructions of the nation. Particularly important to this attempted reconfiguration is Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's book *The Many-Headed Hydra.* In their study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century transatlantic shipping, they argue that the "hydra" was

a metaphor deployed in transatlantic Euroamerican discourse to describe the amorphous, multitudinous forces of labour. Derived from Greek and Roman mythology, the hydra was a dragon or snake-like creature with seven heads. When one of its heads was cut off, two more grew in its place. As Linebaugh and Rediker explain, the hydra offered a potent metaphor for the conflict between capital and global labour: colonial rulers

> variously designated dispossessed commoners, transported felons, indentured servants, religious radicals, pirates, urban laborers, soldiers, sailors, and African slaves as the numerous, ever-changing heads of the monster. But the heads, though originally brought into productive combination by their Herculean rulers, soon developed among themselves new forms of cooperation against those rulers, from mutinies and strikes to riots and insurrections and revolution. (4)[10]

The figure of the hydra suggests a decidedly non-national, often extraterritorial population that had little regard for international boundaries and demarcations. As a metaphor for a transnational body politic, the hydra evokes the amorphous, uncontainable nature of a working class consciousness that cut across divisions of race and culture and threatened the structure of Euroamerican colonialism by defying the rigid hierarchies and

10. Donald Pease has already linked Linebaugh and Rediker's work to *Moby-Dick* through his reading of C. L. R. James: "Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker have described the historical formation with which James associated his castaway world as 'hydrarchy.' The hydrarchy was a maritime world of labor and community building whose members were not regulated by the rule of law that rationalized the values of the global marketplace. The hydrarchy was populated by rogues, beggars, sailors, vagrants, and itinerant workers. These stateless, heterogeneous, geographically dispersed, multinational, and multiracial peoples participated in global diasporic routings that were off the maritime state's charts. The highly uncontrollable, motley spaces on the ships of the hydrarchy differed from the regulated spatialities of the colony, the nation, and the plantation. If the accumulation of international capital depended upon the exploitation of Atlantic labor, these embodiments of living labor effected breaks in that process" ("Extraterritoriality" 213).

spatial organization of empire. Maritime trade was therefore a site of what Negri calls "constituent power," where landlocked modes of social organization could be not only re-imagined but come to fruition.

In *Insurgencies*, "constituent power" is defined as a "radically democratic force that resides in the desire of the multitude and is aimed at revolutionizing the status quo through political and social change" (336n3). In the "multitude," Negri sees the potential to disrupt hierarchical regimes of capitalist power. The multitude constitutes a particular form of insurgency, admittedly more abstract than the practices of resistance that I have described to this point: it represents the *potential* of transformation from below and the *possibility* of transcending those structures that have worked to contain insurgency. What the multitude represents, most of all, is a dramatic reconfiguration of democratic governance. "The project of the multitude," Hardt and Negri write, "not only expresses the desire for a world of equality and freedom, not only demands an open and inclusive democratic global society, but also provides the means for achieving it" (*Multitude* xi). However, "constituent power" and its force of potentiality, transformation, and revolution, is checked by "constituted power," which is characterized by consolidated structures of law and the conservation of order. Negri's phrase emphasizes that this is a form of insurgency that, while differing drastically from the material practices that I have described to this point, nevertheless issues an epistemological challenge to homogeneous concepts of the American nation.

In identifying Hardt and Negri's concept of "multitude" in a mid-nineteenth century

novel, I admittedly risk a charge of imposing an anachronistic reading onto the text.[11] Yet, in *Moby-Dick*, the "multitude" can be identified in the *Pequod*'s sailors, who, as C. L. R. James has suggested are the unsung protagonists of Melville's novel (18). The networks of global capital described by Negri exist in their nascent form by the mid-nineteenth century, as *Moby-Dick*'s depiction of the global whaling trade suggests. Indeed, Melville examines a point of contact between a hierarchical organization of the state and what Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker call a hydrarchy: a non-national community that resists organization, is amorphous, uncontainable, and fluid, and that is based not on rigidly policed racial or geographical demarcations but rather fellowship of shared experience of the sea. Melville posits the creation of such an insurgent state in *Moby-Dick*. The crew of mariners, renegades, and castaways who people Melville's novel, Donald Pease says, "did not belong to a national community. The irreducible differences and inequivalent cultural features characterizing them refused to conform to a state's monocultural taxonomy and could not be integrated within a nationalizing telos" ("C. L. R. James" 154).

And yet, even as the spectre of the hydra threatened to undermine colonial expansion, imperial power depended on its labouring bodies. By confining together small

11. Hardt and Negri clearly link the "multitude" to the development of what they call "Empire," which "spreads its global network of hierarchies and divisions that maintain order through new mechanisms of control and constant conflict" (*Multitude* xiii). The capitalization of "Empire" is significant, signifying that this is a postmodern historical development separate from older forms of imperialism (*Empire* xi-xvii). Nevertheless, Hardt and Negri privilege the development of the United States as an important antecedent of Empire. Though I remain skeptical of the ways in which Hardt and Negri's analysis ironically reifies a narrative of American exceptionalism, implicit in my argument is that *Moby-Dick* to some extent reinforces the connection they establish between contemporary, deterritorialized Empire and mid-nineteenth century American understandings of empire. For a critique of the distinction Hardt and Negri's draw between Empire and imperialism, as well as their apparently unwitting reification of American exceptionalism, see Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire,* p. 16. See also Susan Gillman's essay "The New, Newest Thing: Have American Studies Gone Imperial?"

groups of disaffected and marginalized sailors, indentured servants, and slaves, transoceanic trade offered a breeding ground for a nascent proletarian consciousness that ironically threatened the imperial expansion that it fueled (Linebaugh and Rediker 168-69). Poor working and living conditions engendered mutinous sailors; these sailors might, in turn, seize control of a ship and establish "hydrarchy," a loose form of democratic government organized from the bottom up. Thus, they argue, "the ship … became both an engine of capitalism … and a setting of resistance" (144). Sailors organized in such a fashion would frequently engage in piracy, attacking the merchant vessels upon which they were formerly employed, disrupting the flow of capital across the ocean.[12] Far from the reach of centralized, constituted power, the ship at sea was a particularly fraught space in terms of its revolutionary potential and its relationship to the nation's exercises of sovereignty, at once empire's greatest weapon and a potentially critical crack in its armour.[13]

Though he does not explicitly deploy the language of the "many-headed hydra," Melville nonetheless describes the world of the hydrarchy and offers, much as Linebaugh and Rediker do, a history written from below. Melville sees in the common sailor a "true dignity," and his novel describes the formation of a union among these common men.

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12. In *Villains of All Nations*, Rediker presents a convincing case for piracy as the origin of a radical working class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, linking piratical movements to the development of a concept of workers' rights and of union movements.

13. Linebaugh and Rediker argue that sailors' hydrarchies were crucial to the development of the revolutionary movement in the United States. Samuel Adams, they note, was inspired by the "Spirit of Rebellion" he witnessed in the Knowles Riot of 1747 (216), a protest against British impressment described by Denver Brunsman as "the most serious disturbance against British imperial authority in the mainland American colonies in the generation before the Stamp Act crisis" (324). The gang of African, Scottish, English, and Irish sailors inspired Adams' "ideology of resistance" but, as Linebaugh and Rediker point out, within a few years of the Revolution the "motley crew" who fought against the press gangs was homogenized and the black faces removed—quite literally—from engravings and other images that depicted uprisings like the Boston Massacre (233-34).

The sea, Ishmael suggests, is a space where, liberated from the constraints of the land, "true" democracy can be realized. For Ishmael, the sea is a space where the Nantucketer can be a sovereign unto himself. Ishmael heads to sea to ward off a case of the "hypos," a "damp, drizzly November in [his] soul" (3). He seeks a release from a sense of being "pent up in lath and plaster—tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks" (4). As a space that cannot be contained by mere walls, the ocean restores the sailor from the strictures of civilization to a state of nature, or as Ishmael puts it, a state of "savagery" (270). The sailor owes "no allegiance but to the King of Cannibals, and [is] ready at any moment to rebel against him" (270). From this blank slate, sailors were given the opportunity to form a new form of social organization that is separate from confining identities of liberal republican citizenship and posits new relationships that are defined by qualities other than race and class. The crew of the *Pequod*, C. L. R. James argues, "owe allegiance to no nationality.… Among the crew nobody is anything. They owe no allegiance to anybody or anything except the work they have to do and the relations with one another on which that work depends" (20).[14]

Though James's analysis aptly describes much of the first half of the novel, the remainder of *Moby-Dick* challenges this approach. Over the course of the novel, this fluid, transnational identity is revealed to have been founded on a logic of counterinsurgency that upholds rather than undermines a teleological conception of the

14. This is not to say that racial difference is completely transcended in the novel. In "Midnight, Forecastle," racial prejudice between an unnamed Spanish sailor and the African harpooneer, Daggoo, erupts in violence. "Midnight, Forecastle" attests to the diverse racial and national origins of the crew, its form—identifying each subject by their nationality, save for the few characters who have been already named by Ishmael—seems a moment of skepticism on Melville's part that problematizes James's contention.

state's progress. Melville's ultimate insurgent, Captain Ahab, in fact contains the individual liberty of the crew. The social contract into which they enter—the oath they sign to hunt the White Whale—strips them of the potential force of constituent power.

Approximately half-way through *Moby-Dick*, the *Pequod* encounters a ship called *The Town-Ho* and engages in a "gam," what Ishmael defines as "[a] social meeting of two (or more) Whale-ships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews: the two captains remaining, for the time, on board of one ship, and the two chief mates on the other" (240). The gam with the *Town-Ho* leaves the crew of the *Pequod* with important news about the whereabouts of the White Whale, but this news never reaches the ears of the ship's officers, much less Captain Ahab. Instead, the story of the *Town-Ho* is circulated amongst the crew of the *Pequod* and becomes, in effect, an archive of secret knowledge that is concealed from all but the cadre of renegades, mariners, and castaways that comprise the crews of the *Pequod* and the *Town-Ho*. Significantly, this repressed narrative deals not only with Moby Dick but also a story of shipboard mutiny. The men of the *Town-Ho* reveal the story of Steelkilt, a heroic sailor who resisted the authority of his first mate, Radney, and led a sailor's uprising against the captain of the *Town-Ho*. Steelkilt is barricaded in the *Town-Ho*'s forecastle with his group of followers. One by one, Steelkilt's comrades capitulate to the captain, but Steelkilt is only captured when his final two confederates bind him in his sleep. Steelkilt is brought before the captain to be flogged, but "hisse[s] out something, inaudible to all but the Captain," that compels the captain to relent (254). Radney, the mate, performs the deed the captain will not, and Steelkilt is released. Nevertheless, he

continues to plot his revenge against Radney. Before this can take place, however, Radney lowers in a boat to attempt to capture Moby Dick and is killed by the White Whale. Not long afterward, the *Town-Ho* reaches port and Steelkilt deserts the ship along with a substantial company of his fellow sailors, leaving it beached and undermanned.

"The Town-Ho's Story" posits the existence of a network of subversive knowledge that transcends the confines of the ship. Steelkilt's "hissed … inaudible" (254) words instantiate a current of what Nancy Ruttenburg calls "popular voice," an expression of "democratic personality" that is "unanticipated, inarticulate, uncontainable, heedless of the forms, ventriloquizing a higher will and truth" (6). Such expressions, Ruttenburg explain, are voices from the margins that point to a "*preliberal democratic tradition* for which the separation of the thinker from the mass, the theoretical articulation from the act, has not yet transpired" (6; emphasis original). The popular voice is an expression of a populist body politic that poses an alternative to the structure of the liberal-democratic nation-state and is the voice of the multitude, the people, rather than a discourse mediated through the structures and expectations of rational articulacy. "The Town-Ho's Story" presents a revolutionary tradition that foregrounds the figure of the sailor as a subversive antagonist to the constituted, hierarchical authority of Radney and the ship's captain; however, when the story reaches the deck of the *Pequod*, it becomes depoliticized, contained beneath layers of mediation. The story is told through a convoluted series of filters: it is shared by the *Town-Ho'*s sailors to Tashtego, the *Pequod*'s Native American harpooneer, who reveals it to his fellow shipmates unwittingly in his sleep. When asked, he shares the story with the rest of his shipmates who

nonetheless conceal the story from Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask. Yet, *Moby-Dick*'s reader does not experience the story through the narration of the firsthand witnesses on the *Town-Ho*, nor even Tashtego's somnambulistic "rambl[ing]" (242) or his waking rendition of the story to his shipmates. Rather, the story is shared by Ishmael to friends in Lima some time after the events that comprise the bulk of *Moby-Dick*. The arrested circulation of "The Town-Ho's Story" isolates the *Pequod* from the network of "gams" that contribute to the shared identity of sailors between ships; Ahab's crew has effectively been severed from the hydrarchy.

Indeed, not long after "The Town-Ho's Story," Melville's emphasis on the labouring crew fades into the background as the *Pequod*'s captain moves into sharper focus. Several critics have identified in Ahab an antinomian figure who in his quest against the White Whale rebels against "authority" as a nebulous figure of suppression and power. Timothy B. Powell, echoing Toni Morrison, argues that Ahab, in his determination to destroy an icon of monolithic, totalizing whiteness, strikes a blow against white racialist ideology and an American drive toward monoculture. Powell takes the whiteness of the whale as a racial signifier; Ahab, he says, upsets racial hierarchies, subordinating white officers to their racialized, "pagan" harpooneers. Ahab's desire to "dismember [his] dismemberer" (168) derives, Powell explains, from his experience with the divisive logic of nineteenth century racism. For Powell, Ahab is a William Lloyd Garrison or a John Brown, a man who reaches across racial lines and is condemned for it. Like Ahab, for instance, John Brown was diagnosed as "monomaniacal" for his fervent,

radical abolitionist posture (Powell 166).[15] Ahab rebels, too, against the acquisitive ends of whaling (Huang 60; M. T. Gilmore, *American Romanticism* 115). By pursuing a single whale rather than attempting to capture many whales, Ahab violates the *Pequod*'s designated task; namely, to accumulate as much whale oil as possible and, in so doing, accrue maximum profit. As Ishmael comments, "[h]ad any one of his old acquaintances on shore [meaning Ahab's former shipmates and current owners of the *Pequod*] but half dreamed of what was lurking in him then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the ship from such a fiendish man! They were bent on profitable cruises, the profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint" (186). Ahab in a sense makes manifest the threat posed by the hydrarchy. By commandeering the *Pequod* for his own ends, he removes it from capitalist circulation and, as Huang suggests, "create[s] a rupture inside capitalism" that threatens to "bring the transpacific enterprise to ruin" (60). However, while Ahab appears in the guise of an insurgent, he in fact contains and represses the individual insurgent potential of the crew. He demands "implicit, instantaneous obedience" and exerts an "irresistible dictatorship" over his crew (147).

In "The Town-Ho's Story," Steelkilt functions as Ahab's foil—a leader who enables and embodies, rather than contains, the potential of the hydrarchy. He is a prototype of what Melville will in *Billy Budd* define as "the handsome sailor," "some superior figure of [the sailors'] own class" who inspires "the spontaneous homage of his shipmates" (43).[16] The handsome sailor, Melville explains, is "[a]shore … the champion;

15. Of course, it is anachronistic to read Ahab as a reflection of John Brown. Brown was active in abolitionist circles before Melville composed *Moby-Dick*, but his diagnosis as a "monomaniac" came about in the wake of his unsuccessful raid on Harper's Ferry. Powell's point is well-taken, however; he suggests that Ahab's derangement links to a prevailing discourse that questioned the sanity of insurgents *like* Brown.

16. I return to *Billy Budd* in the conclusion to this dissertation.

afloat the spokesman" who is morally and physically beyond reproach, a platonic ideal of the heroic individual at sea (44). Crucially, the handsome sailor embodies the potential of cross-racial identification and a fraternity that is not circumscribed by race, class, or national status but founded in the common experience of labour at sea. The handsome sailor, in *Billy Budd*, stands at the head of "such an assortment of tribes and complexions as would have well fitted them to be marched up by Anacharsis Cloots before the bar of the first French Assembly as Representatives of the Human Race" (43).[17] Melville's allusion to Cloots not only indicates the transnational and cross-racial makeup of the handsome sailor's "motley retinue" (*BB* 44) but explicitly connects him to a transatlantic revolutionary movement. Cloots, an important figure in the French Revolution, famously appeared before the French National Constituent Assembly in 1790 accompanied by his own motley retinue of thirty-six foreigners to declare the world's endorsement of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Melville suggests here that the handsome sailor is a focal point for a constituent movement of a revolutionary underclass, a figure around which "mariners, renegades, and castaways" might organize themselves.

Steelkilt represents, in short, an alternative model of national citizenship that realizes the potential of postnational identification. He is described as "a Lakeman and desperado from Buffalo" (*MD* 244). Raised on the canals and the Great Lakes of the United States, Steelkilt, Ishmael explains, was "nurtured by all those agrarian freebooting impressions popularly connected with the open ocean" (244). The Great Lakes present a

17. Melville describes the crew of the *Pequod* in a similar fashion: "An Anarcharsis Clootz deputation from all the isles of the sea, and all the ends of the earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the *Pequod* to lay the world's grievances before that bar from which not many of them ever come back" (121).

version of the world in miniature:

> [t]hey contain round archipelagoes of romantic isles, even as the Polynesian waters do; in large part, are shored by two great contrasting nations, as the Atlantic is; they furnish long maritime approaches to our numerous territorial colonies from the East, dotted all round their banks … and by the goat-like craggy guns of lofty Mackinaw; they have heard the fleet thunderings of naval victories; at intervals, they yield their beaches to wild barbarians, whose red painted faces flash from out their peltry wigwams; for leagues and leagues are flanked by ancient and unentered forests.… [T]hose same woods harboring wild Afric beasts of prey, and silken creatures whose exported furs give robes to Tartar Emperors; they mirror the paved capitals of Buffalo and Cleveland, as well as Winnebago villages; they float alike the full-rigged merchant ship, the armed cruiser of the State, the steamer, and the birch canoe.… (244)

In this passage Melville fashions a resolutely colonial world. Ishmael describes the Great Lakes with analogies that collapse the American colonial world—Polynesia, Africa, and native North America—into the space of the continental nation, and renders them as sites of conflict between the "two great contrasting nations," colonial empires who wage battles at sea and at Fort Mackinaw over control of these "fresh-water seas" (244).

Steelkilt is a citizen of this world, "wild-ocean born, and wild-ocean nurtured" (244). Carolyn Karcher suggests that Melville's descriptions identify Steelkilt as being "as much a barbarian at heart as the fabled African savage" (57) but Melville's description does not consign Steelkilt to any single location; rather, he is a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the nineteenth-century colonial world. Moreover, Steelkilt seems to represent the American nation written over *by* the world, its landscape becoming, in effect, foreign to itself. The old North-West, once the frontier of the developing nation, becomes condensed with the global frontiers of the Pacific and Africa. Steelkilt, too, is an American who is marked by the world; however, in "The Town-Ho's Story," this figure is not a site of racial anxiety, but the embodiment of romantic heroism. A product of the terraqueous frontier and a paragon of revolutionary masculine virtue, Steelkilt embodies an alternative telos of citizenship to the regime of monolithic whiteness that guided American imperialism in the nineteenth century. In Steelkilt, Melville proposes that Americanness could be realized in the revolutionary actions of individuals who challenge artificial racial hierarchies, and redefines the right of revolution as a natural right that is not exclusive to white Anglo-Americans. Ahab, however, establishes a rule on the *Pequod* wherein the agency of revolution is denied to all but himself.

"This Whimsical Division"

As a digression from the main narrative of *Moby-Dick* "The Town-Ho's Story" sets into relief what C. L. R. James has identified as the novel's most crucial question: "Why didn't the men revolt?" (50). As James points out, in commandeering the *Pequod*

for his own personal quest, Ahab has given the crew ample justification for mutiny. Ahab realizes this, too: indeed, Starbuck considers resisting Ahab's authority on several occasions throughout the novel, and "The Town-Ho's Story" offers the *Pequod*'s crew a model of justified resistance to a superior's tyranny. As John Michael puts it, "[t]he most remarkable thing about Ahab's fell purpose is not its madness but the absence of any effective opposition to it" (83). James places the blame primarily on Starbuck's shoulders. Reading *Moby-Dick* from an internment camp on Ellis Island in 1952, where he had been imprisoned as a potential subversive, James sees in Starbuck a figure for those intellectuals and politicians who "have led the capitulation to the totalitarians in country after country" (51). Starbuck stands in for those who witness acts of injustice that are committed against others but do not resist them, compromising the public good in the name of stability or self-interest. By extension, James also levels an accusation against Melville, whom he says intended to "make the crew the real heroes of the book, but … [was] afraid of criticism" (18).[18]

James, however, gives Melville too little credit. Indeed, in *Moby-Dick* Melville explicitly entertains the possibility of a similar figure arising from the ranks of the *Pequod*'s sailors only to reject him as a focal point of his novel. Before he joins the crew of the *Pequod*, Ishmael has a brief encounter with Bulkington, ostensibly the *Pequod*'s version of this figure. Bulkington, Ishmael reports, "interested me at once" (16). He cuts a heroic frame, "full six feet in height, with noble shoulders, and a chest like a coffer-dam. I have seldom seen such brawn in a man" (16). Bulkington's complexion, "deeply

18. For extended analyses of James's reading of *Moby-Dick*, see Donald Pease's essays "C. L. R. James, *Moby-Dick*, and the Emergence of Transnational American Studies" and "The Extraterritoriality of the Literature of Our Planet."

brown and burnt," and his "white teeth dazzling by the contrast" (16) anticipate his description of the handsome sailor in *Billy Budd*, a "native African of the unadulterate blood of Ham" whose "ebony" chest are contrasted by his "white teeth flashing into view" (43). Bulkington, like Steelkilt and *Billy Budd*'s "native African," offers the possibility of postnational fellowship. However, Bulkington "slip[s] away unobserved" (16) by his companions in the Spouter-Inn, and in a similar fashion, disappears from Ishmael's narrative, returning only briefly in "The Lee Shore." Once again, Ishmael emphasizes Bulkington's heroism, looking on with "sympathetic awe and fearfulness upon the man" (106). His monument to Bulkington is, however, only a "six-inch chapter" (106): Bulkington is left behind in chapter twenty-three, all but forgotten for the rest of the narrative. With the passing of Bulkington, so goes *Moby-Dick*'s focus on the potential of the hydrarchy on the decks of the *Pequod*. The appearance and disappearance of Bulkington performs Melville's consideration and rejection of the possibility of a hydrarchy on the *Pequod*. Thus, the "Town-Ho's Story" functions less as a model of revolt for the *Pequod* than it serves as a counter-example that emphasizes that, under Ahab, the *Pequod* has been removed—dismembered—from the network of subversive communication that links the transnational labouring force who work on the non-national space of the ocean. The chapter reveals, ultimately, that the *Pequod* is a site where the multitude has been contained, absolved of their duty to revolt, and transformed into "the people."[19]

In what follows, I hope to answer James's question; however, whereas James

19. I discuss the transformation of this "multitude" into "the people" earlier, as well; see my discussion of the relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution in Chapter One.

blames Starbuck for the inability of the *Pequod*'s crew to revolt, I suggest that the answer lies instead in the peculiar form of sovereignty exerted by Ahab over the *Pequod*. Readings that emphasize Ahab as an authoritarian have traditionally imagined him as a figure of totalitarianism. As Donald Pease has pointed out, however, such readings are generally the product of reading literature through the lens of the Cold War: Ahab represents the forces of global Communism, which are challenged by Ishmael as a figure of American democracy ("*Moby-Dick* and the Cold War" 117). Like Pease, I want to complicate this binary logic. I contend that far from representing democratic liberty, Ishmael is representative of the American citizen who has become enervated by the expansion of a sovereign power that leaves him, in Russ Castrnovo's terms, a "necro citizen"—a form of political subjectivity that is acquiescent and politically inert. American democracy, at least in the abstract form that is expressed in documents like the Declaration of Independence, claims to idealize the energized, active, insurgent citizen, something Ishmael is most assuredly not. Ishmael survives the novel, to be sure, but easily capitulates to Ahab's plan to hunt the White Whale, and is hardly a model for political action. If anything, Ishmael is a victim of Ahab's persuasive ceremony—a passive observer who never acts.

Secondly, while I do read in Ahab a figure of expansive power, I interpret him first and foremost as a figure of American empire as Melville understood it in the wake of 1848. Pease understands Ahab as embodying what Marvin Meyers calls the "Jacksonian persuasion," a rhetorical mode that imbues the whalers' economic pursuit with "some higher purpose" (Pease, *Visionary Compacts* 240). I agree with Pease to this extent;

however, I want to push further the meaning behind Ahab's scene of "persuasion" in "The Quarter-deck" to explore its implications in light of the argument I have been pursuing throughout this project about the relationships between insurgency and dismembering in the context of American empire after 1848; moreover, I want to consider more closely the implications of the hunt for the White Whale as the scene of Ahab's "persuasion."

Ahab's ceremony effectively transforms the *Pequod* into a floating manifestation of the colony. In "The Chart," we see Ahab with "the charts of all four oceans before him, … threading a maze of currents and eddies, with a view to the more certain accomplishment of that monomaniac thought of his soul" (199). He has, he claims, "tallied" the White Whale—marked it for its "peculiar snow-white brow … and his snow-white hump.… His broad fins are bored, and scalloped out like a lost sheep's ear!" (201). As Mbembe argues, colonial occupation involves the territorialization of space; the imposition of categories, zones, and boundaries; and the classification of life (25). Ahab similarly attempts to chart the fluid, uncontainable ocean, the figure of the White Whale providing the lines with which he maps the ocean. Ahab has no need for the compass, as his conception of the sea is something that is charted by him alone: he has inscribed the trackless ocean with the White Whale—the unjust enemy, the *homo sacer*—as his guide.[20]

Ahab embodies the paradoxical concept of "insurgent empire." He appears in the guise of the ultimate antinomian, ostensibly defying the received systems of social organization that dominated mid-nineteenth America. And yet, Ahab is nevertheless the

20. For Giorgio Agamben, the figure of the *homo sacer*—a banned individual who could be killed but not sacrificed—is crucial to an understanding of biopolitical sovereignty. As a figure who is both outside and inside the law, the *homo sacer*, for Agamben, is a mirror figure for the sovereign himself but also a figure of bare life; that is, life stripped of its political content by the power of the sovereign.

proxy of American power as it exercised itself over an increasingly global empire. He is akin to the vigilance committees, filibusters, and slave catchers who in the American 1848 extended and protected American interests on the peripheries of the nation: civilian, and often extralegal, entities that stood in an uneasy relationship to constituted authority in the United States. Of course, it is this tenuous position vis-à-vis the law that makes him attractive to his employers: as Ishmael points out, the *Pequod*'s owners hoped that Ahab's particular deviancy, his "monomania," would make him an especially efficient hunter of all whales, not just Moby Dick (186). Just as non-state actors like Harry Love could move unencumbered by the law and commit acts of violence that may have been unseemly if perpetrated by the government,[21] Ahab, his employers Peleg and Bildad hope, will be able to increase their profit margin even if his private motives are troubling. However, Ahab is not so easily contained, and Melville suggests, ultimately, that the kind of sovereignty that he exercises over his crew on the *Pequod* has dire implications for the narrative of Manifest Destiny itself: it inaugurates a form of colonial power that is organized around the killing and processing of its potential citizens.

The figure of the White Whale is, naturally, a crucial figure in this conception of colonial power in *Moby-Dick*. In "The Town-Ho's Story," Radney is killed by Moby Dick. The White Whale appears here as a manifestation of divine justice that sanctions Steelkilt's proposed rebellion by performing the deed on his behalf. On the *Pequod*, however, Moby Dick signals something very different. In "The Quarter-Deck," Ahab ritualistically transforms the constituent power of the motley crew into extensions of his

21. See chapter two.

own agency, delimiting their own potential as actors by invoking the figure of the White Whale. Engaging in a kind of call-and-response performance, he asks the crew, "What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?" When the crew replies that they "Lower away, and after him!" and "pull to" only with "[a] dead whale or a stove boat," he meets their responses "with a wild approval" (161). The crew responds as one body, eager for their captain's approval, perhaps in spite of themselves: they "gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly purposeless questions" (161). Ahab here transforms the routine task of hunting whales into a communal ritual, a ritual that is heightened by Ahab's introduction of the White Whale to the crew.

The White Whale consolidates the disparate energies of "whale" into a single totem who is, as Ahab explains to Starbuck, not a meaningful object in and of itself but a vague cipher for something else, though what, Ahab cannot quite say. The White Whale, Ahab says, is a "pasteboard mask[]" (164) that conceals some indistinct and "inscrutable malice" (164)—a nebulous sign of the injustice of which Ahab imagines himself a victim. Ahab's hope is that by attacking the white whale, he will gain access to that "inscrutable thing" that he hates (164). He makes the White Whale into a symbol of injustice itself and by channeling the crew's sense of that injustice into one animal he gains his "magnetic" power over the crew. He promises the crew the opportunity to rebel against the depravity of the universe, but in invoking that rebellion, he manipulates the crew as if they are automatons. The crew is homogenized into one body—into extensions of Ahab's will. As Ishmael describes it in the wake of the scene on the quarter-deck,

> I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge. (179)

In "The Quarter-Deck," Ahab inaugurates a social contract organized around death, akin to what Achille Mbembe calls "necropolitics." Mbembe's concept, a reconfiguration of Foucault's notion of sovereignty as the power to regulate life, emphasizes instead sovereign power's authority to regulate death. He argues that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides … in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (11).[22] The ritual that Ahab performs on the quarter-deck draws a distinct line between the crew of the *Pequod* and the whales that they hunt; above all, it marks Moby Dick as an absolute other against which his ship of state can consolidate its own identity. The White Whale becomes to the crew what Joaquín Murieta was made to be for the Anglo-American invaders of California: an unjust enemy against whom all violence is justified. The White Whale, like the outlaw, exists in what Agamben calls a state of

22. Mbembe's emphasis on death makes his concept, I think, a better fit for what Melville describes in *Moby-Dick* and, indeed, a better partner for Agamben's theory of the *homo sacer*. Recent scholarship, for instance, has problematized a tendency to draw an equivalency between Agamben's conception of sovereignty and Foucault's notion of biopower. See in particular Rabinow and Rose. Note, too, that Mbembe's concept should be distinguished from Castronovo's notion of "necro citizenship," insofar as Mbembe is talking about a literal taking of life whereas Castronovo describes a form of citizenship that simulates political or social death. The two, I contend, are related, but cannot be entirely conflated.

exception—it is a figure, a *homo sacer*, that may be killed with impunity, but may not be sacrificed. That is, the whale is a figure who has no political or cultural life (*bios*) but only bare life as biological material (*zoë*) (Agamben 1).

And yet, the animal—or to be more precise, the whale—is also a figure over which the law might constitute itself. As Nicole Shukin and Cary Wolfe have each pointed out, the animal is a crucial site in the formation of biopolitical power. As Wolfe puts it, "as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of *whatever* species—or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference" (8; qtd. in Shukin 10). Shukin adds, "the power to reduce humans to the bare life of their species body arguably presupposes the prior power to suspend other species in a state of exception within which they can be noncriminally put to death" (10). Indeed, in *Moby-Dick*, the use of whaling as a metaphor for colonial power is suggestive of the way in which biopolitical sovereignty is bound up in the killing of the animal.

Ahab's Leg: Necropolitical Power and Colonial Sovereignty

"Whaling is imperial!" Ishmael confidently declares; and, in "The Advocate," he offers a miniature history of the United States that explicitly links whaling to the development of a globalized American sphere of interest. *Moby-Dick* dramatizes the fact that the ocean cannot be fully stripped from its colonialist context. In *Moby-Dick*,

whaling, as a practice, functions as a metonym for US imperialism more generally. Yunte Huang has already usefully linked the *Pequod*'s journey into the Pacific with the expansion of American geopolitical interests throughout the nineteenth century, arguing that it should be read "in the context of the U.S. pursuit of economic interests in the Pacific, which are inextricably tied to America's geopolitical ambitions and historical self-justifications" (53). Moreover, as Timothy B. Powell points out, whaling is crucial to the history of the American nation (168). He explains that the course charted by the *Pequod*—from Massachusetts to the coast of Africa, through the Indian Ocean and into the Pacific—traces the passages of U.S. colonialism in the nineteenth century (155). Nantucket whalers, Ishmael claims, "launching a navy of great ships on the sea, explored this watery world; put an incessant belt of circumnavigations round it; peeped in at Bhering's Straits; and in all seasons and all oceans declared everlasting war with the mightiest animated mass that has survived the flood; most monstrous and most mountainous!" (64). He goes on to boast,

> And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, issuing from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers did Poland. Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two thirds of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his; he

> owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen having but a right of way through it. (64)

In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael insists upon whaling's respectable character by imagining that it contributes to the liberation of the oppressed from the shackles of tyranny. The whaling vessel, he claims, is "the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth" (110), blazing a trail for the subsequent arrival of missionaries, settlers, and merchants. According to Ishmael, "[i]f American and European men-of-war now peacefully ride in once savage harbors, let them fire salutes to the honor and glory of the whale-ship, which originally showed them the way, and first interpreted between them and the savages" (110). Whalers opened up contact with Australia, nursing "[t]hat great America on the other side of the sphere" in its troubled infancy, and brought missionaries and merchants to Polynesia (110). Finally, Ishmael predicts, "[i]f that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom credit will be due; for already she is on the threshold" (110). The whaling ship, Ishmael argues, is an advance agent of American colonial power that claims the sea as an extension of U.S. territorial and economic interests.

Though Ishmael exaggerates, his comments are not wholly off the mark. Whaling helped to drive the American economy throughout the antebellum nineteenth century. The processed remains of whales, which for some time had been used as a illuminant as well as in the production of wool, leather, and soap, was by the mid-nineteenth century vital for the lubrication of industrial machinery such as that used in the cotton mills of New

England (Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter 342).[23] Foreign markets, too, created a significant demand for the whaling industry, and the overwhelming majority of whaling ships at the time Melville was writing *Moby-Dick* were American—perhaps as many as 700 out of 900 vessels (Creighton 36). Thus, as Ishmael would have us believe, whaling was indeed an imperial business, a practice that not only led to the expansion of the American sphere of interest into the Pacific and Asia but also fueled, almost literally, the conquest of the North American West: whale products were used as lubricants and illuminants on the transcontinental railroad (Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter 351).[24]

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23. Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter note that "[t]he volume of sperm oil needed to ease the movements of the cotton spindles of New England increased six-and-one-half-fold between 1827 and the Civil War. In 1859 there was eighteen times as much railroad equipment in the United States as there had been two decades earlier; rolling stock was a heavy user of whale oil lubricants, and locomotive headlights were whale oil lamps" (348-51).

24. Indeed, the relationship between the literary "rendering" of whaling and its historical practice is brought all the more into relief by the standard gesture in histories of nineteenth century American whaling to cite *Moby-Dick* as some kind of a reference point. In *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906*, Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter excuse their opening literature survey by noting that "[b]eginning a book about whales and whaling with a survey of literary references has canonical authority. Melville himself begins *Moby-Dick* not with 'Call me Ishmael' but with 'Etymology' (our version is in chapter 2) and 'Extracts,' an anthology of eighty-one quotations" (1). Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter go on, in a Melvillean fashion, to enumerate depictions of whales in *Paradise Lost*, Disney's *Pinocchio*, and even *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. Granville Allen Mawer's study of whaling is entitled *Ahab's Trade: The Saga of South Seas Whaling*; by the third page of the introduction, he turns to *Moby-Dick* to introduce the conflict between many preconceived, romantic notions of whaling and the reality of the profession. *Moby-Dick*, Mawer implies, was a popular failure in Melville's time because of Melville's decision to reject Bulkington, the "conventional hero," in favour of Ahab. "There is more than one Ahab in this book," Mawer warns his reader (xiii), as if to caution those expecting an account of "the romance of whaling" that Melville, too, discarded. Similarly, Lisa Norling's social history of maritime women sternly reminds its readers that Ahab was, in fact married; it says so right in the title of the book, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife*, and in case that is insufficient, the phrase is repeated as the title to the introduction. See also Briton Cooper Busch's *"Whaling Will Never Do For Me": The American Whaleman in the Nineteenth Century*. Busch uses *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd* to introduce his discussion of race, and also makes reference to *Omoo* and *Typee*. In Margaret S. Creighton's *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870*, a particularly domineering captain is referred to as being "[c]ut from the same human cloth as Captain Ahab" (85). Creighton cites Melville's descriptions of certain aspects of whaling, technical and otherwise. She notes in particular his interest in "celebrating male company," "honouring 'Otherness,'" and "questioning autocratic power" (197). The publisher's description of *Rites and Passages*, printed on the back cover, notes that "[f]or more than a century the American public has understood whaling primarily through the work of a gifted man named Herman Melville. It is clear that other whalemen had tales to tell as well, and in *Rites and Passages* they share their compelling vision of life at sea." An allusion to *Moby-Dick* is a standard gesture in such histories, providing a cultural reference point to readers whose familiarity with whaling comes, primarily, from a literary text and often offering a corrective to Melville's fictive vision.

As Ishmael understands it, the "business" of whaling is as much a kind of pioneering activity as it is a practice of economic acquisition. He propagates the myth of Manifest Destiny as a kind of insurgent imperialism—that is, a form of imperialism that, as Timothy Powell points out, was ironically imagined as anti-colonial (151-52). Proponents of American expansion westward believed, as Ishmael does, that colonization of foreign territory was consistent and continuous with the nation's rebellion against European imperialism. According to this romantic historiography, the American Revolution instantiated a teleological historical narrative whereby American democracy would naturally spread across North America and, eventually, the world. As Wai-Chee Dimock argues, by the 1840s, "the word 'freedom' came to be a code word for America's continental expansionism" (9). This expansion, however, was not considered by its proponents as an imperial gesture; whereas European powers were imagined to colonize in order to enslave, Americans imagined that their expansionism was providentially designed to spread political liberty (Dimock 9). As the nation expanded, the argument went, so too would the space of "everlasting democracy." In *Moby-Dick*, Melville deploys whaling as a metonym for colonialism more generally.

Colonial sovereignty, as Melville formulates it in *Moby-Dick*, is linked to the possession and management the cetacean's corpse. In *Moby-Dick* the figure of the animal stands beyond the reach of constituted law. As Derrida argues in his seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign*, the animal exists in a triad with other figures who exceed the reach of constituted authority, the bandit and the sovereign. All three share a "common being-outside-the-law" and therefore "have a troubling resemblance.… [A]ll three of them, the

animal, the criminal, and the sovereign, are outside the law, at a distance from or above the laws; criminal, beast, and sovereign strangely resemble each other while seeming to be situated at the antipodes, at each other's antipodes" (17). In spite of this troubling resemblance, there is nevertheless a fundamental difference between the animal and his human counterparts. While the outlaw and the sovereign are creatures of the law, whose existence is dependent upon some kind of calling-into-being by the law, the animal's relation is fundamentally prior to the law. In other words, the animal's position outside of the law is a result not of a kind of banishment or suspension of the law but rather its complete disregard for it. In Melville's fiction, at least, the animal represents a pre-political, Hobbesian state-of-nature: a figure who is reckless of the law and therefore cannot be subject to it.[25] In *Moby-Dick*, the sovereign's authority derives from his ability to contain that recklessness, to appropriate and summon it as a supplement to his authority. And yet, by dint of this fact, the animal also symbolizes that essential difference between nature and law. The sovereign is essentially a product of artifice, a creation of humanity. The animal, then, signifies that the relationship between sovereign and subject is artificial: it posits a different kind of being-outside-the-law than that suggested by the bandit, who challenges the sovereign's monopoly on the right of violence. The animal, rather, challenges the law through its utter lack of recognition of the law: like the hydrarchy, it posits an alternative epistemology of power to the sovereign's governance and hierarchical regime. In *Moby-Dick*, the exertion of sovereign power over the animal inevitably returns to Ahab's capacity to exert his authority over the

25. See also my discussion of *Billy Budd* in the Conclusion to this dissertation.

crew.

For example, Ahab's leg, fashioned from the bone of a butchered whale, becomes a sign of his power and authority. Ahab's leg ambivalently signifies both his similarity to the whale in terms of his being outside the law and his appropriation of the "animal capital" of the whale.[26] Thus, it becomes a potent sign of his power on the deck of the ship. Upon first casting eyes on his captain, Ishmael notes that "not a little of [his] overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood" (124). Describing the captain standing with his leg steadied in an augur hole specially drilled for that purpose, Ishmael perceives "an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsurrenderable wilfulness" (124) that he immediately links to Ahab's tacit command over the ship: "Not a word he spoke; nor did his officers say aught to him; though by all their minutest gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye" (124). In "Queen Mab," Stubb dreams of being kicked by Ahab's leg. The dream comes in the wake of Stubb's request that Ahab mute his leg while walking on the deck. Ahab responds in a fury, calling Stubb a dog, a donkey, a mule, and an ass. Stubb subsequently dreams that Ahab kicked him with his ivory leg. When Stubb responds by kicking back, he loses his own leg, becoming dismembered himself as Ahab transforms into a giant pyramid. As Stubb becomes disabled, Ahab's apparent disability becomes a sign of sublime power. Stubb then dreams of being convinced by a "badger-haired old merman, with a hump on his back" that he should be honoured to be kicked by Ahab's "beautiful ivory leg": "be *your*

26. The term "animal capital" comes from Shukin.

boast, Stubb, that ye were kicked by old Ahab, and made a wise man of" (132). In Stubb's dream, Ahab's leg becomes a symbol of his indomitable power. Over the course of the sequence, Ahab's will—manifesting through his whalebone leg—invades Stubb's unconscious, convincing him that wisdom lies in never questioning the authority of his captain. Ahab's leg is imbued with the same disciplinary potency as the whip used on the *Town-Ho* but to much greater effect, insofar as Ahab is never forced to engage in corporal punishment himself. Rather, his symbolic power of the whalebone instantiates a kind of necropolitical power whereby his crew police themselves.

In two chapters in particular, "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish" and "Heads or Tails," Melville develops a reading of sovereignty from laws that ostensibly pertain to whaling. In the former, Ishmael discusses the rules governing a ship's right to capture a whale. According to Ishmael, in the event that a whale is "struck" by one vessel but escapes, whalers turn to their own sets of laws, based on Dutch codes, that can be summed up into two dictates: first, that "A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it" and second, "A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it" (396). As Ishmael expands upon this legal code, it becomes clear that it is not quite as simple as he initially suggests; as he notes, there is some debate over what constitutes a "fast-fish" or a "loose-fish." He suggests that, in spite of "scientific commentaries" on the matter, more often than not, "the commentaries of whalemen themselves consist in hard words and harder knocks—the Coke-upon-Littleton of the fist" (396). In other words, Ishmael says that the rights of ownership of the whale's body at sea are less a matter of legal interpretation than of brute force. Interestingly, the example Ishmael uses to illustrate how this legal system operates

in practice is not about whales at all, but an analogy from an adultery case wherein a "gentleman" abandoned his allegedly immoral wife to the "seas of life" (396-97). The lawyer Erskine compares the woman to a whale abandoned at sea who, regardless of the reason for the abandonment, ceases to be the property of the gentleman. "[T]herefore," the lawyer argued, "when a subsequent gentleman re-harpooned her, the lady then became that subsequent gentleman's property, along with whatever harpoon might have been found sticking in her" (397). Ishmael's example illustrates the implications of applying to a human being a law that ostensibly pertains to an animal: in the eyes of the law, the "vicious" woman and the whale are roughly interchangeable, fungible objects of the discourse of power. Moreover, the feminization of the whale suggests a concept of power whereby a subject's violation of traditional notions of gendered behavior is subject to discipline and forced to conform to normative standards of behaviour—in both cases marked by passivity and, in the nineteenth century, an absence from the public sphere—through acts of violence and killing. Sure enough, Ishmael extrapolates this fairly specific court case to a general principle: the law of fast-fish and loose-fish, he says, is the source of the "fundamentals of all human jurisprudence; for, notwithstanding its complicated tracery of sculpture, the Temple of the Law, like the Temple of the Philistines, has but two props to stand on" (397). From these two fundamental laws come the logic of power in Ishmael's world, including the relationship between a master and slave, and colonizer and colonized. Ishmael asks, "What are the sinews and souls of Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish, whereof possession is the whole of the law?" (397). His argument takes on geopolitical significance: "What to that redoubted harpooneer, John Bull, is poor

Ireland, but a Fast-Fish? What to that apostolic lancer, Brother Jonathan, is Texas but a Fast-Fish?" (398).

Ishmael elaborates on his general theory by indicating "a strange anomaly" to his law. In "Heads or Tails," he cites an old English law, recorded in the commentaries of the thirteenth-century English jurist Henry de Bracton: "*Da balena vero sufficit, si rex habeat caput, et regina caudam*," which Ishmael usefully translates (and elaborates on) as "of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of that land, the King, as Honorary Grand Harpooneer, must have the head, and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail" (399). Ishmael links this to courtesies afforded to royalty in England, comparing the surrendering of the whale, and the income that it would provide, to the public expense of a royal car in the English railway. It seems at first a symbolic gesture of deference to royalty. In Ishmael's example of this law put into practice, a group of whalers who are deprived of their whale are dumbfounded, asking the "very learned and most Christian and charitable gentleman" who communicates to them this law whether or not he actually needs the whale's body to fill his coffers (400). The gentleman's response seems to indicate that his act of repossession is less practical than performative: he replies to their every query simply with "It is his" (400). Similarly, in "A Bower in the Ariscides." Ishmael explains that King Tranquo "seiz[ed] his [whale skeleton] because he wanted it; and Sir Clifford [Constable, who possesses another whale specimen on exhibit in Yorkshire, England], because he was lord of the seignories of those parts" (451). The sovereign possesses a tautological right to whale skeleton; it is the sovereign's because

the sovereign declares it to be the sovereign's.[27] In the context of Ishmael's exegesis, such a gesture seems intended to demonstrate the sovereign's power to dictate an exception to the law. The sovereign wields an arbitrary mastery over the body of the dead whale, and is able to circumvent or superimpose a new order over the "natural law" of "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish"—based to some extent, as I mentioned earlier, on Dutch law, but managed in practice by the unconstituted—even hydrarchal—law of the whalers themselves.

The symbolic value of the whale's corpse and the monarch's right to possess it is linked to more practical concerns as well. In trying to explain the logic behind this strange legal principle, Ishmael notes that, according to "the soundest commentators," including Blackstone and Plowden, "the whale so caught belongs to the King and Queen 'because of its superior excellence'" (401). Ishmael dismisses this suggestion, noting with some derision that "this has ever been held a cogent argument in such matters" (401). He then notes that, according to Prynne, the queen is granted the tail so as to furnish her with a whalebone for use in making a bodice.[28] This, too, he deems an unsatisfactory explanation, as "this same bone is not in the tail; it is in the head, which is a sad mistake for a sagacious lawyer like Prynne" (401). "An allegorical meaning may lurk here," he concludes, before noting that the two "royal fish" are meant to provide "the tenth branch of the crown's ordinary revenue" (401). The two are in fact intimately tied together: according to Blackstone, the "tenth branch" to which Ishmael refers is "said to

27. For an examination of the relationship between tautology and power, see Ruttenburg 353ff.

28. Though Melville cites three sources for his discussion in this chapter, the three points he attributes to the various commentators—the designation of the whale as a "royal fish," the justification in the whale's status as possessing a "superior excellence," and the queen's need for a whalebone bodice—can all be found in Blackstone's *Commentaries*.

be grounded on the consideration of [the King's] guarding and protecting the seas from pirates and robbers" (Blackstone, "Of the King's Revenue" 290).[29] Thus, in the whale's body, the practical and symbolic nature of the sovereign's authority are united: the whale is a symbol of the monarch's ability to repossess the income of his or her subjects, but also plays an economic role in the repression of insurgent threats to the peripheries of his or her domain. The appropriation of the head and tail by the recognized sovereign functions as a way of organizing and containing the animal body, and establishes the monarch's necropolitical power to determine the meaning of the corpse. The whale, therefore, constitutes the material and symbolic capital upon which colonial power depends.

Ahab's ritual on the quarter-deck establishes an equivalency between the whales hunted by the *Pequod* and its crew. In the wake of Ahab's revelation about the true purpose of the *Pequod*'s voyage, Starbuck alone remains skeptical, noting that to hunt for a single whale countermands the *Pequod*'s mandate as a whaling ship. Starbuck opposes Ahab on pragmatic grounds, suggesting that Ahab's hunt will frustrate "the business we follow" (163). His complaint is primarily economic, and he initially protests because Ahab's vendetta will threaten the *Pequod*'s ability to turn a profit. Ahab, however, guides Starbuck to "a little lower layer" (163), arguing that the hunt for Moby Dick will have more than remunerative rewards. He fashions himself as the ultimate insurgent who would "strike the sun if it insulted me" (164). He declares himself a rebel against the cosmos, uncontainable, abiding by no rules. He is, he tells Starbuck, that "Truth [that]

29. Melville quotes this section of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in the "Extracts" section of *Moby-Dick* (xxiii).

hath no confines" (164). Ahab, in essence, makes himself the embodiment of the hydrarchy, but in so doing releases its members from their own duty to revolt. Starbuck is left with nothing to do but to "strike a fin" (164). He becomes to Ahab what Frederick Douglass was to William Lloyd Garrison. Much as Garrison and his friends advised Douglass "[g]ive us the facts … [while] we will take care of the philosophy" (*My Bondage and My Freedom* 220), Starbuck, along with the rest of the *Pequod*'s crew, is advised to provide his steel but absolved of his duty to interpret his actions as meaning anything beyond their material function. As John Michael points out, Ahab's ritual transforms the crew into prosthetic bodies, extensions of Ahab's agency and unable to act of their own will (96). Moreover, Pease adds, Ahab releases Starbuck from any interpretive obligation, leaving him to concern himself only with the material act of killing the whale. The meaning of that killing is articulable by Ahab alone. Ahab, Pease argues, co-opts Starbuck's mutinous desire by turning it against the external oppressor, the White Whale. By embodying revolution himself, Ahab removes the crew's impetus to revolt. They are relieved of their obligation to revolt because their insurgent desire has already been perfected in Ahab himself (Pease, *Visionary Compacts* 240). Starbuck relents, and Ahab can gloat that "[s]omething shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion" (164). Just as the crew is "unrecking and unworshipping" (164), Starbuck is converted into a "mechanical" man who understands his role as being an extension of Ahab's will. After the encounter in "The Quarter-Deck," Starbuck admits that Ahab has "overmanned" him and "blasted all my reason out of me" (169). Though he recognized

that Ahab is a false prophet, a "democrat to all above" who nevertheless "lords it over all below" (169) Starbuck can but lament his office, to "obey, rebelling" (169).

Starbuck and the crew are reduced to an animal-like status. If, as Ishmael suggests, sailors live in a kind of state of nature, under Ahab's leadership they enter a social contract that does not incorporate them as fellow men but rather as unthinking animals. Gesturing towards the crew and referring to them as "[t]urkish cheeks of spotted tawn," Ahab characterizes the crew as wild animals, "[p]agan leopards—the unrecking and unworshipping things, that live; and seek, and give no reasons for the torrid life they feel. The crew, man, the crew! Are they not one and all with Ahab, in this matter of the whale?" (164). Ahab's mastery over the crew is linked to his lordship over the animals. The crew, pagan leopards, revert to a state of nature and become unreasoning creatures who do not comprehend the symbolic logic of what they do. Ahab has, in effect, rendered the crew of the *Pequod* as "fast-fish," bound to Ahab's will. With this, Ahab's ceremony is complete: by performing the ritual banishment of the White Whale, by marking the whale as a kind of *homo sacer*, he establishes his authority over the crew by, in turn, reducing them to apolitical, bare life. Rendered politically inert, they are effectively dead material, much as Ahab's ivory leg.

Moby-Dick thus reconfigures the U.S. colonial enterprise: rather than being a program of expanding democracy and the invigoration of transnational bodies into political citizens, it becomes, in essence, a whale hunt, as Ishmael makes clear in "The Advocate." In "The Advocate," Ishmael mounts a spirited defense of the profession of whaling. According to his formulation, the whaling ship is a point of contact between

Euroamerican interests and new peoples and markets. At this threshold, Ishmael claims, the whaling ship begins a process of positive transformation. In addition to bringing religion to the "savages," whaling ships were instrumental in opening the "opulent" Spanish colonies of the Main to American and European trade. "It was a whaleman," Ishmael boasts, "who first broke through the jealous policy of the Spanish crown, touching those colonies" (110). The influx of new trading opportunities in turn "eventuated the liberation of Peru, Chili, and Bolivia from the yoke of Old Spain, and the establishment of the eternal democracy in those parts" (110). In this vision, the transnational circulation of capital spreads not only wealth but liberty. Ishmael imagines an idealistic narrative of colonialism, relatively consistent with the logic of Manifest Destiny, with the whaling vessel as its primary agent. As F. O. Matthiessen suggests, Ishmael sees the *Pequod* "as a means of communication, battering down ancient prejudices, opening doors in the Orient, even, as we have noted, leading the way to the liberation of South America from autocratic domination and to the establishment 'of the eternal democracy' there" (655).

But Ishmael's vision is meant to be ironic. In "The Advocate," Ishmael's defense of whaling depends in large part on his analogy between whalers and soldiers. Significantly, the basis for his comparison derives from each profession's common facility with butchering: "Doubtless one leading reason why the world declines honoring us whalemen, is this: they think that, at best, our vocation amounts to a butchering sort of business.… Butchers we are, that is true. But butchers, also, and butchers of the bloodiest badge have been all Martial Commanders whom the world invariably delights to

honor" (108). He goes on to compare the "disordered slippery decks of a whale-ship" to the "unspeakable carrion of those battle-fields from which so many soldiers return to drink in all ladies' plaudits" (109). Melville's claim for the civility of the whaler derives, ironically, from their common facility with dismemberment and killing. Ishmael's bold defense of whaling as a "respectable" and "Imperial" business is counterpoised by his reference to butchery as the common ground between the professions.

Thus, the *Pequod*, a microcosm for the colonial "ship of state," is assembled from the dismembered bodies of empire's victims. In "The Ship," Ishmael describes the vessel as a transnational body, a product of the whaling industry's global reach, its complexion "darkened like a French grenadier's" (69). The *Pequod* is fitted with masts cut from Japanese forests that nevertheless remind Ishmael of kings of Cologne; it features, while docked in Massachusetts, a "strange sort of tent, or rather wigwam" to Ishmael resembles "some old Pottowottamie Sachem's head" (70). The ship is a "thing of trophies," adorned all over with bits and pieces culled from the bodies of its victims:

> All round, her unpanelled, open bulwarks were garnished like one continuous jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale, inserted there for pins, to fasten her old hempen thews and tendons to. Those thews ran not through base blocks of land wood, but deftly travelled over sheaves of sea-ivory. Scorning a turnstile wheel at her reverend helm, she sported there a tiller; and that tiller was in one mass, curiously carved from the long narrow lower jaw of her hereditary foe. (70)

The arrangement of bone prompts Ishmael to think of a "barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with pendants of polished ivory" (70). The *Pequod*, he claims, is "[a] cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies" (70). According to Ishmael's description, the *Pequod* is the disciplined, manipulated, and recycled corpse of the whale itself, made into a cannibal that feeds on the flesh of its own species. Juxtaposed with the bones of dead whales, the "Pottowatomie Sachem's head" takes on a new meaning: it becomes part of an assemblage of bones and dismembered bodies that frame the colonial errand. What *Moby-Dick* suggests, then, is that the colonial ship-of-state is less the product of expanding freedom but rather an archive of dismembered bodies. Much as the movement of Manifest Destiny westward left in its wake the spilled blood of Native, African, and Mexican American people, the *Pequod*'s sojourn into the Pacific leaves as its remainder the eviscerated corpses of whales. This alarming excess potentially gives damning testimony against the narrative of the "anticolonial empire"; however, as the *Pequod* suggests, colonial power is capable of, and even dependent on, re-appropriating these troubling remainders of colonialism's bloody swath.[30]

30. Tashtego's presence on the *Pequod* reinforces this reading. The *Pequod*'s "unmixed" Native American harpooneer, Tashtego hails from "Gay Head, the most westerly promontory of Martha's Vineyard, where there still exists the last remnant of a village of red men, which has long supplied the island of Nantucket with many of her most daring harpooneers" (120). Situated on the western precipice of the island, Tashtego is an example of what Brian Dippie calls the "vanishing American"; whereas he once hunted "the wild beasts of the woodland, Tashtego now hunted in the wake of the great whales of the sea" (120). Tashtego's skill with a harpoon signals his adaptation from what was by 1851 an increasingly untenable way of life. However, Tashtego likewise signals that this transformation is the result of a process of violence and dismemberment. As Powell points out, given his geographical origin Tashtego is likely a descendant of King Philip, the leader of the Wampanoag nation who "staged the largest and most effective revolt in the colonial period of New England" (164). Philip's resistance was defeated, however, when he was captured, quartered, and his head posted on a spike, while the rest of his people fled to Martha's Vineyard, Tashtego's home. Ishmael makes the connection between whale hunting and Indian killing most explicit in "The Affidavit," wherein he says that famous individual whales such as "New Zealand Tom and Don Miguel, after at various times creating great havoc among the boats of different vessels, were finally

Conclusion

In "The Try-Works," Melville describes the process by which the whale's corpse is melted down, or rendered, into valuable oil with which the world "pay[s] [the whaler] the profoundest homage" by burning in "tapers, lamps, and candles that burn round the globe" (109). The try-works, Ishmael says, are among the most "outwardly distinguish[ing]" feature of the American whaling ship (421). After being initially fired with wood shavings, the try-works is fueled by whale "fritters," desiccated pieces of blubber that burn with the intense heat necessary to melt the whale's fat. Thus Ishmael says, the whale becomes "[l]ike a plethoric burning martyr, or a self-sacrificing misanthrope"; it "supplies his own fuel and burns by his own body" (422). Melville's vision of the try-works as melting pot is a stark contrast to use of similar images by J. Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur. In *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) Crèvecouer writes, "Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle" (55).[31] Melville's metaphor, however, is of a much darker, even demoniacal sort. Stoked by the

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gone in quest of, systematically hunted out, chased and killed by valiant whaling captains, who heaved up their anchors with that express object as much in view, as in setting out through the Narragansett Woods, Captain Church of old had it in his mind to capture that notorious murderous savage Annawon, the headmost warrior of the Indian King Philip" (205).

31. An example more contemporaneous with Melville is Ralph Waldo Emerson's metaphor of the "smelting pot": "Man is the most composite of all creatures.… Well, as in the old burning of the Temple at Corinth, by the melting & intermixture of silver & gold & other metals, a new compound more precious than any, called the Cornithian Brass, was formed so in this continent,—asylum of all the nations, the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, & Cossacks, & all the European tribes,—of the Africans, & of the Polynesians, will construct a new race, a new religion, a new State, a new literature, which will be as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting pot of the Dark Ages, or that which earlier emerged from the Pelasgic & Etruscan barbarism" (299-300).

Pequod's "pagan harpooneers," wielding "huge pronged forks and dippers," the ship seems to Ishmael a hellish scene: it "shot her red hell further and further into the blackness of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing *Pequod*, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (423).

C. L. R. James identifies "The Try-Works" as "the turning point" of *Moby-Dick* (44). Indeed, in "The Try-Works," "everyone is shown for what he is" (James 44). The acquisition of whales in *Moby-Dick* is tantamount to the accession of territory and indeed, the appropriation of colonial bodies. However, as I have suggested in this chapter, these forms of acquisition entailed forms of incorporation that offered insurgent challenges to coherent concepts of the nation and of the American body politic. In the "hydrarchy" and in the "multitude," colonial power faced both the sublime object of the American narrative of expanding democracy that was outlined in the Declaration of Independence and elaborated on in facetious articulations of Manifest Destiny, as well as insurgent danger that was contained by expressions of American political culture such as the Constitution of the United States and the Fugitive Slave Law.[32] In *Moby-Dick*, Melville metaphorizes such processes of incorporation and containment in a story of whale hunting. The result, he suggests, is that the expansion of American colonial power processes men much as it processes whales. Men, like the "plethoric burning martyrs" burned in the try-works, are rendered, melted down, the worthless excess discarded. As

32. See chapter one.

an alternative metaphor to the melting pot, the try-works suggests that the process of "Americanization"—whether of the multitude, the individual, or of territory—is but the last step in a long process of violence and death that characterizes American power after 1848.[33]

This process of "rendering" has narratological implications as well. Indeed, "The Try-Works" might also be read as a metafictional chapter, wherein Melville describes the process whereby Ahab distills the myriad, polyvocal hydrarchy into a single, monolithic narrative. In contrast to Ishmael, whose dissections reveal nothing concrete about the "meaning" of the whale and whose narrative digressions can do little but forestall the novel's inevitable climax, Ahab is able, as Castronovo points out, to contain disparate narratives into a single narrative, transforming plurality into singularity, by turning to rituals and symbols he constructs through his pagan harpooneers (*Fathering* 92-93). As the novel progresses, the many voices that speak in the early chapters are subordinated to Ahab's florid speeches; the inarticulate hiss with which Steelkilt spoke reduced to a

33. My understanding of "rendering" is heavily influenced by Nicole Shukin's reading of the term in her book *Animal Capital*. Whaling itself is dependent upon the transformation of corpses into fuel; through a process of rendering, the whale's body is converted into the oil that not only literally fuels the colonial ship but is also transformed into the commodity that drives capitalist expansion into increasingly distant markets. As Shukin suggests, there is a crucial relationship between mimetic acts of rendering—that is, an act of representation, "reproducing or interpreting an object in linguistic, painterly, musical, filmic, or other media"—and the "industrial boiling down and recycling of animal remains" (20). In *Moby-Dick*, Melville is deeply concerned with this very double entendre: even as Ishmael fixates on paintings and drawings of whales, he offers a similarly obsessive account of the melting down of the whale in the *Pequod*'s try-works. Melville engages in a task similar to that of Shukin's. For Shukin, "rendering" "suggests a rubric for critically tracking the production of animal capital … across the spaces of culture and economy and for illuminating the supplementarity of discourses and technologies normally held to be unrelated" (21). Melville, too, emphasizes the "discomfiting complicity of symbolic and carnal technologies of reproduction" (Shukin 21), locating in the multifaceted nuances of "rendering" the processes by which a certain concept of the American nation is sedimented in the wake of 1848, containing the troubling challenges to a totalizing vision of nation that are posed by race and class divisions. "Rendering" encompasses not only physical process of rendering but also authorial projects of rendering and as such it provides a crucial term to my understanding of Melville's fiction. Indeed, Ahab engages in a similar project on the *Pequod*: parallel with the *Pequod*'s rendering of the whales's corpses is Ahab's appropriation of the crew's constituent power. We might then understand the process of "rendering" as being a crucial metaphor for the production of bare life in the context of Melville's novel.

"half-mutinous cry" that Ahab dismisses with his reminder that "[a]ll your oaths to hunt the White Whale are as binding as mine" (508). As Castronovo puts it, "the men can do no more than murmur their dissent; the ritualized arena of politics leaves no space to formulate a will counter to Ahab's" (*Fathering* 97). Ahab's necropolitical regime is characterized by subjects who are politically dead, consumed by the rendering vats constituted by the contract that Ahab consecrates on the quarter-deck.

Like the crew, the whales are transnational bodies. For Ishmael, the whale's body, read through the corpse, reveals only uncertainty. His forays into anatomy, phrenology, and other pseudoscientific practices of reading the body come up empty precisely because the whale defies the fixed hierarchical meanings upon which racialist and nationalist science depended. In *Melville's Anatomies*, Samuel Otter addresses *Moby-Dick*'s cetology chapters specifically, analyzing them in the context of contemporary discourses of pseudoscientific discourses of phrenology and ethnology. Melville, Otter explains, "performs anatomies of anatomies" (6), critiquing in *Moby-Dick* epistemologies organized around external, ocular signifiers in favour of "an epistemology of the body based … on contact between individuals, the caress and the squeeze that takes place in the dark" (101). *Moby-Dick*'s anatomy chapters do not simply discredit the scientific method, but rather "defamiliarize[] nineteenth-century corporeal inquiry" (133) as part of a project "to unhinge these catachreses in which characteristics are confounded with character, head with person, and sight with touch" (122). Otter's analysis usefully discloses the ways in which Melville draws on ethnological and anthropological discourse in order to inhabit and critique it; however, by narrowly considering Melville's

anatomical obsessions in terms of scientific discourse, Otter overlooks how Ishmael's attempts to "read" difference in such a manner result not only in the violent dismemberment of the whale's body but its industrial processing. In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael's efforts to "know" the whale, to penetrate its head, to read its skin, and to interpret its meaning all derive from the *Pequod*'s quest to transform the whale from an animate creature into an industrial commodity. In "A Bower in the Ariscides," he explains his intimate knowledge of whale anatomy derives from his experience on a ship that had captured a whale cub. The whale was "bodily hoisted to the deck for his poke or bag, to make sheaths for the barbs of the harpoons, and for the heads of the lances. Think you I let that chance go, without using my boat-hatchet and jack-knife, and breaking the seal and reading all the contents of that young cub?" (449). He meditates on the whale's skin as the crew cuts in; he offers his contrasted view of the sperm and right whales' heads as they are mounted on the sides of the ship. Ishmael's investigations of the whale's body, then—his attempt to understand and "read" the whale—can be read as an effort to understand the transnational body. The process of rendering supplements Ishmael's investigations by melting down these discrepant bodies and purifying them. Ishmael feels most connected to his fellow crewmembers as they squeeze the lumps out of the whale's sperm precisely because this is what is left of the whale's body after the inconsistencies that he maps in "Cetology" are melted away.

And yet, even as the rendering of whales and of men homogenizes and contains insurgent bodies, the industrial processes by which the whale is transformed into animal capital leaves behind haunting traces. In "The Funeral," Ishmael describes the discarded

body of the stripped whale. He compares the "peeled white body of the beheaded whale" to a "marble sepulchre," still colossal in spite of the processing it has undergone (308). Ishmael writes, "[t]he vast white headless phantom floats further and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls, augment the murderous din" (308). It is a "hideous" sight, a blight on the "fair face of the pleasant sea" (308). "[T]hat great mass of death floats on and on," Ishmael says, "till lost in infinite perspectives" (308). The scene is a "doleful and mocking funeral" as the birds and sharks take part in a funeral banquet that for one whom they would not have helped in life. But, Ishmael says, this is not the end: "[d]esecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost survives and hovers over it to scare" (309). The whale corpse, he says, might be spotted by some other man-of-war or ship, who will mistake it and its swarming seabirds for shoals, rocks, or breakers; therefore, "for years afterwards, perhaps ships shun the place; leaping over it as silly sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally leaped there when a stick was held" (309). "Thus," Ishmael says, "while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to a world" (309). Such remainders, bodily traces left behind by the colonial ship of state, function as an archive of bodily excess that gives the lie to the metaphor of the melting pot. They are a "powerless panic" to the world because they reveal the truth that lies behind the well-wrought narratives of American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny.

In the end, Melville is skeptical of the potential of the multitude. As Robert Milder points out, by the 1840s, Melville had become disenchanted with popular

democracy, putting his faith instead in an ideal of exceptional individualism and the rise of a figure who would pit himself against "both the liberal's faith in human capacity and the conservative's reliance on social-control" (227). But this figure never arises in *Moby-Dick* either, at least not on the *Pequod*; the crew is all too willing to capitulate to Ahab's necropolitical ceremony, and the result is the destruction of his ship of state. However, in "The Funeral," Melville leaves open the possibility of a practice of reading that recuperates the potential of insurgency by turning to what in *Billy Budd* he will call "the ragged edges" (128). I will now turn to *Billy Budd* and suggest ways in which Melville offers a rubric for an insurgent readership that is capable of resisting the monolithic narratives proffered by men like Ahab.

CONCLUSION

Melville's Insurgent Art: *Billy Budd* and the Birth of the Modern Citizen

The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction, cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact. Truth uncompromisingly told will always have its ragged edges; hence the conclusion of such a narration is apt to be less finished than an architectural finial.

Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*

Before he sets sail on the *Pequod*, Ishmael stops in at a whaleman's chapel to hear Father Mapple preach. On this occasion, Mapple's sermon is on Jonah, the reluctant Old Testament prophet who is commanded by God to warn the citizens of Ninevah to mend their sinful ways. Jonah, recognizing that doomsaying prophets are rarely welcome figures, attempts to abscond on board a ship. However, he thrown overboard in a storm and swallowed by a "large fish" (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Jon. 1.17), which Mapple interprets, with due deference to his audience, to be a whale. While surviving in the fish's stomach for three days, Jonah is inspired to "true and faithful repentance" (*MD* 46-47) and continues on his ordained mission to "sound those unwelcome truths in the ears of a wicked Ninevah" (*MD* 47). Mapple derives two lessons from the story of Jonah: first, that a sinner should follow Jonah's example of true repentance; and second, and more importantly, that it is God's will for his subjects to "preach the Truth to the face of

Falsehood" (*MD* 48). The story of Jonah and Mapple's homily reflects Melville's theory of authorship in the early 1850s, as he outlines in his review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Mosses from the Old Manse* and his correspondence with Hawthorne during the preparation of *Moby-Dick*. In these pieces, Melville articulates a vision of the American author as a prophet who, like Jonah, reveals the "Truth" to a potentially resistant audience. The American author, Melville tells Hawthorne, perceives the "absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of a man who fears them not, though they do their worst to them" ("To Nathaniel Hawthorne," April 1851 186). In contrast to his contemporaries like Emerson and Whitman, who felt that the authentic American voice was one of Adamic innocence (Ruttenburg 345-6), Melville believed that the American author needed a "great, deep intellect," "a touch of Puritanic gloom," and "great power of blackness … [that] derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin" ("Hawthorne and his *Mosses*" 242; 243). Melville felt that the American author should follow Jonah's example: though he may be "appalled at the hostility he should raise" (*MD* 47), the author is duty-bound to deliver the "Truth" in an act of insurgent authorship capable of transforming and renewing the nation.

Nevertheless, Melville was skeptical that the American reading public would be as receptive as the people of Ninevah. The market, he complained, would not accept his insurgent art. "Dollars damn me," he wrote Hawthorne; "[w]hat I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way, I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches" ("To Nathaniel Hawthorne,"

June 1851 191). Though he maintained his belief in "unconditional democracy," Melville confessed a "dislike to all mankind—in the mass," whose literary appetites forced any author brave enough to "get a living by the Truth" to frequent the "[s]oup societies" (191). Melville's dilemma is illustrated, once again, in his description of Mapple's church and congregation. As Michael T. Gilmore explains, Mapple's sermon depicts such a fraught relationship between the insurgent author and his audience (*American Romanticism* 125-26). Mapple constructs a series of physical barriers between himself and his flock, standing alone at his pulpit and even going so far as to pull up the rope ladder behind him. "[I]mpregnable in his little Quebec," Mapple's isolation reveals Melville's worry that the insurgent author, like the minister at his pulpit, must withdraw "from all outward worldly ties and connexions" (39) not simply to maintain a purity of thought but for protection from a multitude hostile to the "Truth."

Melville thus faces a crucial dilemma: he is committed to "unconditional democracy" but also holds an elitist distaste of the masses, an aporia he is unable to resolve, at least in *Moby-Dick*. As I argued in chapter three, *Moby-Dick* is marked above all by arrested insurgencies. Though the novel may well be, as Castronovo and Bryant have each suggested, a revolution in *form* (Castronovo, *Fathering* 67-68; Bryant 70-71),[1] it describes a world where revolution cannot take place. In this conclusion, I want to turn to Melville's final work, *Billy Budd: An Inside Narrative*, to explore how Melville

1. Castronovo argues that in *Moby-Dick*, "Ishmael constructs a politics of narrative through which he can take issue with the covenant the author makes with the autocratic structure of narrative in order to impart his tale.… This line of interrogation implicates citizens as well, leading Ishmael to examine critically an implacable covenant that requires consent to American national narrative as a precondition of encountering and attaining meaningful political experiences such as freedom and community" (*Fathering* 68). Bryant, meanwhile, attempts to debunk the "theory of the two *Moby-Dicks*" and insists that its convoluted structure "makes readers read in ways that politicize and radicalize" (71).

models a practice of insurgent readership. In *Billy Budd*, Melville looks back on the nineteenth century as one in which political subjectivity is dependent on the state's ability to produce an acquiescent, passive body politic. He describes the emergence of modernity in the colonial world in the sacrifice of the innocent, Billy Budd, to the overarching power of the state. However, even as he historicizes the nineteenth century as a constellation of conflicts between the forces of constituent and constituted power, insurgency and counterinsurgency, Melville attempts to show his reader how to adopt a practice of citizenship capable of resisting the dismembering logic of state and colonial power.

Billy Budd and the Time of Revolution

Set against the backdrop of the "Great Mutiny," an aftershock of the American and French Revolutions, Melville imagines in *Billy Budd* a nineteenth century set into motion by conflict between democratic movements and the forces of state power. The Nore Mutiny, the narrator says, was "[t]o the British Empire … what a strike in the fire brigade would be to London threatened by general arson" (54). In other words, the "irrational combustion," ignited "as by live cinders blown across the Channel from France" (54), is an episode in an ongoing history of civil unrest and mutiny that threatened to grind British imperial expansion to a halt. The novel's setting, then, in the wake of these moments of resistance, describes the inauguration of a nineteenth century organized around insurgency and counterinsurgency. In *Billy Budd*, Melville describes the birth of the modern political subject. However, this will be a monstrous birth. Indeed,

Billy Budd charts the transformation of the vital, heroic political subject—the "handsome sailor"—into a thoroughly modern citizen-subject who is characterized instead by his passivity, vulnerability, and ultimately his death.

At first glance, *Billy Budd* is clearly situated historically. In the second paragraph of the third chapter, the narrator describes its temporal setting in detail:

> [i]t was the summer of 1797. In the April of that year had occurred the commotion at Spithead followed in May by a second and yet more serious outbreak at the Nore. The latter is known, and without exaggeration in the epithet, as "the Great Mutiny." (54)

However, in spite of this apparent fixity, *Billy Budd* cannot be consigned to a single historical moment. As Herschel Parker remarks, the novella is loose with its chronology. Describing the first two, meandering chapters of the novella, Parker notes that Melville "launches the reader into the fluctuations of the narrator's consciousness, where one time in the past jostles against another time in the past, and one remote place collides with another remote place" (101). Parker explains that the opening clause "[i]n the time before steamships" (43) collides with the year 1843, specified in the novel's dedication; meanwhile, the narrator's recollection of the African handsome sailor points to Melville's own visit to Liverpool in the late 1830s (Parker 101-2). *Billy Budd* is retrospective and sometimes nostalgic, but by drawing implicit connections between these disparate dates, it charts a historical narrative that reaches to Melville's present. As a number of critics have suggested, *Billy Budd* contains numerous veiled references to the postbellum United

States. Michael T. Gilmore, for instance, reads *Billy Budd* as a product of post-Reconstruction sympathy for the South and as a response to tumultuous elections of 1888 ("Speak, Man!" 496-97). Robert K. Wallace and Larry J. Reynolds, on the other hand, each read *Billy Budd* as Melville's response to labour unrest after the Civil War. According to Wallace, the plot of *Billy Budd* and Melville's revisions mirror developments in the trials of the accused in the Haymarket Riot (109). "*Billy Budd* becomes a site," Reynolds adds, "charged by contemporary events[,] for Melville to revisit and review the issues of democracy and authority, revolution and reform, violence and order, which had long concerned him" (22). The novel's complicated textual history adds to the sense of historical confusion. Unfinished at the time of Melville's death, the final edition ends where Melville began, with the ballad "Billy in the Darbies," suggesting a circularity that contributes to the novella's temporal disunity. *Billy Budd* constructs a disarticulated, even dismembered, historical narrative that organizes the nineteenth century around conflicts between insurgency and counterinsurgency on the transatlantic stage.

Throughout the novel, Melville's descriptions of Billy emphasize that he is a pre-political, incipient citizen. He stands on the threshold of "citizenship," as it were, on the *Bellipotent*, just prior to incorporation into the body politic on the *Bellipotent*. Melville identifies Billy with other figures who stand just beyond the limits of political culture, most notably children and animals. After his arrival on the *Bellipotent*, Billy is dubbed "Baby" Budd for his innocence. He is described as possessing "that kind and degree of intelligence going along with the unconventional rectitude of a sound human creature,

one to whom not yet had been proffered the questionable apple of knowledge" (52). Billy is a "child-man" who remains in a state of "utter innocence" (86). More than a simple innocent, however, Billy is truly a natural man. Melville's narrator repeatedly compares his understanding of the world to that of an animal. Though Billy is a foundling, the narrator comments that "[n]oble descent was as evident in him as in a blood horse" (52). He takes his impressment "pretty much as he was wont to take any vicissitude of weather. Like the animals, though no philosopher, he was, without knowing it, practically a fatalist" (49). His lack of self-consciousness is compared to that of a Saint Bernard dog, and reacts to a fellow sailor's suggestion of mutiny "like a young horse fresh from the pasture suddenly inhaling a vile whiff from some chemical factory, and by repeated snortings trying to get it out of his nostrils and lungs" (84). Melville's descriptions cast Billy as a prejuridical figure who, as a consequence of his sheer innocence and ignorance, has no understanding of the codes and conventions of civil society. He is unsocialized and illiterate, cognitively prior to the word of the law, living in "lingering adolescen[ce]" (50) on the threshold of political culture.

Billy is analogous to what Laurent Berlant calls the "infantile citizen," a kind of political subject who is marked by his or her naive ingenuousness, suppressed political knowledge, and unwavering faith in the nation's commitment to the "best interests of ordinary people" (27-28). Such an individual, Berlant argues, threatens to "disrupt the norms of the national locale": his or her innocence and illiteracy "elicit[s] scorn and derision from 'knowing' adult citizens but also a kind of admiration from these same people, who can remember with nostalgia the time that they were 'unknowing' and

believed in the capacity of the nation to be practically utopian" (28-29). The infantile citizen reveals the discrepancies between the utopian language of nationhood and the reality of political subjectivity. As such, the infantile citizen is potentially a subversive figure whose "stubborn naïveté gives her/him enormous power to unsettle, expose, and reframe the machinery of national life" (Berlant 29).

On board the *Rights-of-Man*, Billy's qualities as such an individual make him a natural leader who transforms that ship from a "rat-pit of quarrels" into a cohesive community. Billy's presence, as the *Rights-of-Man*'s captain describes it, had a salutary effect on the ship's crew. Billy's presence, he says, was "like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. Not that he preached to them or said or did anything in particular, but a virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones" (47). Billy, the captain says, is a "peacemaker" (47) who transforms the character of the ship from one of strife to one of peace. This effect is spontaneous: the captain says that "a virtue went out," and that Billy did nothing in particular to bring about such a dramatic change in the sailors. The only sailor to resist Billy's natural effect on the crew, Red Whiskers, is ultimately pulled into line through the force of Billy's right arm; however, this, too, is described as a spontaneous, unmeditated action on Billy's part: "So, in the second dogwatch one day, the Red Whiskers in presence of the others, under pretense of showing Billy just whence a sirloin steak was cut … insultingly gave him a dig under the ribs. Quick as lightning Billy let fly his arm" (47). This spontaneous, electric action of Billy's arm has a unifying effect. Red Whiskers, "astonished at the celerity" of Billy's action, "now really loves Billy … or is the biggest hypocrite that ever I heard of" (47). Billy, on board the *Rights-*

of-Man, is the embodiment of the constituent potential of the infantile citizen to unite the crew in a fraternal bond. "[T]hey all love him," the Captain observes, describing his ship as a "happy family" (47).

However, upon boarding the *Bellipotent*, Billy is impressed into the service of the empire, and becomes an object of state discourse. He crosses a threshold between the *Rights-of-Man*'s world of political idealism and the *realpolitik* of state citizenship.[2] In such a setting, Billy is anachronistic and anomalous. The encounter between the *Rights-of-Man* and the *Bellipotent* illustrates that no vessel is actually a free agent but is subject to the authority of the crown, obliged to "surrender[] to the King the flower of his flock, a sailor who with equal loyalty makes no dissent" (48). This crossing narrativizes the transformation of the natural man from the realm of the theoretical to the actual. The *Rights-of-Man*, named for Paine's essay, is an ideal state wherein hierarchies of power do not move to contain the kinds of potential force that Billy represents. However, Billy's crossing of the literal threshold between the two ships reveals that on the *Bellipotent*, things are quite different:

> But now, when the boat swept under the merchantman's stern,
> and officer and oarsmen were noting—some bitterly and others
> with a grin—the name emblazoned there; just then it was that

2. See Bernstein, 203; Doyle, 206; and Mizruchi, 144. Bernstein argues that Billy's impressment transfers him to a more complex, sinister world. The *Rights-of-Man* "symbolizes at once an unfallen world in which inherent evil does not exist, but also a primitive world … Where man is governed not by a codified set of laws, but by natural law" (203). Doyle, meanwhile, says that Melville "understands his story as a parable of the social contract's trouble," which he explores through "his emphases on impressment, on the threat of mutiny, and on war as a hidden motor and profit within Atlantic culture" (206). Finally, Mizruchi argues that Billy's impressment "is clearly a move from a liberal democracy to a military state" (144). Noting Billy's inefficacy with language and Claggart's indeterminate race, she reads both Billy and Claggart as figures for immigration (149).

> the new recruit jumped up from the bow where the coxswain had directed him to sit, and waving hat to his silent shipmates sorrowfully looking over at him from the taffrail, bade the lads a genial goodbye. Then, making a salutation as to the ship herself, "And good-bye to you, old *Rights-of-Man*." (48-49)

For the first time, Billy's good-natured innocence gets him in trouble: the lieutenant roars at him to stand down, taking Billy's gesture to be a "sly slur at impressment in general, and that of himself in especial" (49). Billy's illiteracy—his ignorance of the codes and decorum of the military state—transforms into satire, a "sinister dexterity" (49). Billy's movement to the *Bellipotent* transforms his words from geniality to insurgency, which, in turn, must be contained by the lieutenant. This act of mistranslation reveals the fundamental difference between the *Rights-of-Man* and the *Bellipotent*: on board the latter, Billy's qualities as the handsome sailor are recognized not for their constituent potential to found a more perfect political community, but as a subversive threat to the constituted power structures upon which the imperial state depends.

Constituent power and its cognates—mutiny, revolution, insurrection—are empty spaces in the ship's vocabulary. In the wake of the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore, the word "mutiny" is taboo, and to merely speak of it is understood as a threat to authority of the ship's captain and the kingdom. Describing the lasting impact of the Great Mutinies, Melville's narrator notes that "[s]uch an episode in the Island's [i.e. England's] grand naval story historians naturally abridge," and even those who do mention the event give it "less a narration than a reference, having to do hardly at all with details" (55). As

Melville notes, such an event is a blow to national pride, a family secret that must be treated with discretion. The *Bellipotent* operates under a code of silence. When Claggart first approaches Captain Vere with his accusation against Billy, Vere initially admonishes Claggart to "[b]e direct, man"; however, once Claggart elaborates his facetious worry that "the *Bellipotent's* should be the experience of the —" Vere cuts him off, "his face altering with anger, instinctively divining the ship that the other was about to name, one in which the Nore Mutiny had assumed a singularly tragical character that for a time jeopardized the life of its commander" (93). In contrast to Billy, who embodies the insurgent potential of constituent power, Vere represents the arresting force of constituted authority. Vere, the narrator says, resists anything that might have a destabilizing influence, whether on government, society, or thought. "[H]is bias," the narrator says, "was toward those books which every serious mind of superior order occupying any active post of authority in the world naturally inclines: books treating of actual men and events no matter of what era" in which he finds "confirmation of his own more reserved thoughts" (62). Vere is unmoved by the "invading waters of novel opinion social, political, and otherwise, which carried away as in a torrent no few minds in those days, minds by nature not inferior to his own," not because the revolutionary talk of the late eighteenth century was "inimical to the privileged classes" to which he belonged, but because "they seemed to him insusceptible of embodiment in lasting institutions … [and] at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind" (62-63). "With mankind," Vere says, "forms, measured forms are everything" (128).

Billy's blow against Claggart, however, threatens to disrupt Vere's beloved forms.

Billy's blow represents the full force of constituent power: it is unmeasured, passionate, and is the spontaneous eruption that speaks in the stead of a silenced, marginalized body: "quick as the flame from a discharged cannon at night, his right arm shot out, and Claggart dropped to the deck" (99). Melville's simile, comparing Billy's blow to the flame of a cannon, connects Billy's action to the martial context of *Billy Budd* and the "irrational combustion" of the French Revolution (54). However, rather than instantiating a revolutionary change in the order of the ship, Billy's blow instigates the consolidation of constituted power. The killing of Claggart propels Billy into the narrative logic of state power, which works to trim off what Berlant calls the "ambivalent knowledge" of social criticism and dissenting voices (51). Claggart's death signifies that the world of the *Bellipotent* is a postlapsarian world, and Billy Budd, the infantile insurgent, will be the sacrifice that ushers in the nineteenth century.

On board the *Bellipotent*, Vere maintains his power largely through his ability to control and contain such "ambivalent knowledge." In the wake of Billy's killing of Claggart, Vere instructs the surgeon to summon the ship's lieutenants, but charges his men to keep the matter to themselves. Vere is determined to "guard as much as possible against publicity" (103). Melville's narrator compares this decision to the policies of Peter the Great of Russia who, as Harrison Merton Hayford and Sealts note, signified for Melville authoritarianism and martial law. As Lester H. Hunt argues, the narrator's reference to Peter the Great makes it clear that Vere's politics are of the sort where power is seized and held (284-85). Moreover, the allusion suggests this autocratic authority claimed by Vere is dependent on a kind of publications ban and his control over

information and narrative. Indeed, in Billy's trial, Vere appears "necessarily … as the sole witness … temporarily sinking his rank, though singularly maintaining it in a matter apparently trivial, namely, that he testified from the ship's weather side, with that object having caused the court to sit on the lee side" (105). Melville's inclusion of this "apparently trivial" detail indicates that even as Vere appears to "sink[] his rank," his testimony comes from a position of authority: his insistence that he testify from the weather side follows naval convention that that side of the ship was reserved for the captain (Connell and Mack 319). Vere thus reminds those in the courtroom of his rank even in the act of denying it, and maintains his authority as sole arbiter of justice on the ship. Moreover, he exercises strict control over the narrative of Billy's crime as well. Acting as both the case's only witness and Billy's prosecutor, Vere appropriates a position of supreme sovereignty over the hearing. Though he occasionally concedes his authority to the first lieutenant who "at the outset had not unnaturally assumed primacy in the court," he does so at his own whim, not according to military convention. Indeed, after offering his arguments for punishing Billy, the first lieutenant assumes power only after being "overrulingly instructed by a glance from Captain Vere, a glance more effective than words" (108). Vere never relinquishes authority completely, and even when he appears to do so, it is only mere dissemblance. Vere determined Billy's fate immediately after his act of violence against Claggart: he calls him "fated boy" (99) and exclaims, "[s]truck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!" (101). As Vere's officers realize, his arguments in the drumhead court are based on a "prejudgment" on the captain's part.

Through this process of apparently relinquishing his authority, Vere strengthens his power on board the ship, using the condemned foretopman to justify his excessive powers. In offering his argument to hang Billy, Vere repeatedly invokes a state of emergency by making reference to the recent mutinies at the Nore and Spithead. "In wartime at sea," he argues, "a man-of-war's man strikes his superior in grade, and the blow kills. Apart from its effect the blow itself is, according to the Articles of War, a capital crime" (111). When one of the officers protests that Billy "purposed neither mutiny nor homicide," Vere counters that "before a court less arbitrary and more merciful than a martial one, that plea would largely extenuate.… But how here? We proceed under the law of the Mutiny Act" (111). Vere adopts the role of the sovereign insofar as he invokes his power to determine the state of exception. Acting as both witness and judge, Vere marshals a series of emergency powers that he exercises in the name of stability. Beyond determining Billy's guilt, he goes on to defend the use of the death penalty by insisting that to allow the prisoner to live would result in chaos among the ship's common sailors, or, as Vere describes them, "the people":

> "The people," (meaning the ship's company) "have native sense; most of them are familiar with our naval usage and tradition; and how would they take it? Even could you explain to them—which our official position forbids—they, long molded by arbitrary discipline, have not that kind of intelligent responsiveness that might qualify them to comprehend and discriminate. No, to the people the foretopman's deed, however

> it be worded in the announcement, will be plain homicide committed in a flagrant act of mutiny. What penalty for that should follow, they know. But it does not follow. *Why*? they will ruminate. You know what sailors are." (112)

Indeed, by not punishing Billy for his alleged mutiny—which everyone in the drumhead court realizes was *not* mutiny, and was witnessed only by Vere anyway—Vere risks inspiring his sailors to "revert to the recent outbreak at the Nore" (112). Clemency, Vere says, is an act of weakness: "[t]hey would think that we flinch, that we are afraid of them—afraid that practicing a lawful rigor singularly demanded at this juncture, lest it should provoke new troubles. What shame to us such a conjecture on their part, and how deadly to discipline" (113). Vere recognizes that his power over the crew depends largely on his ability to not only mark the state of exception but also on his capacity to narrativize that process in such a way as to appropriate the constituent power of Billy's blow into a sign of his own sovereign power. "War looks but to the frontage, the appearance," he tells his officers, and says that unless strict control is maintained over this "appearance," the sailors, even those who "share our own abhorrence of the regicidal French Directory" (112), will be caught up in the revolutionary sentiment that erupted at the Nore.

To ensure that the sailors interpret Billy's hanging as he intends them to, Vere engages in a historical revision of the incident between Claggart and Billy. He convinces his officers first of the expediency of killing Billy by, as Nancy Ruttenburg argues, reducing the case to a tautology, deploying a hermeneutic strategy that "condemns

narrative itself to irrelevance" (Ruttenburg 351). In effect, Vere dismembers history: he tears apart cause and event, motive and action, and decontextualizes Billy's insurgent strike from its place in a longer narrative. Vere argues that, "[q]uite aside from any conceivable motive actuating the master-at-arms, and irrespective of the provocation of the blow, a martial court must needs in the present case to confine its attention to the blow's consequence, which consequence justly is to be deemed not otherwise than as the striker's deed" (*BB* 107). Vere's convoluted, legalistic language here strips Billy Budd out of historical presence: he separates actor and deed by confining his officers' focus not on the act's perpetrator but rather to "the striker's deed." In other words, to Vere's martial court, narrative, motive, and provocation are meaningless; the consequence of the blow is all that matters. Vere isolates Billy's insurgent act from its context, forcing his crew to set aside its incredulity that Billy would have committed such a deed, and moreover, separates the deed from any justification that it might have had. Vere condemns Billy himself to silence: during the trial, the first lieutenant offers Billy the chance to speak on his own behalf. However, Billy defers to his captain/prosecutor: "the young sailor turned another quick glance toward Captain Vere; then, as taking a hint from that aspect, a hint confirming his own instinct that silence was now best, replied to the lieutenant, 'I have said all, sir'" (108).

Billy's reading of Vere's countenance and his subsequent silence is puzzling, to say the least: Vere has just finished convincing the court that "[t]he prisoner's deed—with that alone we have to do" (108). However, we might read in this moment Billy's full incorporation into the social contract of the *Bellipotent*: he gives himself over fully to

Vere, acquiescing completely to his authority, even at the cost of his own life. When Billy refuses the opportunity to speak on his own behalf, to offer a counternarrative to the one that Vere has constructed for the court, he crosses another threshold, this time from infantile citizen to necro citizen. Indeed, even prior to his hanging, Billy is described by Melville's narrator as a deathly figure. On the evening before his death, the narrator says that Billy is "in effect … already in his shroud" (119). As Laura Doyle points out, "[w]hen faced with execution, Billy implicitly accepts … Rousseau's dictum that the citizen must undergo the 'total alienation … of himself and all his rights to the whole community" (207). Billy's innocence and naïveté were once potentially subversive qualities, but by the end of the novella they have become symbols of his lack of political agency. His state of being just prior to his execution prompts the narrator to compare him to colonized subjects: Billy

> was wholly without irrational fear of [death], a fear more prevalent in highly civilized communities than those so-called barbarous ones which in all respects stand nearer to unadulterate Nature. And, as elsewhere said, a barbarian Billy radically was—as much so, for all the costume, as his countrymen the British captives, living trophies, made to march in the Roman triumph of Germanicus. Quite as much so as those later barbarians, … and picked specimens among the earlier British converts to Christianity, at least nominally such, taken to Rome (as today converts from lesser isles of the sea

may be taken to London). (120)

Billy, in spite of his Anglo-Saxon purity, has become akin to racialized subjects who were imagined as living outside of the political sphere "nearer to unadulterate nature." Moreover, he has been turned into a trophy, a spectacular exhibition through which a colonizing culture tries to reify an unstable sense of racial or cultural superiority. Like the head of Joaquín Murieta, he is an object that is severed from its place in the historical record. In the wake of his trial on the *Bellipotent*, Billy similarly becomes an object of power that consolidates state authority on the ship. Billy thus becomes a model citizen, a figure whose death disciplines his fellow citizens—in this case, the crew—into a political and social death.

Indeed, the scene of Billy's capital punishment replicates in expressions of power that quiet the crew's discontent. At the hanging, Vere first recounts what has happened to warrant Billy's death: "he told them what had taken place in the cabin: that the master-at-arms was dead, that he who killed him had already been tried by a summary court and condemned to death, and that the execution would take place in the early morning watch. The word *mutiny* was not named in what he said" (116-17). Vere's narration reproduces the logic of the trial: it confines the story of Billy Budd to its consequences—a man died, there was a trial, and another now must die as punishment—divorcing narrative from its consequence (Ruttenburg 352-53). Vere "refrained too from making the occasion an opportunity for any preachment as to the maintenance of discipline, thinking perhaps that under existing circumstances in the navy the consequence of violating discipline should be made to speak for itself" (117). Just as Vere insists that Billy's blow speak for itself

without the testimony of its perpetrator, he severs the consequences of Billy's insubordination from any potentially mitigating factors. The effectiveness of this strategy becomes evident in the scene that follows. The crew, sensing something amiss in the Captain's story, becomes agitated only to be immediately silenced: "a confused murmur went up. It began to wax. All but instantly, then, at a sign, it was pierced and suppressed by shrill whistles of the boatswain and his mates. The word was given to about ship" (117). With Billy's example being "made to speak for itself," the boatswain's *piercing* whistles construct parallel scenes of punishment. Melville's adjective links the violence to be done to Billy's body with that of the whistle, another symbol of discipline on the ship. This circuit culminates in Billy's actual death. As Billy is hanged, he famously offers his last words, "God bless Captain Vere!" (123). The crew, "[w]ithout volition, as it were, as if indeed the ship's populace were but the vehicles of some vocal current electric" echoes Billy's final benediction, an action that leaves Vere standing "erectly rigid as a musket in the ship-armorer's rack" (124). Melville's narrator links once again the disciplining of Billy to that of the crew: his body is theirs, and his final words are theirs. This, in turn, is revealed as a source of the colonial captain's potency as Melville deploys a phallic metaphor that is folded into the symbol of the "musket in the ship-armorer's rack," a weapon of the colonial engine.

Melville's novella narrates how the ship of state transforms constituent power, embodied in Billy Budd's Adamic innocence and purity, into something corrupt and threatening. As a consequence of the textual mediations of Vere, Billy, a figure of a prelapsarian, pre-modern past, becomes the man who he killed, Claggart. When the

events on board the ship are reported in *News from the Mediterranean*, the figures' virtues and flaws are reversed. As the periodical puts it,

> John Claggart, the ship's master-at-arms, discovering that some sort of plot was incipient among an inferior section of the ship's company, and that the ringleader was one William Budd; he, Claggart, in the act of arraigning the man before the captain, was vindictively stabbed to the heart by the suddenly drawn sheath knife of Budd. (130)

In the "News from the Mediterranean" section of *Billy Budd*, Billy becomes characterized by his "extreme depravity"; Claggart, on the other hand, possesses a "strong patriotic impulse" (130). Ultimately, Melville suggests that the nature of state power is such that it transforms innocence into depravity, constituent power into criminality. In *Billy Budd*, Melville discloses the narrative and even aesthetic relationship between insurgency and counterinsurgency. Vere is not simply an authority figure, but an authorial one. His narrative decisions—to censor certain pieces of information and to control the attention of his "readers"—determine the meaning of Billy's life and death on board the ship. Vere's account of Billy's blow against Claggart transforms a spontaneous gesture of frustration into an act of mutiny, transforming innocence into rebellion. The great irony of *Billy Budd* is that there is no mutiny on board the *Bellipotent* until Vere makes it so. Melville emphasizes, then, the power of narrative to not only contain constituent power but to channel it, to transform the insurgent into a kind of *homo sacer* through whom constituted power establishes its own sovereignty.

With that said, Vere, too, is almost as much an object of authority as Billy. Though as captain he exerts supreme control over his ship, Vere's authority always operates in deference to the external authority of the nation, whether it is manifest in the "Articles of War" under which he feels compelled to operate or in the buttons of his uniform:

> [d]o these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to Nature? No, to the King. Though the ocean, which is inviolate Nature primeval, though this be the element where we move and have our being as sailors, yet as the King's officers lie our duty in a sphere correspondingly natural? So little is that true, that in receiving our commissions we in the most important regards ceased to be natural free agents. (110)

Vere recognizes that as a citizen, and in particular as an official, he lacks agency and is instead little more than a conduit for the expression of the law. As Doyle points out, Vere insists that the officers do not put Billy to death, but rather the law acting *through* the officers (209). He denies his own agency even as he condemns and executes Billy Budd, an act that reproduces in the potential citizen his own self-abnegation. Vere does not act, as Thomas Claviez argues, from a position of self-exemption from the rules (42-43), but rather as an expression of the law. He is thus not quite a villain, as Kevin Goddard supposes (106), but a exemplar of model citizenship, just as Billy is. This is the tragedy of the nineteenth century as Melville imagined it, looking back from the 1890s: the political subjects of an imperial century are unable to read past the "frontage" and submit to the "forms, measured forms" imposed upon them by state power.

Ragged Edges

Billy Budd is among Melville's most divisive books. Critics tend to find in it confirmation of their own inclinations and biases, reading it according to a binary logic that insists it is either Melville's final "testament of acceptance" or his everlasting "No! in thunder."[3] Some readers point to Billy Budd's benediction "God bless Captain Vere!" as Melville's own capitulation to the need for state power to exert itself over the disruptive potential of the democratic mob. This reading concludes that the message of *Billy Budd* is that collateral damage is an inevitable cost of peace and stability and that it is better to kill an innocent man than to risk appearing weak in the eyes of potentially antagonistic forces, whether they be real or imagined. The contrasting view reads Billy's final words as an ironic parting salvo, a final realization of his role in a narrative that has less to do with what actually occurs on the *Bellipotent* and more to do with the individual's meaninglessness as a cog in the machinations of power. In this reading, Melville looks back bitterly on a century that consistently undermines the potential of heroic individuals and forecloses the potential of radical change in the name of stability and a neutered version of "progress." However, to read *Billy Budd* in either of these rigid fashions duplicates the error of Captain Vere: it imposes forms on the narrative that will not admit contradictory or complicating information. Much as Vere excises the mitigating antagonism between Claggart and Billy so as to shore up his own authority on the ship, the imposition of a "zero-sum" reading on the novella robs *Billy Budd* of its potential as a subversive inclusion in the literary canon. Indeed, to examine the novella in such a

3. For a useful overview of the two "schools" of *Billy Budd* criticism, see Claviez pp. 31-34.

fashion is anathema to Melville's purpose. *Billy Budd*, above all, forces its reader to examine his or her own political biases in order to undermine the constraints of such perceptions. As Hunt notes, the novel's subtitle, "An Inside Narrative," points to the importance of perspective and, moreover, to the possibility of underlying counternarratives that exceed the confines of narrative (274-75). Robert Milder adds that *Billy Budd* seems to be carefully crafted to thwart such determinate readings. Melville, Milder says, is a "politic agnostic": "he 'doesn't know' with finality—not because he is indifferent but because he sees too much" (241).

The narrator's ongoing metacommentary on the nature of history and narrative lends credence to this hypothesis. For example, the narrator claims that he is incapable of assaying the logic of Claggart's sociopathy. Similarly, he is unable to penetrate the interiority of Vere's thoughts and evaluate objectively whether or not he is sane or mad. After Vere leaves to call the drumhead court, the surgeon can only speculate: "Was Captain Vere suddenly affected in his mind, or was it but a transient excitement, brought about by so strange and extraordinary a tragedy? … Was he unhinged?" (101-2). The narrator can offer no explanation: "Who in the rainbow can draw the line where the violent tint ends and the orange tint begins? Distinctly we see the difference of the colors, but where exactly does the one first blendingly enter into the other? So with sanity and insanity" (102). Instead, the narrator says, it is up to the reader to make his or her own decision (102). As Susan Mizruchi notes, such uncertainty is crucial to the narrator's aesthetic method (156-57). The novella consistently leaves "the truth" as an open question, up to the reader to answer for him- or herself. Therein lies the final "lesson" of

Billy Budd. If the Melville of "Hawthorne and his *Mosses*" lamented his lack of a receptive audience, the Melville of *Billy Budd* tries to inculcate into his reader a sense of what it means to *be* that audience. The novella, then, is less about insurgent authorship than it is about insurgent readership: it compels the reader to engage in reading as an active practice that involves the weighing of evidence, the consideration of mitigating circumstances, and the onerous questions of expediency and necessity with which Vere himself wrestles.

Billy, the necro citizen, is so amenable to Vere's machinations precisely because of his naïveté and innocence. Billy lacks the ability to properly read the signs and structures of power that operate on board the *Bellipotent*. Unable to comprehend irony or double meanings, Billy plays into the hands of power and reveals himself as the ideal subject of state power. But, in *Billy Budd*, Melville tries to equip his reader against such a fate. He writes,

> [t]he symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction, cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having to do with fable than with fact. Truth uncompromisingly told will always have its ragged edges; hence the conclusion of such a narration is apt to be less finished than an architectural finial. (128)

Melville urges his reader to look to the "ragged edges" in search of the "[t]ruth uncompromisingly told"—to examine more skeptically, in other words, the well-wrought urns of "official narratives" and romanticized histories to find the "Truth" revealed by the insurgent author. In *Billy Budd*, Melville asks his reader to look past the aesthetically

pleasing finitude to the discarded fragments, and to inspect instead the "ragged edges" that bind together national narratives like that in "News from the Mediterranean." What Melville proposes, in other words, is an understanding of history not as a coherent whole, but as a dismembered object that can be fruitfully read by paying close attention to the lines at which narrative tries to suture it back together.

This is the task I have attempted to undertake in this dissertation. Focusing on the "ragged edges" of literature and history—those figures who speak, write, and act from the margins of nineteenth-century citizenship—I have pursued a practice of insurgent reading that intervenes against the totalizing narratives of being American in the antebellum period. In so doing, I propose an alternative vision of American literary history that looks beyond the "architectural finials" of monumentalism and Manifest Destiny and instead situates American literature and history in the context of ongoing tensions between constituent and constituted power. By focusing on the ways in which state power dismembers discrepant narratives of being American and reconsolidates the national body in figures who, like Billy Budd and Captain Vere, are characterized by passivity and inaction, this dissertation exposes the ways in which challenges to the coherence of the nation were, in their various forms, contained, dismembered, and processed back into stable models of democratic citizenship.

Ultimately, I propose here a reconfiguration of our understanding of U.S. literary history in such a way that recognizes that the privileged discourse of official history is as much a product of art as fiction. While I would not go so far as to suggest that explicitly fictional narratives should replace more traditional historical data, I do want to posit that

literary mediations of history might have great value as being complementary to these archives. The literary mediations of marginalized figures such as fugitive slaves, outlaws, or the crew of a whaling ship might contribute to the reconstruction of the sinews and muscles that animate the lifeless historical artifact. Much as in *Billy Budd*, in which the ballad "Billy in the Darbies" provides a fictionalized and subversive supplement to the official account printed in "News from the Mediterranean," fictive texts like "The Heroic Slave," *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, and even more explicitly literary texts like *Moby-Dick* can help to form a history that is capable of imagining the nation in new ways. I suggest, ultimately, that literature might perform a kind of necromancy, revivifying the corpses produced by the dismembering force of "official" histories of the state and helping us to conceive alternative practices of nation and democracy.

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Peer-Reviewed Publications:

"Alienated Histories, Alienating Futures: Raciology and Missing Time in *The Interrupted Journey*." *Skin.* Spec. issue of *English Studies in Canada*. Ed. Julia Emberley. 34.1 (2008): 103-23.

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